

Board of Water Commissioners

Minutes 03/27/2012

Harwich Water Department
BOARD OF WATER COMMISSIONERS
Meeting on March 27, 2012

Present: Chairman Donald Bates, Vice Chairman Allin Thompson, Clerk Danette Gonsalves, Superintendent Craig Wiegand, Secretary Alexandra Bilek, Senior Billing Administrator Wellesley Marsh, Comptroller Sandra Cummings, Selectmen Angelo LaMantia, Town Treasurer Mary McIsaac

Chairman Donald Bates called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

The minutes for the previous meeting held on March 13, 2012, were approved with a motion by Clerk Gonsalves and seconded by Vice Chairman Thompson; 3-0-0.

Superintendent Wiegand asked Selectmen Angelo LaMantia why the Selectmen withdrew the Water Department's Warrant Article to become a water-sewer district. Mr. LaMantia said they pulled it to prevent needless discussion at Town Meeting because the Warrant Article is premature as there is a study underway to determine what the best course of action is.

Town Treasurer Mary McIsaac gave the Board an update about the lockbox cost to the Water Department. She said the soft dollar total annual fee would be approximately \$2,800. Ms. McIsaac said the estimate of \$2,800 is high because the volume is usually lower. She said they have never paid for the services as the average daily balance has always covered it. Ms. McIsaac said the Water Department's indirect cost is \$3,000. She said she doesn't think the indirect cost will go up due to the soft dollar cost of the lockbox. Vice Chairman Thompson moved to accept the lockbox with Century Bank with a second by Clerk Gonsalves; 3-0-0.

The Board reviewed the abatement request from Robert DeMaggio of 12 Willow Lane in regard to a late fee. Upon review and discussion Vice Chairman Thompson moved to approve the abatement request with a second by Chairman Bates; 3-0-0.

Superintendent Wiegand reviewed the bids for proposed legal services for the Water Department study. He said the bid prices came in at \$28,000, \$27,000 and \$24,000. Vice Chairman Thompson moved to award the study to the low bidder Louison, Costello, Condon & Pfaff, LLP with a second from Clerk Gonsalves; 3-0-0.

Vice Chairman Thompson moved to accept the draft letter to the Board of Selectmen in regard to online submission of the Consumer Confidence Report with a second by Clerk Gonsalves; 3-0-0.

Mr. Wiegand broached the topic of the Department's mark out policy as it concerns utilities. He said to date we are currently holding back two National Grid requests due to non-payment. Mr. Wiegand said National Grid is telling their customers that the Water Department is holding up their work. He said we have marked out all but those two requests, and that is why they owe us \$7,000. Mr. Wiegand said he had Town Counsel review this and they said the Department was within its rights to charge for services rendered. He said National Grid was bringing in hundreds of markouts at one time and we did them all. Mr. Wiegand said National Grid has been advised to pay the balance under protest and let it be decided in Court. He advised the Board to seek payment through Small Claims Court. Mr. Wiegand said there is a meeting scheduled for Friday at the Town Administrator's Office with the Department and National Grid. Selectmen Angelo LaMantia asked if we could email him in detail what has happened with National Grid over the past year. Mr. LaMantia asked why the Department does the markouts and not Digsafe. Mr. Wiegand said Digsafe only markouts out in the street, so even if we were part of it we would still have to markout the service from the street to the house.

Mr. Wiegand voiced concerns about the Board of Water Commissioners election. He asked how it would work if there were two Board members employed by Robert B. Our. Mr. Wiegand said Robert B. Our bids several Department projects. He questioned how there would be a quorum if the two employees recused themselves. Mr. LaMantia said that would fall under the Rule of Necessity. Mr. Wiegand is concerned about the public perception, and the fact that Mr. Joudry is an Estimator and will be privy to all of the bids. Vice Chairman Thompson said the Ethics Commission has ways of dealing with that.

The Board will meet again on Tuesday, April 10, 2012.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a.m. with a motion by Clerk Gonsalves and seconded by Chairman Bates; 3-0-0.