

Harwich Water Department
BOARD OF WATER COMMISSIONERS
Regular Session held on October 8, 2013 at 8:45 a.m.

Present: Chairman Allin Thompson, Vice Chairman Danette Gonsalves, Clerk Donald Bates, Superintendent Craig Wiegand, Comptroller Sandra Cummings, Sr. Billing Administrator Wellesley Marsh, Office Assistant Tracey Alves, Minute Taker

Chairman Thompson motioned to open the Regular Session at 8:40 a.m.

Vice Chairman Gonsalves seconded. 3-0-0

Chairman Thompson entertained a motion for the Minutes taken on September 24th, 2013.

Vice Chairman Gonsalves moved to approve the Minutes.

Clerk Bates seconded. 3-0-0

The Abatement for 9 Harold Street had already been approved at a prior meeting and was in need of signing only.

An appointment was set for 8:45 a.m. for resident Todd Campbell to attend the meeting to discuss a water leak at his property of 435 Long Pond Drive. Mr. Campbell attended the meeting and explained that upon receipt of his semi-annual water bill he had realized that it seemed abnormally high in the amount of \$184.21. He stated that his meter had been changed out a year prior and that he has four adults and two children living at the property and no irrigation. He checked his house for leaks and it was then that he discovered a small leak at the meter buckle. He reacted by calling the Water Department and a service visit was scheduled within 24 hours to fix the leak, as this was the earliest that the technicians had access into the property. Mr. Campbell wanted the Water Department to know that he was sure that the leak was occurring on the outlet side of the meter and not the inlet side. He insists that it was running through the meter and leaking out on the other side. Mr. Campbell stated that the meter was in an obscure area so he was unsure of as to how long this had been going on. He believes that the leak was a contributing factor to his high water bill and would like his bill reduced. Superintendent Wiegand proposed that the meter be taken and tested for accuracy. Until then, the Board will take it under advisement, wait for the results and then get back to him regarding the decision rendered.

Superintendent Wiegand then began speaking of another property owner named Regina Aubuchon who is upset with her semi-annual water bill in the amount of \$750.60. Ms. Aubuchon currently resides in Texas. She has a tenant living at her property in Harwich which does have irrigation. The tenant came into the Water Department one day to report a leak at the meter and at that point Water Department technicians were dispatched to the property to fix the leak. Ms. Aubuchon was upset that the Water Department discussed the leak with the tenant. When the Water Department technicians responded to fix the leak at the meter they didn't feel like it was major. This property shows that in the recent past it was visited by a plumber and a toilet leak was detected and there are also true signs of tenant/owner issues. Ms. Aubuchon asked that moving forward any dealings regarding leaks or having to do with water at the property were to be run by her first. Superintendent

Wiegand then recommended to Ms. Aubuchon that she write a letter stating this so her file can be updated and Water Department personnel will know how to react in case of an emergency at her property. She was prompted to follow the rules by filling out an Abatement form if it was monetary compensation that she was seeking. Once received, her case would be under review until further notice.

Cape Net has all of the engineered drawings but still has still not revealed a price for fiber optics. Superintendent Wiegand put a call into Open Cape and asked his contact there if he would rattle their cages. Open Cape willingly stated that they will personally put a call in to get them in touch with us.

Sea Sound Condo's request for the Service Tight Protection Plan was very well presented, however, it has been decided that it is/was designed for private residents only.

Chairman Thompson made a motion to deny the request based on terms restricted to private residents only.

Vice Chairman Gonsalves seconded. 3-0-0

The Capital Outlay meeting is approaching. Since there are no items on the Capital Outlay for this year Superintendent Wiegand will get a hold of the Chairman to see if attendance at the meeting is necessary.

The Depot Road Extension property had a meter monitor placed on it a year ago due to a high water bill received. Sr. Billing Administrator Marsh stated that since there was no prior history on the account a meter monitor was put in so we could go through this past summer to see a base line. What we saw was that water was running continuously through the meter. The owners of the property were informed of this and they stated that they know there is a leak but they have been having trouble getting a plumber out there to repair it. This property previously had well water and that is why there were no prior records of usage. This is why when the property owners questioned how high their bill was that the Water Department entertained the idea of placing a meter monitor on the account. A year of monitoring has gone by and it is proven that there is a leak somewhere. Superintendent Wiegand stated that we've done what we were supposed to do and went out of our way to find out what the issue was. A payment plan can be offered to the owners of this property but they are responsible for the account balance.

Vice Chairman Gonsalves motioned to deny the request for Abatement.

Chairman Thompson seconded. 3-0-0

Verizon has approached Superintendent Wiegand to do a similar project as AT&T. They are interested in constructing a cell tower on a location off of Spruce Road. Superintendent Wiegand is going to have them write-up a proposal. Chairman Thompson said to double check the Land Use map and make sure that the land they are interested in is not Chapter 97 land as this would prohibit the land being used for anything other than water. Permission was granted to pursue this information.

The Planning Board meeting regarding Well 10 is on October 22nd, 2013 at 7:00 p.m. at the Town Hall. One or all can be there, as it is a public meeting.

The Bid Opening for Well 10 is on October 25th, 2013 at 10:00 a.m. to be held at the Harwich Water Department. Permission was given to cut the foundation out of the proposed package. The goal is to have the foundation poured before the weather gets cold and from there the project can move at its own pace.

Ted Nelson & Co. drafted a report on the proposed Comprehensive Wastewater Plan. The feeling overall after reading the report is that water and sewer should be kept separate. It would be best to keep them separate. The report proposes a surcharge be added onto water bills with a portion of it going towards wastewater. Chapter 165, Acts of 1935 states that the only way they could do that was if there was a problem with water quality and sewer issues were addressing problems with water quality as well as drinking water issues. Legally, it would be against the law for them to do this. If there is going to be a surcharge it should be applied to the tax portion of the Town and not to the water portion. An enterprise fund for wastewater should be established. This would also help to track money and make it easy to identify where money was spent for water and where money was spent for wastewater. The bottom line is that they cannot charge a surcharge on the water bill because they aren't addressing drinking water quality issues.

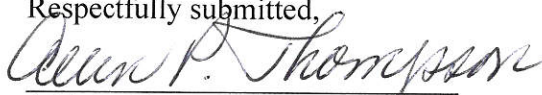
Roberta McDowell sent in a letter outlining concern of the use of herbicides and pesticides used by NSTAR to take down trees near well fields and fresh water ponds. They used to mechanically remove shrubbery and now they have resorted to using chemicals. She wants to know if NSTAR is being monitored in their applications of these chemicals. The Pleasant Bay Alliance is also concerned. Roberta McDowell has asked if the Board could write a letter to NSTAR to express its concern. This topic is to be revisited at the next meeting.


The next Board meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 5th, 2013.


Chairman Thompson moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:35 a.m.


Vice Chairman Gonsalves seconded. 3-0-0


Respectfully submitted,


Allin P. Thompson, Chairman


Danette Gonsalves, Vice Chairman


Donald T. Bates, Clerk


Craig Wiegand, Superintendent


Tracey Alves, Minute Taker