

**MEETING MINUTES
CHARLTON WATER AND SEWER COMMISSION**

Date: June 18, 2007

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Location: Charlton Wastewater Treatment Facility

Attendees: Stephen Zeveska; Joseph Belanger; David Paquin; Dan Prouty; Kathleen Walker, Board of Selectmen; Debbie Laplaca, Worcester Telegram; J. Robert Gauthier

Members	Present	Members	Present
Sandra Dam	Y	John Elliott	Y
Paul Gagner	Y	James McIntire	Y
Cheryl McKissick	Y		

Minutes Recorded By: N. Shields-Swindell

Item	Business
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7:00 p.m.: James McIntire, Chair, called the meeting to order

Sandra Dam moved to accept the Minutes of June 4, 2007. Cheryl McKissick seconded. Mr. Gagner said that he had not been able to read them yet. For Dam, McIntire. Against McKissick, Elliott. Abstained Gagner. Not Passed. Mr. McIntire said that the minutes are e-mailed by the Friday before the meeting and asked if the Commission needed more time to read them. Mr. Elliott said that he was O.K. with Friday. Mr. Gagner said that he is still having e-mail problems Acceptance of Minutes tabled until next meeting.

The Commission signed the Payroll, Warrants and Commitments.

The Plant Manager was unable to attend the meeting so the Interim Superintendent presented the **Monthly Operating Report**. There was a TSS violation due to a clarifier upset and a filter breach. The Copper levels were also unaccountably high, however this has never occurred two months in a row, so an expensive EPA study has not been required. The Plant Manager has started to turn more RBCs on for the summer months, when the Ammonia Nitrogen permit level changes from 3.6mg/l to 1.4mg/l. The Commissioners had no questions regarding the MOR.

7:15 pm – Omer Dumais of Tighe and Bond came to update the Commission on the **Drinking Water Search**. For the benefit of the new Commissioners he brought copies of all the information distributed at earlier meetings. Cheryl McKissick moved to notify anyone who might have an interest in an agenda topic. Paul Gagner seconded. Ms. Dam pointed out that some people might be accidentally omitted if someone had to determine just who might be interested and then call them individually and suggested that the agenda could be posted on the Town website. Cheryl McKissick amended her motion to post the agendas on the Town website. Paul Gagner seconded. Unanimous. Ms. Laplaca asked when the agenda would be posted and was told it would be the Friday before the meeting. Mr. Dumais explained that the **Comprehensive Water Resource Management Plan** consisted of two components the – wastewater and the water supply. He explained that it was being paid for with a 2% interest loan from the MA Water Pollution Abatement Trust and about \$375,000.00 had been authorized so far, with about \$200,000.00 going to the Water Supply Investigation. For the most part this has been spent on well drillers and laboratory services. He distributed four tables of information gathered in a preliminary desktop survey consisting of published data and explained that

priority had been placed on proposed well sites in close proximity to the existing water lines. Mr. Elliott then asked if Tighe & Bond had any inkling that the DEP would refuse to permit development of the Buffumville site. Mr. Dumais said that they knew it would be tricky but they felt that proper engineering would provide solutions to DEP's concerns. He said that currently the DEP would like bedrock well sites tested before looking at engineering solutions for Buffumville. Ms. McKissick said that she was looking for written permission from the DEP to drill test wells at Buffumville. Mr. Dumais said that this was not necessary as test well 30-66 had been drilled in 1966. Mr. Elliott asked how was the water quality. Mr. Dumais said a little high in manganese. Mr. Elliott asked if there was any silt. Mr. Dumais said no, and the site had been flooded many times since 1966. Mr. Dumais said that he felt and still feels that engineering design and construction solutions could address the DEP's concerns. Mr. Elliott asked if the Buffumville site will cost more to develop than a bedrock site. Mr. Dumais said that it will need expensive treatment similar to that required by surface water. Mr. Elliott asked if this would cost more than treating arsenic in a bedrock well. Mr. Dumais said yes. Mr. Elliott asked how many years will it take to develop a well. Mr. Dumais said bedrock wells take less time and that five years is the usual time frame. He continued, that with 30-66, there would need to be negotiations with the Army C of E, as they would be looking for water for their facility and maybe some help with site maintenance, and it could take up to two years to come to a licensing agreement. He pointed out that Mr. Prouty's property was also located within the C of E flood zone and would also be subject to their agreement. He said that testing outside the flood zone adjacent to these sites showed shallow overburden with no appreciable volume of water. Ms. McKissick asked if it would be more cost effective to drill production wells instead of test wells. Mr. Dumais said that a 2.5" gravel packed test well cost about \$30.00/ft while the production well would cost about \$500.00/ft, with bedrock test wells the differential was not so extreme. His opinion was to put in the least expensive test wells possible, and he was uncomfortable spending more than necessary to collect the data needed, however this was a decision for the Commission to make. He said typically they budget for 500 ft test wells, but the driller and hydro geologist make decisions in the field. Mr. Zeveska spoke up and said he should be listened to because he and Mr. Belanger had a combined 60 years experience drilling wells in the area and the cost to drill a 700 to 800 ft test well then abandon it and drill a production well would cost more than just doing the production well. Mr. Dumais said that if there was a high likelihood the well would produce sufficient water that approach would make sense. He said that the budget proposal would include options and prices and always includes production wells, for the Commission's decision. Mr. Zeveska said that in his opinion there are no 150 gpm bedrock wells in Charlton and that the Town will need several wells. Mr. Dumais said that was the reason Tighe & Bond usually suggests investigating gravel packed well sites before bedrock sites. Everyone seemed in agreement that it was difficult to determine where the water in a bedrock well was coming from, that they were unpredictable and could stop producing sufficient water at any time. Mr. Belanger asked about the process for abandoning wells and Mr. Dumais went through this and repeated that Tighe & Bond's approach is to offer all options to the Town for their informed decision. Mr. Dumais then returned to his agenda and continued to review the Water Supply Investigation. He said that a site near Cranberry Meadow was close to the water line but

had a limited recharge area and was not sustainable. At the Buffumville area test well 30-66 had the advantage of sufficient water, ease of access and was relatively close to the water main. Mr. Prouty asked why Tighe & Bond had not spoken to him about his property. Mr. Dumais reminded him that he and Mike Zylich had met with Mr. Prouty, and his property was also within the C of E flood easement and was not as easy to access. He said that he thought Mr. Prouty's site might have potential for a second well site if 30-66 proved to be successful. Mr. Dumais said that the Commission had been unwilling to spend additional money until a basic agreement had been reached with the C of E and the DEP had been unwilling to agree to development until the C of E had given their approval. Tighe & Bond had put together their concept of solutions to DEP's site concerns in the hope that once these concerns were addressed they would grant approval. At the most recent meeting with the DEP the only answer offered was "maybe". Mr. Dumais explained that some of the measures planned to protect the well consisted of a casing high enough to prevent flooding more than once every five years, elaborate concrete seal arrangements to prevent ground water from entering, a submersible pump with a vent pipe located above the 500-year flood level and a filtration plant located even higher. Ms. Walker asked how much money and how long Tighe & Bond was expecting to spend on the bedrock well investigation. Mr. Dumais said the budget was \$138,000.00, and he couldn't say definitively how long the investigation would take. Ms. Dam said that, how she understood it, the DEP wanted the Town to try a bedrock site first. She pointed out that the bedrock site planned for testing was not close to the water main, however it was the only proposed bedrock well site whose owners granted access. Mr. Elliott asked Mr. Dumais if the Commission should get any option on the property. Mr. Dumais said that was prudent approach, however it could take a substantial amount of time. Mr. Prouty asked the well drillers in attendance where they would look. Mr. Zeveska said near the Heritage School and near Muggett Hill. Ms. Dam explained that some of these places had been initially investigated, but the owners refused to grant access. Mr. McIntire said that these would be good options for the Sub-Committee to explore. Mr. Dumais said that Tighe & Bond based their recommendations on fracture analysis and existing well data. He said that Tighe & Bond usually puts together the technical specifications and then requests prices from local well drillers. The Commission has asked Tighe & Bond to hire the drillers because if the Town did, it would require a bid process. Mr. McIntire asked what Tighe & Bond's recommendation was. Mr. Dumais said to proceed with the scope of work and budget as outlined on January 29, 2007, on the bedrock parcel that has granted access. Three wells of 500 feet each or a total of 1,500 feet of drilling are planned and there is money left over from the amount budgeted for testing at the Hanna property. He said that if the Commission wished to negotiate an option it could, and concurrently Tighe & Bond would like to continue to collect site data and use the best science to select the actual test site. He explained that several permits will be necessary, including one from the Charlton Conservation Commission and there would need to be a MESA submittal for the protection of sensitive life forms. Mr. McIntire asked if there were any other questions. Ms. McKissick asked why was this presentation required and how much did it cost as all the information distributed was already on file. It was explained that this was the regularly scheduled update on the Water Search and Mr. Dumais had brought the extra copies as a courtesy to the new Commissioners. Ms. Walker asked if the DEP was still vague and was there any feeling

on how much more they would require. Ms Dam said that the DEP was very particular about their regulations because once a Town started to supply water it could not stop. She said that according to the DEP \$100,000.00 was not much for testing in a long-term project to develop a public water supply. Mr. Dumais said that the DEP will render decisions, but not tell a Town what it needs to do next. Ms. Walker asked how many times the Town will have to go to the DEP. Mr. Dumais said at least to get permission on the scope of testing and then to the water management section. Ms. Walker asked if involvement of the State Senator and Representative would be helpful. Mr. Dumais said that he couldn't see that it would hurt. Ms Dam added that the DEP gave the impression that they would reconsider the 30-66 site if bedrock testing did not work out and other bedrock sites may become available if the owners should decide to grant access. 8:35 pm Mr. Dumais left the meeting.

The Interim Superintendent suggested that the Commission consider drafting the **MTA Second Supplemental Agreement** for review by their engineer and counsel. If the MTA's requirements were better defined it would assist in determining the exact parameters of the upgrade. Mr. Elliott said he didn't want the engineers or counsel to work on it, he wanted Ms Dam to do it. He stated that the Commission spent \$75,000.00 on engineering in the past year. It was pointed out that \$40,000.00 was budgeted for engineering and only about \$4,000.00 of that had been spent. Ms. Dam also asked the Commission to review the proposal from Alcott Associates regarding the response to McDonalds. Mr. Elliott asked to have this subject tabled so the data could be put into a format he could understand. Ms Dam said that she would be happy to make copies and explain items of business on the agenda to bring the Commissioners up to speed so that they can come to meetings prepared to make decisions. Mr. McIntire asked that the Commissioners read the First Supplemental Agreement for the next meeting.

A review of files as requested by Ms McKissick at the last meeting shows that the Commission had an executed license from the **Army Corps of Engineers** granting permission to install, maintain and sample water supply test wells at the Buffumville site dated May 10, 2005.

David & Sandra Woods owners of **164 City Depot Rd (12-B-4.20)** have requested an abatement of the Betterment assessed to their property. The assessment, in the amount of \$6,560.00, is the remainder of the betterment as originally assessed to Parcel **12-B-4.10**. The portion of the original property with access to the sewer was sold to the Woods in January of 2003. Sandra Dam moved to grant the abatement in the amount of \$6,560.00, to 164 City Depot Rd (12-B-4.20) on the condition that the Woods sign an agreement stating that they will be subject to a privilege fee should they connect to the wastewater treatment system. John Elliott seconded. Unanimous.

John Elliott moved to have the files searched to provide him with the original letters and documents relating the N Sturbridge Rd Sewer Extension so that he could research this matter before voting on this extension and connection. No second.

Commitments were prepared for:

A Grinder Pump Violation at 26 Trolley Crossing (34A-A-1.2) This had already been billed. The Commitment is to put it into the Vadar System now that Demands are out.

New User Fees at 21 N Main (35-C-10)

A Tie In was completed at 21 N Main ST (35-C-10)

Grinder Pump Violation notices for clogged pumps during the Month of May were sent to Acct. 372 59 N Sturbridge Rd (12-A-1.26)

Acct 287 6 Ash Rd (12B-F-4)

Acct 238 15 Hollywood Dr (16A-A-25)

Acct 115 125 Sunset Dr (12A-D-34)

A written request for a Division of Betterment with a draft Certificate of Division and a check for the standard legal review fee was received from the office of Atty George Hammond regarding the property of Lisa Gaudette at **84 Osgood Rd (12-A-4.1) Acct # 374**, in regards to the sale of part of the original lot. Kopelman and Paige have reviewed the documents. Sandra Dam moved to grant the Partial Betterment Release. Cheryl McKissick seconded. Mr. Elliott questioned why Ms. Gaudette was required to pay for a legal review. It was explained to him that it was the Commission's policy to require the review for any legal documents to protect the Town from lawsuits and insure that legal procedures are followed correctly. The party receiving the extraordinary service was required to offset some of the expense otherwise born by all the other sewer users. It was further explained that it was duly voted at a Commission meeting and posted. For: McIntire, Dam McKissick & Gagner. Abstain: Elliott.

The Contract from Woodard & Curran allows for a Plant Loading & Pricing Adjustment. There were very high B.O.D. loadings last year. The Interim Superintendent has negotiated this expense down from \$37,000.00 to \$19,000.00. She recommended trying to get more years included the average as this would work in the Commission's favor, but she couldn't in good conscience say the Contract Operator was wrong. And the MTA was surcharged for some of these loadings as part of the rate structure. Cheryl McKissick move to accept the \$19,000.00 expense. Sandra Dam seconded. Unanimous.

The Commission's current policy is to not to allow any new **Sewer Extensions** to the existing system due to capacity issues. The revised sewer regulations, regarding connections/extensions that were promulgated by the DEP on January 12, 2007 have changed the requirements needed for state approvals. As of that date sewer connections discharging $\leq 15,000$ gpd will need only local approvals. John Elliott moved that the Commission approve all current sewer extensions under 15,000 gpd. No second. The Interim Superintendent recommended adopting a connection permit application similar to the previous state DEP form and required paperwork. This application would be reviewed by the Commission's engineer at the applicant's expense, per Commission policy. Mr. Elliott asked to have this discussion tabled until he can read the former DEP application. The Town treasurer will borrow the money for the balance of the original water project cost and the interconnection costs to date because the SRF money will not be available for this fiscal year. Cheryl McKissick moved to approve this action. Sandra Dam seconded. Unanimous.

Limited parking at the Plant has resulted in grounds maintenance issues due to parking on the grass. A price has been requested from the Highway Dep. for paving a portion of the existing lawn and current pull out areas adjacent to plant. They have quoted \$2,480.00 for labor only. This does not include materials. The Commission's consensus was to get more definitive prices. The discussion was tabled.

- The Chair is concerned about **Community Outreach** and would like the community to be more informed about Commission activities. The Commission has put informational stuffers in the sewer user fee bills every quarter and the Interim Superintendent and

former Chair have written articles for the Charlton Gazette. John Elliott moved that the procedure for accepting the Meeting Minutes be altered to provide that during open meeting the prior meeting minutes will be discussed and if there are any corrections, errors or omissions to be made the Secretary will make such changes and present a revised hard copy for the next meeting to voted on and accepted as written. All meetings will be digitally recorded, copied and permanently stored in two secure locations under the Commissions (sic) control. Once the minutes have been voted on "accepted as written" the Secretary will post the minutes on the Commission's Web site. Cheryl McKissick seconded. Mr. Elliott said the digital recording would go onto a computer, which would then print out the minutes correctly. Mr. McIntire said the Commission could get quotes for the equipment. Ms. Dam said this could be costly. For: Elliott, McKissick & Gagner. Against: Dam Passed. An Open House could be held at the Library. Ms. McKissick suggested moving the meetings to the Town Hall. For Old Home Day the Commission could get a booth. The Woodard & Curran contract also requires community outreach. Mr. McIntire said that this will require help from all of the Commissioners

The Chair will e-mail a draft **Water Search Sub-Committee** scope to the rest of the Commission. He suggested getting together quickly before the next scheduled meeting. The formation of the Sub-Committee will be announced on cable TV and the Town web site.

Ms. Dam left the room for this discussion. The Chair gave a brief history of the Superintendent search and the decision to go to Contract Operations. With the Contract Operator running the WWTP efficiently there was no longer any need for a Superintendent with wastewater licenses. Ms. Dam had stepped in to fill the Administrative role on an interim basis, while the Commission developed the **Water/Sewer Technical Administrator** job description. Mr. McIntire explained that the Commission could post the position or offer it directly to Ms. Dam. Mr. Gagner said that it should be posted and given to employment agencies. Mr. Elliott said he wanted the position of Superintendent and Technical Administrator combined. Mr. McIntire explained that Contract Operations was running the plant, it would cost another \$30,000.00 to \$60,000.00 to for the changed position, the new position would have to go back to the Personnel Board and the budget for FY 2008 would not cover it. Cheryl McKissick moved to redefine the position and call it Water/Sewer Plant Systems Manager, with Superintendent duties and increased pay scale. John Elliott seconded. Mr. Elliott said he would write the new job description by July 30, 2007. For: Elliott, Gagner. Against: McKissick, McIntire. Not Passed. Mr. Gauthier spoke as past member of the Commission who had worked on developing the Water/Sewer Technical Administrator job description. He said that it was not practical to hire a Superintendent when Contract Operations was running the WWTP. Commission employees no longer ran the plant and it was determined that an oversight position was required. Mr. McIntire agreed with Mr. Gauthier and said that with Contract Operations running the facility it was unwise to spend an extra \$50,000.00 to \$60,000.00. Mr. Elliott complained about Ms Dam's membership on the Commission. Mr. Gauthier pointed out that a Town By-law allowed a Commissioner to serve as Superintendent and the issue was that a Superintendent was not needed while an Administrator was. He asked if the discussion was about the position or the person. Mr. McIntire said that Ms Dam has been doing an excellent job and felt it

would be an insult to push her aside. Cheryl McKissick moved to advertise both a Superintendent position and Water/Sewer Technical Administrator. No second. Mr. Elliott said that he wanted to see someone testing the water system. Mr. Gauthier said that there was currently no Water Budget to cover that expense and it could not come from the Sewer Budget. Ms. Laplaca asked for clarification on what responsibilities and functions would be gained by advertising both positions. Mr. McIntire said the new Commissioners were questioning decisions made by the previous Commission on the immediate needs of the of the department after much diligent research and work and the Commission now seemed to be at a stalemate. Mr. Gagner suggested having Mr. Elliott rewrite the job description and moved to table the discussion. No second. Ms Walker said that what is needed immediately is an administrator, then the Commission could consider future needs. Cheryl McKissick moved to advertise the Water/Sewer Technical Administrator position as accepted by the previous Commission and approved by the Personnel Board and consider future needs when the Administrator is in place. No second. Mr. McIntire said that he felt the position should be filled with the present employee. Cheryl McKissick moved to offer the Water/Sewer Technical Administrator position to Ms Dam. James McIntire seconded. For: McIntire. Against: McKissick, Gagner, Elliott. Not Passed. The discussion was tabled. Ms. Dam returned to the room. John Elliott moved to hold the Water/Sewer Commission meetings in the Town Hall or some other suitable venue. Paul Gagner seconded. Ms. Dam said that if the meetings are to be held at the Town Hall they should be televised. Mr. Gauthier said it would be a disservice to the Town not to televise the meetings. Mr. McIntire pointed out that the Commission would not have access to their records during meetings. For: McKissick, Gagner, Elliott. Against: Dam, McIntire. Passed. Sandra Dam moved that meetings be televised. John Elliott seconded. For: McIntire, Dam, Elliott. Against: McKissick, Gagner. Passed.

There was discussion of the Commission’s goals for 2007 – 2008. Items mentioned were; water for the Library, communication, the water infrastructure and 500 – 600 gpd for the Town. Commissioners were asked to e-mail their ideas to the Interim Superintendent. Sandra Dam moved to go into **Executive Session** to comply with Exception 3 – to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the governmental body, to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel, to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with non-, union personnel and reconvene in Open Session. James McIntire seconded. For: Cheryl McKissick, Paul Gagner, John Elliott, Sandra Dam and James McIntire. Unanimous.

Return to Open Session

Cheryl McKissick moved to adjourn. Paul Gagner seconded, Unanimous.

11:00 p.m.: **Meeting Adjourned** **Next Meeting:** Tuesday, July 9, 2007

Approved:

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Sandra Dam	Date	John Elliott	Date
_____	_____	_____	_____
Paul Gagner	Date	James McIntire	Date
_____	_____		
Cheryl McKissick	Date		