

Meeting Minutes

Charlton Water and Sewer Commission

Date: **September 10, 2007**

Time: 7:00 p.m. Location: Town Hall, Selectman’s Meeting Room

Attendees:

<u>Members</u>	<u>Present</u>	<u>Members</u>	<u>Present</u>
Cheryl McKissick	Y	James McIntire	Y
Sandra Dam	Y	Paul Gagner	Y
John Elliott, Sr.	Y		
Tracey Roberts	- Administrator		Y

Item Business

Chairman McKissick opened the meeting at 7:07 p.m.

The new computers have been installed at the plant. There is a wage issue with the new employee – we stated \$12.32 but the correct wage is \$12.03 for a new hire in that union position. Ms. McKissick reported that the new hire that worked one day, will not be returning. Ms. Dam suggested the W/S Administrator review the union contract for the future. Operating hours at the office was tabled until next week.

Mr. McIntire moved to appoint Mr. Lalle to the water search subcommittee. Mr. Elliott second. Unanimous. Mr. McIntire requested a listing of all the members. Ms. Dam requested notification of when those meetings were going to be held. We had voted that their meetings be posted and televised and that did not happen; and the Water and Sewer Commission was not notified. It was brought up that their meeting was not held in the meeting room, and it was not televised as voted. The meeting was not posted. The Chairman said she wanted to review the minutes regarding that vote. The Chair then asked Selectman Walker if the meeting they held at the Library was posted as required, and Ms. Walker responded no. The Chairman directed her to please make sure all future meetings were posted.

Water Sewer– Administrator’s report - Tracey Roberts

TV Inspection –two other firms contacted for bids -linear foot price from Woodard & Curran requesting same from others - typically work on a “per day” basis and have asked for additional information relative to the system. She will gather information for these firms and follow up to obtain pricing.

Woodard & Curran – Oil Containment proposal – SPCC plan. This needs to be signed as we are overdue in submitting this to the EPA. Ms. Dam moved that based upon the recommendation of the administrator, we authorize Woodard and Curran to move forward with this work at a cost of approximately \$4,200. Mr. McIntire seconded. Mr. Elliott asked if containment was required. The Administrator thought it was not at this time; and that just a plan was needed. This is a time sensitive matter. Vote: Unanimous.

7:30 p.m. Jean Vincent – Executive Director of Charlton Housing Authority which provides for 30 – one bedroom units for low income elderly/disabled and 6 – 3 bedroom units for low income families. She questioned the new metered rate as it would not benefit them. She is requesting relief from the metered rate. She is currently on the Title V rate. She does not want to switch to the metered rate unless we could provide some relief. Mr. Elliott asked what she is currently paying. She is paying \$70/bedroom per quarter. She is not paying the \$93.75 per e.d.u. He noted that the bills still have to be paid. Ms. Roberts has contacted Mr. Alcott, our rate consultant, who will be available the first week in October to meet with the Administrator and the Commission. She also noted that there are still not

many on meters at this point. Ms. Roberts suggested that the board is working to make this situation better and that we need to work with our rate consultant. Ms. Vincent requested the elderly discount. Ms. McKissick asked if we could read her current meter. Ms. Vincent will put on a compatible meter if necessary. Ms. Dam stated that the issue is not if we can read the meter, but the rate itself. She further noted that we are in a time of transition with the rates and while the Housing Authority may not benefit by going to a metered rate, every homeowner that has gone on the metered rate has saved money. Regarding the question of the elderly discount, Ms. Dam suggested that the Administrator review our policy to see if the Housing Authority fits the criteria and report back to us at our next meeting. Ms. Vincent asked about the outside faucets (if she did go on a meter) as they are on every building. This issue would have to be reviewed.

Mr. Gagner reported that he had received a call from Mr. Brownville regarding his sewer bill. He met with him to explain his bill. He wasn't happy with the answer. Mr. Gagner feels the e.d.u. method is not a fair rate. Mr. Brownville asked to have Mr. Gagner review his property. He reminded him of the commission's policy. The customer asked for a letter from the commission that he could give to his attorney regarding this policy. Mr. Gagner composed a letter for Mr. Brownville. Ms. McKissick asked the Administrator whether the customer had contacted her, as she was supposed to follow up with him. Ms. Roberts responded that she had a copy of the bills but had not had a chance to review them and had not been in contact with Mr. Brownville. Ms. Dam asked what value it would be to review the property for number of bedrooms as he is on a metered rate now. Mr. Gagner responded that it would affect his capacity fee. It was noted by the Chair that the bedroom count does not affect his capacity fee. He has a three family home and is being billed for three e.d.u.'s and the bedroom count does not matter at this point. Mr. Gagner motioned that he send the letter he drafted to the customer. Mr. Elliott seconded. Ms. Dam asked what value is the letter. The commission is not changing their policy; and if the customer has already stated there is a threat of legal action, then the letter should be reviewed by our attorney before sending.

Mr. McIntire asked if the letter was being sent to support an abatement. Mr. Gagner still felt it would change his charge. Ms. McKissick reiterated that the bedroom count would not affect his e.d.u.s. Mr. Gagner, Mr. Elliot in favor. Ms. Dam – against. Mr. McIntire voted in favor, stating as long as it does not set a precedent of this board inspecting bedrooms in the future. Ms. McKissick abstained. Motion passed. The draft letter was given to the Administrator to put on letterhead before mailing.

8:00 p.m. Jim Finegan – Weston and Sampson – Interconnection Facility

gave a recap of how the water comes through Southbridge to the Interconnection Facility. The pipes are about 230 feet apart on Stafford Street. The facility will house meter, control valves, and disinfection equipment. The building will be on a piece of land owned by the Town. It will be a 10 by 20 foot precast structure. Charlton will have to have a licensed operator before the system goes on line. Weston and Sampson is coordinating with Southbridge regarding the telemetry equipment. Ms. McKissick suggested the Town go for emergency status to avoid the public bidding process. Mr. Finegan suggested the Town contact an attorney before doing that. Mr. McIntire said it sounds like the timeline would be the same with or without public bidding. Mr. Finegan said it could escalate costs if you try to shorten the timeframe too much. Regarding the question about the façade of the building, it will cost approximately \$15,000 more to make it look like it fits in the area. The Chairman recommended that we work with R.H. White and get an emergency status declared to move this project faster. Mr. McIntire asked how much time we would gain if we bypassed the bidding process. Mr. Finegan responded maybe three months. Mr. McIntire expressed concern regarding eliminating the bidding process as the winter months will slow down the process anyway. Ms. Roberts met with the Conservation Agent regarding their needed approval. The Chair asked about S.R.F. funding requirements. Mr. Finegan said that it can add cost and hopefully would not hold up the process. The

next steps are the NOI from Conservation, the funding, and the requirements from Southbridge. Ms. Dam expressed concern about not going through the bidding process and that we can go through the regular process is almost the same amount of time. Using attorneys and waiting for emergency status could take the same amount of time as just approving the bid documents and sending them out for prices. Mr. Gagner asked about just getting three prices and having RH White be one of them. Mr. Finegan stated that the project cost would require the formal public bidding process. He also said that we would need our Order of Conditions from the Conservation Commission before going out to bid.

Ms. Dam motioned that we fast track the project through the public bidding process so that we can comply with the proper procedure for fairness to all contractors. Mr. McIntire seconded. Mr. Elliott asked for Weston and Sampson to expedite their process. Unanimous

Mr. Gagner asked about the security need of the building. Also a question was asked regarding the façade of the building. Mr. McIntire moved that we go with the upgrade to make the building look better. Ms. Dam seconded. Mr. Elliott said that he doesn't think that we will see enough of the building to warrant the \$15,000 and that it would be a waste of money. Ms. Dam and Mr. McIntire-yes, Mr. Gagner, Mr. Elliott and Ms. McKissick – no.
Motion failed.

Ms. Roberts discussed the security issue and the parts in the water booster pump station. Mr. Finegan stated that we would not be activating this station and we could possibly re-use some of the telemetry equipment from this station. This station was not ever completed. This would be a good back up source at some point if we could make an agreement with Oxford. Ms. Dam stated that there is a length of pipe to Oxford that was never approved or installed and therefore we have no connection to Oxford.

Ms. Walker asked the commission to consider expending the funds for designing the N. Main Street water line extension which would go to the Library. Ms. Dam moved that we have the Administrator review the water search and Library issue and give us a recommendation within a month's timeframe. Ms. Roberts stated that she does not feel that she could evaluate within a two week time frame. Mr. McIntire asked to amend the motion and include Ms. Dam to work with the Administrator to review this project and report back to the commission. So amended. Mr. McIntire seconded. Mr. McIntire, Ms. Dam, Mr. Elliott and Mr. Gagner in favor. Ms. McKissick abstained. Motion passed. Mr. Finegan from Weston and Sampson left the meeting.

Ms. Roberts continued with her report:

HAP – Michelle from HAP was present for the discussion. The Administrator spoke with Maureen Ciesla of the Town of Southbridge regarding this project. Maureen indicated that they would be agreeable to the development tying into the Southbridge line by means of extending the low pressure line (approx. 2250 l.f.), pending review and approval. The criteria looked at would be items such as “looping” of the line, so as not to adversely affect the water quality, etc. This, of course, would be accomplished with coordination between the two communities. I informed Maureen that we would be happy to work together to accomplish approval of a plan that covers the requirements of each community for this project. Construction Inspection would need to be worked out, as well as adherence to the Mass Highway Construction Specs. for working within the roadway. The only obstacle at this time is to determine whether or not there is any legal ramification with us allowing a water line from Southbridge to be extended in a roadway in Charlton as the pipe would be owned by Southbridge. Ms. McKissick asked regarding whether this 4,000 gallons would come from our 100,000 gpd from Southbridge. Ms. Roberts stated that Maureen said if they tied into the high pressure line it

would affect the 100,000 but if they extended the line it would not. Ms. Dam motioned that we move forward with the Administrator's recommendation that she continue looking into this issue and, if no hurdles are found, to write a letter to HAP giving our support for them to move forward with the project. Mr. Elliott seconded. Ms. Dam expressed concern that it could interfere with the 100,000 gpd that we get for contaminated parcels through the Intermunicipal Agreement as this project was not known at this time. If there are no legal issues then the Commission would give all the help that they can and move forward as fast as possible. Four in favor and Ms. McKissick against.

Tighe & Bond – The Administrator has reviewed the proposal for Engineering Services relative to the WWTP Upgrades. It appears to be a straightforward proposal, with the standard insurance coverage and verbiage contained in the agreement. She recommends that the Commission Members vote to accept the proposal as written, so that the work may proceed. We are approximately 1 month behind schedule (see attached) at this time. Also, the contract amount; \$258,000.00 will need to be submitted as a warrant article. The article is due tomorrow (Tuesday), and I recommend that the Commission vote to appropriate \$258,000.00 from Certified Retained Earnings, in a Warrant Article, drafted and submitted by Tracey Roberts, for Engineering Services for WWTP Upgrades per the Proposal of Tighe & Bond.

Ms. Dam moved that based on the recommendation of the Administrator, we appropriate \$258,000 from Retained Earnings and that a warrant article be drafted by the Administrator and that we sign the proposal for the WWTP Upgrade from Tighe and Bond. Mr. McInitre seconded. Unanimous.

Ms. Roberts reported on her inspection of the MTA grease trap on the 6W site. The last pumping was 6 days ago and there was a substantial amount of grease there when checked today. It is not known whether the second grease trap installed by the MTA will actually solve the problem. Ms. Dam moved that, after the review by the Plant Manager and the Administrator over the next few weeks of the 6W grease trap, that the Administrator have a letter drafted for the board's review for our next meeting with recommended consequences for McDonalds if it is shown that the second grease trap does not solve the problem. Mr. McIntire seconded. Unanimous.

Alcott (Sewer Rate Review) – The Administrator has spoken with Steve Alcott and she will be meeting with him on October 3rd to begin review of the rate structure. He has offered that several alternatives can be looked into and we will be discussing them then.

Ms. McKissick expressed concerned and wanted to ask the Department of Revenue to do a forensic audit on our water and sewer funding. There is 1.88 million from the Masonic Home that some sewer users feel it should go to the Phase 2 project instead of the upgrade. Ms. McKissick asked if Ms. Dam could shed any light on a forensic audit. Ms. Dam stated that the 1.88 million from Masonic Home was a legal agreement signed by the Commission. Ms. Dam asked if Ms. McKissick had a cost for this project. Ms. McKissick said that she thought the DOR would do the audit at no cost. Mr. Elliott questioned the reason for an audit. Mr. Gagner said he would welcome an audit but did not know how to form the motion. Ms. Dam suggested that our Town Accountant can give the information regarding where our money comes from and how it is spent if the board members don't understand the finances. Ms. McKissick stated that we have not had an internal audit for years and she would like the DOR to review the books. Ms. Dam stated that she has no issue with an audit but the DOR audits the Towns books, including the Water and Sewer, every year. If there are questions about individual appropriations then the members should ask the Town Accountant and our own finance team about them. Mr. McInitre suggested that if Ms. McKissick is receiving questions from residents that she write them down and bring them to the board so that we can answer them.

Ms. Roberts reported that she has met with the Finance Team and was told what she would need to do to get the DOR the items they require for their audit.

Ms. McKissick was approached by the Town Administrator regarding an invitation from the Board of Selectmen to discuss the Special Legislation at their open meeting at 6:30 tomorrow night. Ms. Dam motioned that the Administrator send the vote to the selectman that we made and we recommend the same vote by the Selectman. Mr. McIntire said because our vote was not unanimous that we send the letter because the individuals that attend may muddy the waters and he was one that was opposed and most of the members cannot attend tomorrow. Mr. McIntire seconded the motion. Ms. Dam stated that we are not posted for tomorrow night so we cannot take another vote tomorrow and if the Selectmen want a joint vote we should reschedule a joint meeting when we can both be posted. Ms. Dam added that the Chair present the letter. Four in favor and Ms. McKissick abstained. Mr. Gagner said he could be present tomorrow with the chairperson.

Ms. Dam motioned 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 government’s bargaining or litigating position; also, to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel; to actually conduct collective bargaining and contract negotiations with non-union personnel; and to come out of Executive Session only to adjourn. Mr. McIntire second. Mr. McIntire – yes, Mr. Gagner – no, Ms. Dam –yes, Mr. Elliott – no. Ms. McKissick – no.

Motion to adjourn by Mr. McIntire. Seconded by Mr. Elliott Unanimous.

Meeting adjourned approximately 9:30 p.m.

Approved

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