

## WMAC Meeting Minutes, July 23, 2015

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

Guest: Eric Hooper, Superintendent - Sharon DPW; Nancy Fyler – Neponset River Watershed Assoc

1. Minutes from the June 18 meeting were approved.

2. Eric Hooper will propose the following to the selectmen for the increase in water rates. Move the fixed fee per quarter for residential accounts (5500 accounts altogether) from \$21 to \$22.50. Move the water rate per 1000 gallons for the top residential block (under 200 accounts altogether) from \$13.50 to \$15.00. Move the fixed fee for commercial accounts (under 200 accounts altogether) from \$20 to \$22.50 per quarter. This will net about \$90,000 per year in increased revenues. Implementation would hopefully start in January 2016. WMAC unanimously voted in favor of this proposal.

3. The Water Department wants to consider establishing a formal program for registration and annual inspection of in ground irrigation systems for residential and commercial accounts. This can be accomplished via either new bylaw or existing bylaw amendment. The state plumbing code may already apply to components in the irrigation system, such as the backflow preventer.

Eric and Nancy have checked with Wayland, Concord and N. Andover for the bylaws/programs that they have implemented in their towns on irrigation systems. Best practices are being identified and considered for our proposed bylaw/program in Sharon.

At the Federal government level, EPA's Water Sense program is starting to formulate a list of requirements that would certify personnel to qualify, install, inspect and service irrigation systems. Public health considerations and environmental protection are driving reasons for moving toward a certification process.

A bill called An Act Relative to Sustainable Water Conservation Practices, S.373, has been filed in the Massachusetts state legislature. This bill would provide a registration process for irrigation professionals.

David Crosby, Chris Pimentel and Rory McGregor will check with the service providers for their in ground irrigation systems and obtain copies of their check lists for starting up irrigation systems in the springtime or closing them down in the Fall. The lists will go to Eric and Nancy to assist their information gathering.

4. Eric reviewed Water Department activities during June. Following a moderate drought in May, rainfall in June was significantly above average. Nevertheless, YTD rainfall is almost 4" lower than normal. Pumping was higher compared to last June by more than 10%. Unaccounted For Water has been at 20% of total volume pumped for several months; effort is under way to find the leak sources; a significant source appears to be along Rte 1, and will be repaired within a few weeks. Nitrate levels are stable at under 4 ppm.

Fiscal year ended June 30<sup>th</sup>. The Water Department had revenue at \$3.5 million, which is \$250K above initial budget. The additional retained earnings will provide a buffer against unanticipated contingencies such as a rainy summer or an opportunity to purchase property in a Zone I.

The Water Department is working with the WaterSmart company to provide educational information integrated with water bills that support initiatives which encourage water conservation.

Locations in Sharon for storm water recharge projects are being identified by Weston & Sampson.

Weston & Sampson is preparing an updated cost estimate for the water treatment plant at Well #6 to remove iron and manganese.

Advanced Metering Infrastructure is a fixed communications network for data gathering and management on water use by customers. The Water Department is investigating this system as a possible upgrade to our current "drive-by" data gathering procedure.

5. Eric presented data on ground water monitoring in the vicinity of Well #4, Sharon's primary well which pumps up to 1 million gallons/day. The data shows how quickly the groundwater levels recover when pumping at Well #4 is turned off. Paul Lauenstein presented data on stream flow in Beaver Brook at the Maskwonicut St. gauge versus aggregate pumping of Wells #2, 3, and 4 in the years 2010 and 2014. His observation is that the higher pumping rate last year resulted in significantly lower stream flow during the July – September time frame.

6. The next meeting will be Thursday September 24th at 7:30 pm at the Community Center. There will be no meeting in August.

Respectfully submitted,

Rory McGregor