

WMAC Meeting Minutes, January 15, 2015

Attendees: David Crosby - Chair, Anne Carney, Paul Lauenstein, Rory McGregor – Secretary, Chris Pimentel

Guest: Eric Hooper, Superintendent - Sharon DPW

1. Minutes from the December 18 meeting were approved as amended.
2. Priorities for WMAC to address in 2015 were reviewed:

a) Water Master Plan:

New projects include the following: check the four water storage tanks and come up with maintenance and replacement cost estimates.

Review the fees for joining MWRA and the costs to implement both emergency water connection and supplemental water connection. Consider taking advantage of state assistance for payment of the connection fee. Cost for supplemental water is approximately \$3.30 per 1000 gallons per Paul Lauenstein vs. the current \$1 per 1000 gallons for water that we pump from our town wells. The use of supplemental water could take place in summertime when demand on our water system is greatest.

Review existing maintenance projects and decide whether to reorder the priorities.

b) Define irrigation policy. Implement water meter program for this activity if appropriate.

Eric Hooper encouraged us to begin this investigation asap. David Crosby will ask Nancy Fyler, Sharon's Water Conservation Coordinator, to attend our February meeting, coordinate the discussion, and work with a subcommittee of WMAC to put forth a straw proposal for consideration by our committee. Paul Lauenstein repeated his call for an analysis of whether or not the current top block rate already accomplishes the objective of the proposed irrigation meters at no cost to residents or the Water Department.

c) Leak detection program, funding and service offerings. Get the proposed leak detection program for homeowners onto the town warrant. Set up a fund to help homeowners finance the service work that is needed to repair leaks.

d) Investigate a storm water management program to address the new requirements that have been approved by the Commonwealth relating to the water withdrawal permits. Eric will present information to WMAC on Sharon's efforts already under way in cooperation with Neponset River Watershed Association.

What is the best bang for our buck? Rain gardens, parking lot mitigation, etc. Which locations in town are prime candidates for storm water management projects? Paul Lauenstein reported that the development agreement for Bella Estates on North Main Street requires three rain gardens. Unfortunately, the Planning Board waived the requirement in the development agreement for three tree boxes to infiltrate curbside runoff and thereby help protect the nearby wetland.

3. Eric Hooper brought up an idea proposed by the town of Concord: when a home is sold, include as part of Title 5 inspection procedure a test for leaks in water supply to and within the house. WMAC will give this further discussion and decide if it is something that we want to implement in Sharon.

4. Eric's update on water system management included the following points:
 - a) Groundwater and surface water levels are running normal/above normal.
 - b) Revenues for 2014 are \$3.4 million. Approximately \$500K will go into retained earnings.
 - c) Pumping for 2014 was 466,499,000 gallons, the third lowest since 1996. Annual consumption in the future will most likely continue to be somewhere between 450 and 500 million gallons per year.
 - d) Unaccounted For Water in 2014 is 11.7%. When adjusted for hydrant flushing and construction related losses, the final number will fall below the permit limit of 10%.
 - e) Nitrate concentration at Well #2 and #4 have remained well below the 5 mg/l, which automatically requires an investigative study.
5. Discussions are continuing with Norwood on the work required to implement the emergency connection to MWRA water via their town.
6. Eric is investigating the proposal to have a regional initiative for the Water Smart program coordinated by Neponset River Watershed Association. If we collaborate with other towns, we might be able to reduce the cost of the program, which provides regular communication with our users on water issues, conservation opportunities, etc. Eric is also considering Northern Data as a possible vendor.
7. The next meeting will be Thursday February 19 at 7:30pm at the Community Center.

Respectfully submitted,

Rory McGregor