

Town of Rockland SEWER COMMISSION



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Charles Heshion, *Commissioner*
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Sherri Vallie, *Commissioner*

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Rockland Sewer Commissioners Meeting
587 R Summer St., Rockland, Ma.
Recorded for Public Playback on WRPS
(local cable access tv)
www.wrpsrockland.com

March 28, 2023

In Attendance: Chuck Heshion, Sherri Vallie, Dan Duross

Introductory Remarks

This is a working session for the sewer commissioners. The listing of matters are those reasonably anticipated by the chair may be discussed, not all items may be discussed, and other items not listed may be brought up for discussion within the limits of the law. The public is welcome to attend. There may be votes at this session. There will be no public comment except by those parties listed on the agenda

**Motion made by Dan Duross, 2nd by Sherri Vallie, to begin the meeting at 2:00 PM, March 28, 2023
All in favor 3-0.**

Approve minutes from last meeting

Agenda item to approve minutes from Jan 10,12,& 19- these minutes were previously approved at meeting of March 14, 2023

Continuation of Old Business

Letter drafted for Board of Selectmen regarding Sewer Liason, further edits to be completed before sending

Connections

Updated list drafted – all approved before moratorium with Manzella Court approved after (small project)

Manzella Court (on waitlist), Concord Meadows aka 365 Concord St , Beechwood Estate, Dywer St, Monahan Rink, 48 Carey St for total new flow of 26,970 GPD

Today's flow is 3.5 MGD which is steady for month of March and will affect our 12 month rolling average going forward. Our current 12 month average is 2.73 MGD. The 12 month rolling average should govern new connection approvals.

I&I required to be removed, based on approvals, is 315,315 GPD. This is in addition to 700,000 GPD needed to bring plant back to approved capacity. Total I&I needed is over one million gallons per day before any new connections will be allowed.

Current high water flow is creating more velocity in the pipes which will exacerbate any existing cracks in the pipes which then creates more I&I.

Based on this data, new connections are not expected to be approved for at least one year. Goal is to reduce flow to 12 month average of 2.0 MGD to avoid further sewer system overflow (SSO). Ideal average is 1.85 MGD.

\$1.4 million is needed to pay for I&I removal on approved projects (315,315 GPD) based on current \$6.61 per gallon cost.

Our current I&I Remediation project will remove 119,000 gallons, hopefully more given the high flow and damage done to the pipes. Results will be evident at the end of this summer.

Until we can remediate the 11 to 1 ratio we have already committed to, we cannot approve new projects. This will hamper incoming development money. There is also the 2006 fine expected and continued project approvals without the I&I remediation will be interpreted as failure to follow the 2022 order. If funds can be secured to removed the 315,000 gallons already committed, moving forward a new project will pay the proper cost to remediate. That does not solve the entire problem as the flow capacity has not been reduced. That will require another 700,000 gallons.

No connection approvals mean there will be no revenue for the sewer department

Beechwood Estates

Letter signed by commissioners to offer opportunity to speak to the board before being removed from approved project list.

Municipal Fees Discussion

Currently, there are no municipal facilities paying for sewer services. This means residential rates are subsidizing the cost of those services. The cost for school usage is 5,791,000 GPD at \$7.41 rate is \$429,113 not being paid. Mass Laws Chapter 40N provides the authorization for sewer works systems to assess fees to the municipalities. The fear is fees assessed to the school will be passed to the residents as higher taxes. It is hoped the town would not fight the fees after the passage of all these years that contributed to the current situation. Mr. Heshion would like to open discussions with the board of selectmen and the town administrator to assess \$300,000 annual fee, subject to user rate increases. This money would be dedicated to I&I. The sewer department current budget of \$200,000 which will only cover 30,000 GPD would cover new single family homes. It is hoped the town would pursue grants etc. to assist the department. The alternative is to calculate the user fees. It is noted the sewer department has no control over how the town realizes these funds, but it is hoped they could be part of the free cash and more responsible town project spending. New development cannot be allowed without additional capacity and the funds from a developer will not cover what is needed. With these additional fees, it is estimated capacity will be reduced in 4-5 years enough to allow new projects.

Our current capacity does not allow any new flow.

The board is grateful for the ARPA funds pledge, but that is not going to assist in the capacity problem. Fee structure is only helpful if new development can be approved. If the municipal fees are instituted, it will be at least 3 years before capacity is reduced enough. It is estimated one million gallons need to be removed just to get to safe plant operation.

Due to the overcapacity situation, there reputation of the sewer plant is being affected. North River Watershed specifically identified Rockland as the cause of the clam bed closing. It is certain this story will reach the EPA as well.

Discussion regarding a draft letter to initiate a meeting, in open session, with the goal to avoid putting the burden of payment on current rate users or taxpayers. Fees proposed to start in 2025 with increases commensurate with sewer rate increases as directed by the rate study. The board does not want to see this raise taxes and is looking at the idea as more of a partnership to resolve the capacity problem. At a minimum, municipalities should pay connection fees as new building progresses. For the town to pay their share would look good in to the EPA.

The department will need grants and funding for the plant upgrade. The department also needs grants and funding for the I&I. A one million grant would cut the five-year moratorium to two years.

Off site storage is premature until the plant design is completed.

After the elections, a joint meeting should be scheduled so that we can get the solid financial help we need. The Sewer commissioners do not have that type of expertise. Vote will be requested at April meeting.

Moratorium Amendments

First moratorium we instituted in 2021. Based on the new EPA order, additional clauses are suggested to be added. Mr. Heshion would like to make those changes effective for July 2023. A copy would be provided to the EPA for their comments. This will be separate from our semi annual report in May.

333 Weymouth ST

Draft fees were sent to developer. Usage flow was reported wrong and only one bathroom is being added. Fees are reworked to be approximately \$1,600 (not \$35,000). He is scheduled to appear next week at the working session. This job will include a clean out. Suggestion fees be discussed at each board meeting before being officially sent to applicants. Final fees will have a vote.

Beech Hill work

Beech Hill residents called regarding work being done by Dandel. The sewer department is also the drainage committee and that they had asked for public information for all the sewer lines from the crest of the hill down. It was felt the sewers were draining into the wetlands at the bottom of the hill. Based on the bill from Dandel, pipe was installed from the manhole to the wetlands. There is no catch basin, just a run off. The question is does the sewer department pay for all of that work or should the highway split the cost; to be determined. The department should pay for the manhole, but not all the piping. In addition, the Dandel contract does not include materials. The department is paying for the work to divert rain water from the manhole.

Dyer Street Project

Dyer Street developer invited to April 20 meeting. Town engineer has shut down the job site at the Mr. Heshion's request due to sewer line failing testing and pressure testing. Because builder covered it up prior to testing, it will have to be excavated. An official report will be written. A neighbor also complained about the drainage from the project going into the back of their house. This will be investigated. The department is still waiting for updated plans.

I&I Rehab Work

The work crews have been spotted around town. The company name is now Inland Waters. Police details at each job need to be signed off with location and the words "green mountain project". Green Mountain change order needs to be signed by town accountant, town attorney is reviewing now. Change order should be part of ARPA project and commingled account 680292

Generator Piping

Pipe Spec and invitation for bid have been sent to Chris Kenny for review

Administrative Update

-Drainlayer applications for Roto Rooter (Mitchell Associates is fine) but Roto Rooter only provided two references. The commissioners would like to see the third. The owner is also aware that only Rockland Drainlayers are to be used. There will be no umbrella license issued. The list of licensed drainlayers is on the Sewer department website.

-The list of drainlayers is getting longer and longer due to one time applicants being approved. The suggestion is made to require only Rockland drainlayers are used in the town. This also causes quality

issues such as Dyer Street project. Suggestion is made to add this requirement to the new Rules & Regs document. Should a moratorium be instituted on new drainlayer licenses? To be discussed further at future meeting

-SSO event triggered reverse 911 robo calls. David Turin of EPA informed Rick Kotuch that this call is not needed. Mr. Heshion discussed with Mr. Duffy who coordinates the emergency calls. This process will be discontinued. Ms. Woods from North River Watershed has requested we notify additional people, the board feels it would be better if she managed this notification to others.

-978 Union St – needs to cut and cap the sewer and get inspection – permit has not been pulled – letter was sent on Feb 15 – no responses – Mr. Heshion will see if it was complete

-Manhole at Jefferson is collapsing – Rick contacted Dandel – quote to follow

-Viola Update, NLK North America is a company that takes the plant off the grid for energy savings purposes – Rick K is getting concerned about going offline putting a stress on the generator – possibility it may not go back online – the risk of doing this quarterly is not worth the small revenue received – to be added to a meeting agenda

- Revised Sewer Connection Fees document distributed on March 16, there was a question regarding 440 GPD, it is confirmed the document is correct – it will be published on April 1 – The I&I and maintenance fees only apply if greater than 440 - Other fees will be discussed to ensure all is working –

-Park & Howard Street – Billy Crystal is under contract to purchase both lots – the previously approved project is now part of the 40R overlay district and will raise funding for the town – The new owner is proposing a new project, more high end – Mr. Crystal wants to discuss the project with the commissioners, it is already approved for water as a grandfathered project, and it will use less than 10,000 GPD – He is invited to attend April 20 monthly meeting

-330 Weymouth St – sewer remediation fee document needs to be updated as estimate form does not indicate change to maintenance – Robyn noted there are additional commercial fees none of which mention toilets – It is also suggested the forms be sent as PDF not Excel and should be sent from town email account preferably through Robyn

-Approved waiting list – dated July 2022 from the website – newer list will be forthcoming based on today's connection discussion

-Abington flow data – Adam Higgins notified flows are reported annually – there will be a discussion with Abington that some of our flow will be diverted through them to Brockton – there are questions regarding the logistics of this idea – there might be fees incurred to use their service and we would lose the income we receive

-Zoom meetings – decision to continue is pending – It is important that meetings continue to be recorded rather than meet in person

-Elementary School Project – AECOM did original flow measurement by camera originally – Weston & Sampson to do flow measurement when project is complete – Mr. Heshion will look at the work progress – AECOM went as far as Reed street, but next measurement should go to Plain street

-Dynavac work will proceed second week in May to fix parking lot manholes

-CO2 detectors – requesting a new quote because lobby panel is outdated and this is an opportunity to replace – this panel will be included in electrical upgrades

-IPP application -the program needs to be taken over by somebody as there may be some permits that are about to expire and will need both an inspection as well as instructions – these need to be documented – Mr. Heshion will sit with Rick – also need to add in our dental offices and the car wash which includes pfas – pfas will become a measurable item in wastewater by the EPA – we need to add a fee to the IPP structure for car washes –

-PFAS sampling will begin July 2023, however until method is approved, monitoring will be done by draft method – Rick says Veolia will begin the sampling July 2023

-Letter from DEP stating we were out of compliance due to not sending reports – the person who should be getting the reports had changed, all is now resolved

Ordinance Rules & Regs update

On the town warrant, there will be an article to amend the Ordinance to change the name to Sewer Use Bylaw - The second part of the article removes reference to a \$10 fee – Once this is done, the commissioners must then begin to amend and update a rules & regs document

Motion to approve article as written to to town meeting made by Mr. Heshion, 2nd by Mr. Duross – all in favor 3-0

FY2024 Budget distributed

Ms. Vallie will meet to discuss with Finance Committee tonight – The only update is \$350 from a union contract – Superintendent salary increase to be submitted for \$122,000 – It is hoped to increase response to the search for candidate – This increase is for budgetary purposes and does mean it has to be paid

Motion made to increase superintendent salary for budget purposes only by Mr. Heshion, 2nd by Mr. Duross – All in favor 3-0

Admin clerk added for 15-19 hours, no benefits

Article Funding Summary

Expenses are being projected to include where funding is coming from – Concern is the CWMP and Rate Study is over budget. Mr. Heshion explained this is due to the administrative order asking for amendment for alternatives

I&I Control Monitoring is covered for Year 1 by ARPA funding and for Year 2 by operating budget
Digester boiler & piping still pending on piping bid and if the same vendor is selected as done for the boiler, there may be some leverage

Motion made by Dan Duross, 2nd by Sherri Vallie, to adjourn at 3:39 PM All in favor 3-0.

Documents to be included:
none

Next working session is scheduled for Tuesday, April 4, 2023

Next monthly meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 20, 2023 ZoombTBD