



Water/Wastewater Commission

Meeting Minutes

April 20th, 2022

Legislative Building, City Hall Campus
700 Main St, Fitchburg MA 01420

A meeting for the City of Fitchburg Water/Wastewater Commission was held on Wednesday April 20th, 2022 at the Legislative Building, City Hall Campus, 700 Main St. Fitchburg, MA 01420

The meeting commenced at 5:01 PM

Members present: Nicholas Erickson, Commissioner of Public Works & City Engineer
George Seiner, Commission Member
Mark Piermarini, Commission Member
Colby O'Brien, Commission Member
Michael McLaughlin, Commission Member

Others present: John Deline, Deputy Commissioner of Water
Mark McNamara, Interim Deputy Commissioner Wastewater Division

Absent: Stephen Bodurtha, Commission Member
Rick Healey, Chairman Water/Wastewater Commission

Item #1

Approval of meeting minutes: Motion to approve minutes from March 16, 2022 meeting was granted by unanimous vote.

Item #2

Public Forum: None

Item #3

Water Division:

- Rate Study – Weston and Sampson will be conducting a dual rate study for both water and sewer. We have not had any water rate increases since 2018. Our water revenues have thankfully stayed the same but are not going up. Revenues were impacted this fiscal year due to all the rain we had last summer in July and August. Those months are typically our high usage months, and was not the case. We are just meeting what we projected for this fiscal year.

People are frugal which is good for conservation, but unfortunately it affects the rates. We will be working on this rate study with our on call contractor Weston and Sampson and of course once completed, we will present to the Commission. This will likely happen within the next fiscal year.

- Regional NPDES Permit renewal – NPDES (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System) Permit controls water pollution by regulating point sources that discharge pollutants to surface water. Mass DEP and US EPA administer these water discharge permits. This is backwash from the plants from the water treatment process that goes out and down to Wyman’s Pond and then into the Nashua River. Meeting held last week with DEP and representatives from other water/wastewater facilities regarding aluminum limits. New NPDES permit coming sometime in the summer, which will have stricter standards. Lower levels of discharge will be allowed. They are going to give us some time to implement these new standards.
- FY23 Budget update - FY23 budget discussion and vote to approve to send to City Council will be held at next Commission Meeting when Rick Healey is back.

Item #4

Wastewater Division

- DLS update – Department of Labor Safety came in August of last year for a site inspection. They came up with some recommendations for us. One of which was to develop a hazardous communication plan. This has since been completed and staff has received training. Program was submitted and accepted. Our case has been closed as of April 13th of this month.
- Staffing update – Interviews have been held for head chemist and 1 operator. We have recommended who we would like to see hired and are now waiting for HR to finalize and send out offer letters so we can get these people hired. This will help with our OT budget because these positions are mandated to be filled every day. Our current employees have been filling in working overtime during this shortage.
- West plant repurposing – We received a bid. Two companies have teamed up and sent in one proposal. West Group Law is arranging a date in which the City can sit down with them to discuss the proposal.
- Biobot update – This is a state funded program where measurements of wastewater are taken to determine if Covid 19 is present. This program has been extended until the end of June. The results show the trend of Covid 19 in Fitchburg’s wastewater which tracks very similarly to Worcester County within the state. We have only been testing samples for approx... 1 month.
- CSO update – We are mandated by the state to report CSO (combined system overflow) events, the due date for reporting these events is coming up on May 1st. A draft plan is to be submitted to the state, and we have Weston & Sampson our on call contractor working on this so we can meet the deadline.
- Budget update – FY23 budget discussion and vote to approve to send to City Council will be held at next Commission Meeting when Rick Healey is back.

Item #5

Other Business:

- The Water/Wastewater Commission will next meet at 5:00 pm. on May 18, 2022 at the Legislative Building, City Hall Campus 700 Main St. Fitchburg MA, 01420.

Meeting adjourned at 5:43 pm

