

## WMAC Meeting Minutes, March 19, 2015

Attendees: David Crosby - Chair, Lealdon Langley, Paul Lauenstein – Vice Chair, Rory McGregor – Secretary, Chris Pimentel

Guest: Eric Hooper, Superintendent - Sharon DPW; Ian Cooke – Exec Director, Neponset River Watershed Assoc

1. Minutes from the February 19 meeting were approved.
2. Recommendations presented by Ian Cooke for water irrigation system oversight/regulation by the town included the following:
  - a) Survey the town and find out who has/uses irrigation systems
  - b) Promote water saving devices
  - c) Use social marketing techniques to communicate with target audience. Maybe talk with the town of Concord MA who has tried this.
  - d) Convert to billing systems that can become a way to communicate with potential customers. One possible contact is Conserve to Enhance by Water Resources Research Center at the University of Arizona in Arizona.
  - e) Inspect irrigation systems on an annual basis: timer, backflow prevention, sprinkler head operation, etc. Walpole MA does this on an annual basis for all residences and businesses with irrigation systems.
  - f) Do not permit new construction to install irrigation systems. Make the buyer decide to do that after they own the property.
  - g) Require new and existing systems to meet certain performance standards. Require home owners to meet certain standards when they sell the property.
  - h) Require businesses that install irrigation systems to certify that their personnel are qualified in this profession and have received a training program that is recognized by State or National authorities such as WaterSense.
  - i) Limit land area on each property that can be irrigated.
  - j) Offer rebates to reduce the amount of lawn on the property.
  - k) Have minimum performance standards for system components: sprinkler heads, soil moisture sensors, backflow valves, etc.
  - l) Consider establishing a policy for private irrigation wells.
3. Eric's thoughts on irrigation systems:
  - a) Start the registration process for irrigation systems this year.
  - b) Implement the enforcement process for compliance with minimum performance standards next year.

c) This point from last month's meeting was revisited. Certified private contractors should inspect lawn irrigation systems for backflow prevention, leaks, spray nozzle aim, appropriate programming of the system controller, functioning of rain gauge or soil moisture detector, etc. A tune-up should be done in spring to ensure efficient water use during the summer irrigation season, and then the irrigation system should be winterized in fall. The idea of the Water Department or some other entity training, certifying and listing lawn irrigation professionals was discussed, as was the idea of requiring owners of automatic irrigation systems to obtain an annual permit from the town, based on proof that the system had been inspected by certified lawn irrigation professionals.

4. Report on Water Department activities during the past month was presented by Eric Hooper:

a) Meetings with Town of Norwood officials regarding the OP 5 emergency connection to MWRA were scheduled, but had to be postponed due to other DPW issues with weather related problems.

b) Approximately 31 million gallons were pumped and 24 million gallons were billed in February. Unaccounted-for-water for February was estimated at 22%. Club House at Bella Estates produced 25,000 gallons per day until the leak was detected; it was unnoticed because of all the snow that concealed the problem. Fire hydrant that was hit produced spillage of 250K gallons.

c) Approximately \$600,000 in retained earnings for FY 2015 (i.e. the year end is June 30, 2015) plus \$841,420 in one-time revenue from the sale of cell-phone antenna leases on Sharon's water tanks will go toward the cost of capital projects.

d) Readings of groundwater levels at the monitoring wells has been impeded by deep snow. Nitrate readings have also been delayed.

e) Update to Master Plan: Weston & Sampson has been commissioned to identify and prioritize projects that will be needed over the next 20 years and their costs. These projects include replacement of radio meters, automation of leak detection, maintenance of water storage tanks, and implementation of a system to provide customers with more feedback on their water usage. When the current drive-by radio meters need to be replaced, a new generation of fixed-network radio meters will provide real-time monitoring features to better manage the water distribution system. The plan is to integrate a real-time acoustic leak detection system when the next generation of radio meters is installed. The process of replacing the meters will span several years, and should be initiated before the batteries in the current radio meters begin to die.

In addition, the contract will evaluate projects needed to cleanse and infiltrate storm water to recharge aquifers, and help the town comply with conditions in its [Water Management Act](#) withdrawal permit and its [National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System \(NPDES\)](#) permit. The amount of credit that infiltration projects might provide toward satisfaction of permit requirements is related to the hydrologic unit code (HUC) level that the project affects. In other words, infiltration projects that only affect a small sub-basin might receive less credit than infiltration projects that affect a larger sub-basin. The degree to which an infiltration project improves the quality of water recharged to the aquifer is an important consideration.

Total contract cost is \$60,000.

5. The town does not want to use separate accounting software for water department billing to customers. Water Smart is a company that we would like to work with. They provide educational information integrated with monthly water bills that could be helpful to our initiatives to encourage

water conservation. We need to explore how they can work with MUNIS, our current billing service provider, and integrate their services into the residential bill paying system.

6. The next meeting will be Thursday April 16 at 7:30pm at the Community Center.

Respectfully submitted,

Rory McGregor