

WMAC Meeting Minutes for September 17, 2020

Attendees: David Crosby – Chair, David Brookfield, Anne Carney, David Hearne, Lealdon Langley, Chris Pimentel – Vice-Chair

Guests: Eric Hooper, Superintendent- Sharon DPW
Robert Terpstra, Water Division Supervisor, Sharon DPW
Margaret McCarthy, Weston & Sampson Engineering Inc.
Rebecca Gonsalves, Weston & Sampson Engineering Inc.

1. **Meeting Minutes Approval:** WMAC minutes for meeting held on August 20, 2020 were approved.

2. **Final AMI system RFP** – The Water Department cannot spend money or contract for projects until after project funding is approved at town meeting. Next town meeting is scheduled for Oct 12th; however, a budget is not likely to be approved until the following town meeting, which is scheduled for Dec 1. The committee is looking for RFP responses back before the Dec 1st town meeting. To that end, a motion was made to immediately approve the Automatic Meter Reading/Infrastructure RFP for distribution to venders. The vote in favor was unanimous. With this, the RFP's should go out in October. Assuming the measure is approved we should be ready to start our final evaluation the beginning of Dec, with a goal of contract execution in or around the end of Jan/beginning of Feb. To expedite the process, WMAC may be required to meet more often than just once a month.

Margaret will be pulling together a process schedule for the RFP; committee members, Rob Terpstra and the Water Dep Admin will have the schedule and RFP itself emailed to them for review. WMAC should be able to start the interviewing process in November, and perhaps as early as October.

3. **RFP Revision for AMI** - Per discussions and comments to the RFP in our previous meeting(s), modifications have been made to the price form and venders are asked to discuss extended warranties, upon which the ranking criteria accounts. The form is structured in such a way that allows for more effective assessment and scoring of the cost proposals. A matrix to assess the values, once we select the technical preferences, will be provided with the goal of showing real costs from years 10-20 and how proposals impact or drive costs/savings far into future years. This matrix will be sent out for review in advance so we can discuss and approve in the next WMAC meeting on Oct 15th.

4. **RFP Process** - Vender assessment is pre-determined by legal process. In the first step, technical proposals are reviewed for spec compliance and ranked. A ranking of:

- “Advantageous” to “Highly Advantageous” would move the vender to an interview.
- “Non-advantageous” or “Unresponsive” means they do not move on to the interview.

After interviewed, if deemed meeting the spec, the vender moves to the price proposal phase, at which time their price proposals would be opened.

5. **MWRA connection** - Clearing of the site has commenced. There has been little response/complaint to the activity but public notifications have been proactively issued incorporating bussing concerns. Buses will have access to all stops and accommodations will be made for those bus schedules. Impacted residents will get letters assuring their kids will get picked up/dropped off.

Construction on water pipe mains was discouraged at pre-construction, as extension of the work schedule will be weather dependent, but construction of the pump station itself can and will proceed through winter months. According to Eric, the emergency connection should be fully functional by fall of 2021.

6. **Irrigation** - The DEP Drought Task Force met and assessed water supply, history, extent of dry conditions, fire and other relevant data, examining all sides and potential impacts, and issued a recommendation from which the Secretary of Environmental and Energy Affairs issued a Level 2 Drought Declaration, which prohibits use of outdoor, unattended irrigation systems. Notices are going onto the website and message boards announcing the restrictions:

- Level 1 Drought Declaration - Adherence to watering schedules
- **Level 2 Drought Declaration** - Prohibits use of outdoor, automated/unattended irrigation
- Level 3 Drought Declaration - No hand-held watering or outdoor hose use
- Level 4 Drought Declaration – Emergency conditions

Water permits allows DEP to issue these declarations and restrictions. Under our permit we aren't obligated but do adhere to these needs.

7. **Massapoag Tank** - The Massapoag tank construction will not commence until spring 2021. Financing for \$2.7 million is approved. Due to residential conflicts the tank location had to be moved to a spot where the bedrock is less ideal, resulting in a substantial estimated cost increase. In addition, both structural and sheet steel costs have been fluctuating. Bid estimate is at 3.9 (which is a little conservative). Eric is asking for an increase of about \$1.5 million, to reach a total of 4.1 million in available funding. This number builds in the higher steel costs and all other contingencies.

Eric is asking for slightly more than the actual cost estimate. Procurement rules prohibit contracting prior to all funds being approved, so if the contract price comes in at a higher number than the appropriated financing it will delay the project until at least the next town meeting. Eric is confident that \$4.1 million will at least cover the entire need.

Revenue is up by about 20% from last year, due to the increased consumption impact of C19 and the improved rate structure. This might help to cover these borrowings.

8. Eric's Water Department Report:

1. Pumping: Pumping remains, month to month, about 10-15% higher than in recent years and the monthly highs are also up. Typical pre-covid winter use has been about a million gal/day. Eric does not expect to get that low but we are down to 1.5 as of Sep 17th. Most likely we will come off the summer to around 1.1, or slightly higher. August was above the 5, 10 and 15-year average.
2. Town has not voted up any other capital projects. Everything outside of MWRA project is essentially on hold. Other water main projects will not be implemented before winter and so won't start before spring 2021.
3. Water Levels: Normal groundwater file from every month – Eric expressed that, while we may be at a Level 2 Drought Declaration, the ground water levels are consistent with previous years. Eric is not concerned about the ground water levels, especially as we are coming off the summer and irrigation is already lightening considerably. Elevation at the lake has not been problematic either, however, minimum discharge volumes are lower than what they should be, so surface water is recognized as suffering.
4. Unaccounted for water is hovering at about 6%, well below the 10% requirement. Found in irrigation leak at the high school which should provide additional improvement.
5. Nitrate readings are at 4.7 at Well 4, which is approaching the 5 mg/L study trigger. With no patterns in the data, Eric is uncertain about what the cause might be. Dave Brookfield suggested, as with increased water consumption due to C19, septic load is also higher, causing higher nitrate concentrations. In consideration of this possibility, the DPW will test the other wells, and more frequently, to keep a closer eye on it.
6. Well 2: The water department stopped pumping Well 2. They tested Rory's water and all nine wells were very high in iron and manganese. Well 6 was turned on to supplement; Well 6 often causes complaints but is somehow a big improvement from Well 2 right now. Hopefully, it's performance will continue for the rest of the season. In the future, the department will try a crop rotation type schedule b/w Wells 6 and 2, giving each a substantial rest (rather than continual use of either of those wells). For now, they will leave Well 2 off for the winter and see what it looks like in the spring.