



TOWN OF HALIFAX, MASSACHUSETTS BOARD OF WATER COMMISSIONERS

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MEETING MINUTES August 8, 2023

5:01 p.m. Daniel Bosworth made a motion to open the meeting.
Seconded by Richard Clark *Motion Passes*

Present: Richard Clark, Chairman
Daniel O. Bosworth, Jr., Clerk
Bill Lindsay, Superintendent
Kathleen O'Neil, Administrative Assistant

Absent: Donald Bosworth, Commissioner

Meeting Minutes

Daniel Bosworth made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from June 12, 2023, as written.
Second by Richard Clark. *Motion Passes*

Discussion – Pine Street Bridge Repairs

Andy Dennehy and Chris Jones from Beta were in attendance. Beta is the firm that engineered the plans for this project. Highway Surveyor, Steve Hayward was also in attendance. The contractor for the project was asked to attend tonight's meeting. He failed to show up.

Beta designed the water main to hang off the bridge but the contractor did not install it per the plan and instead buried it (see attached photos.) The contractor claimed to receive verbal approval during the pre-construction meeting. The contractor would like to continue installing the main in the ground. Beta would like it installed as designed as does the Water Superintendent.

Beta offered to write a memo to the contractor directing him to stop the work. However, the contractor's contract is with the town, not Beta. Beta, however, can threaten to withhold payment to him.

There will be an issue with operations and maintenance if the main is buried versus being built as designed. Steve plans to meet with the contractor tomorrow. He will hand deliver the memo stating he needs to build per the plan.

Discussion – Staff Updates

Employees John Sullivan and David Hathaway were in attendance. There is an issue with how overtime is to be paid per the recently signed union contract. David, who is the union steward, provided copies of the overtime verbiage from the current and last union contract (see attached.) As of now, employees will not receive any on-call and/or regular overtime rates if they took any vacation, personal or sick time during that same pay week.

Discussion – Staff Updates

Earlier this morning, David approached the Town Administrator, Cody Haddad and stated that there had been a misunderstanding about the wording in the new contract. David explained that he attended four negotiation meetings where he declined the revised wording for paying out overtime. During the third meeting, David agreed to partially change the wording but did not agree to the terms written in the contract that was signed.

David asked Cody to hold the requested meeting after hours so that the Water Commissioners can attend. Cody said no but he would agree to meet with the Chairman of the Water Commissioners during his office hours.

Dick is upset that any contract was signed without the Water Commissioners seeing it first. Especially since they pay their employees' salaries. Both David and Suly said they never would have signed the contract if they realized that this language had changed.

Bill stated to Cody during negotiations that he didn't like the wording and conditions but Cody kept it in any way. Water Treatment Operators have mandatory overtime to do the wells on weekends and holidays. It is non-negotiable. The wells need to be done every day.

Dick is concerned that the Water Commissioners were shut out of the negotiations under the new Town Administrator. The previous Town Administrator, Charlie Seelig, included them in all negotiations. Both Dick and Danny agreed that the wording should be changed as it is now unfair. They are also concerned that staff may choose not to clock in during emergencies and holidays if they are only getting paid their regular rate.

Dick would like all parties to meet with the Board of Selectmen. Kathy will write the request memo.

Request for Abatement – 64 Ridge Road - Barresi

Homeowners, Francis and Ellen Barresi were in attendance. Their water meter was tested at the factory and the results show that the meter is accurate 96.5-99.5% (see attached.) Bill performed a data log today that lists water usage from June 13, 2023, through today. During this period, only 5,200 gallons were used.

Mr. Barresi stated that he is not going to dispute that the meter is accurate but he does not understand where that amount of water went. They are looking to understand what they could have done with that amount of water. They have lived in the house for fifty years and have always had the same low usage.

Dick explained that the Water Commissioners need a valid reason to grant an abatement. The meter tested as accurate proving that that amount of water went through it at some point during the period of April of 2022 to April of 2023. Dick stated that he would like nothing more than to abate this bill but it is not lawful for him to do so.

Request for Abatement – 64 Ridge Road - Barresi

Mrs. Barresi stated that they would know if their water was running continually. They are home every day and cannot travel. The water would make the yard wet and likely show up on the street or their basement would be flooded. There have been no signs of a leak anywhere in the house or on the property.

Danny questioned the backflow measures on their irrigation system. Mrs. Barresi stated that when the sprinkler company turned it back on this year, they did not need to make any repairs or replacements in any area. She stated that at the end of every summer, the company turns off the water and blows out all the lines.

Danny said that as far as he can see, the water went through the meter somehow and the Commissioners cannot set a precedent to grant abatements without a valid reason. Dick agreed with Danny and offered the Barresis' the option of setting up a payment plan. Mrs. Barresi said that that doesn't change the fact that they would be paying for water that they did not use. She said she has no problem paying the amount of what their bill normally is but not \$2,700.

The Barresis' stated their frustration that the water department cannot show them where the water went. Dick stated that it is not legal for the Commissioners to just waive the cost of a water bill. Mr. Barresi wants to see the specific law that states that they can't.

Mr. Barresi feels that the validation of the meter is in question. He asked if there would be a change in water pressure if the water was running continuously. Dick stated that it is possible.

Mr. & Mrs. Barresi left the meeting very upset and unsatisfied that an abatement was not granted.

Treatment Plants Upgrades

Bill stated that no work has started. Parts have been ordered and drawings are being done.

Adjournment

6:45 p.m. Daniel Bosworth made a motion to adjourn.

Seconded by Richard Clark

Motion Passes

Approved,


Daniel Bosworth, Clerk