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# Town of Portland Water and Sewer Commission

February 13, 2023, Regular Meeting

Buck Foreman Community Center – Second Floor

265 Main Street, Portland, CT

**Members Present:** Jim Nursick, Jim Tripp, Jim McCabe, Dick Cote, Dave Kuzminski

**Absent:** Dick Cote

**Also Present:** Ryan O’Halpin, Public Works Director; Ralph Zampano, Board of Selectman;  
Members of the public: Matthew Coronella

## 1. Call to Order

Chair Jim Tripp called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. in the Buck Foreman Community Center.

## 2. Review & Approve Minutes of January 9, 2023, Regular Meeting

Jim Tripp entertained motions to approve the minutes. A motion was made by Jim McCabe, seconded by Jim Nursick to approve the minutes. Vote unanimous. Motion passed.

## 3. Correspondence and Communication: Public comment may be heard.

## 4. Report from Director

Ryan O’Halpin noted that the well has risen back to 9 feet, 7.6 over the last three weeks, which is consistent with last year. The MDC bill for January was \$58,900.

## 5. Old Business

**a. Development of an Alternate Water Source:** Ryan O’Halpin stated that GZA has completed all geological surveys and site walks for the sites identified last year, 170 drilling logs were found. Jim Tripp stated that he had a meeting with Rich at the RT 17 park to identify specific areas of concern.

### b. Maintenance:

**i. Water System:** Ryan O’Halpin noted there were several sites (including the Quonset Hut on Pickering Street) at which pipes froze last week during the cold temperatures. Some meters were replaced, and water had to be shut down.

**ii. Sewer System:** Ryan O’Halpin stated that the “muffin monster” is shut down due to an auger that needs to be replaced, along with the elbow at a cost of \$36,000. Ryan will submit to the Board of Selectman for approval. Coe Avenue pump station had one pump fail, which will be rebuilt. The station is now down to one pump.

Engineering for the clarifier tanks is moving forward. Ryan is sending requests for proposals for sewer pump station upgrades and water main replacement. Proposals are expected by mid-March.

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**c. Meter Updates:** Chairman Tripp introduced the guests, Francis Corcoran and Marc Yaggi, from Sustainability Partners, who gave a presentation. Before the presentation, Paul Dellaripa, Water Meter Specialist, from FW Webb, spoke about the proposed pilot program to replace meters. He noted that FW Webb has worked with Sustainability Partners and stated that the new proposed meter system features excellent, patented technology, and is one of the top selling systems.

Francis Corcoran, Sustainability Partners, introduced himself and his colleague, Marc Yaggi. His presentation focused on the problem of aging infrastructure, including increasing burdens, higher rates to residents, and emergency repairs. He stated that Sustainability Partners provides an alternative to the traditional purchase of capital assets, featuring a month-to-month usage-based utility system. Mr. Corcoran noted the following features of the proposed system:

- Zero up-front costs.
- Engineered to robust standards.
- Simple 10-page, month-to-month contract.
- Asset use entirely in town's control.
- No termination penalties.
- Option to take ownership of assets back at any time, prorated to remaining useful life.
- Monthly usage fees aligned with town revenue sources.

Sustainability Partners will collaborate with the town, facilitate the development of a system, fund the project, monitor the infrastructure, mitigate risks to the town, repair or replace any assets that break down. The town will pay only for what it uses. The ultrasonic meters capture all revenue.

**Financials:** The system features open book accounting, contracts, warranties, designs, and documentation. Paul Delarippa gave an estimate for 2,367 total meters (water and sewer), based on a consumption estimate of estimate of 276 million gallons. The new meters are warrantied for 25 years. The meters feature 24-7-365 acoustic leak detection (ALD) for the entire system, wireless technology, battery powered with technology which reduces battery usage when not being used. The total cost, including labor costs and software would be \$1,730,000, with the cost spread over 25 years.

The monthly fee would be \$8.47 per meter per month net cost per meter per month of \$2.81) for 25 years. The town could realize a 12% reduction in unaccountable water usage (currently at 38% for the town) in the first year. Anything over 12% and the system effectively pays for itself. The water reduction usage would continue to grow over time. The existing meters capture water at ¼ of a gallon. The new meters would capture water at a much smaller amount, which reduces unaccountable water usage. The data is presented in a way that will work with the town's billing system. There is automatic temperature notification when the temperature reaches 37 degrees which helps prevent pipe freezing/bursting.

Every three hours, information is transmitted to the collector, which gives reliable 24-hour reads. The estimated annual average revenue is \$0.3 million; estimated average revenue recovery per meter per month is \$11.28.

**d. Budget/Rates:** Jim Tripp noted that MDC rates have dropped slightly and, even though other costs have increased, no rate increases are anticipated for Portland Water customers. Jim Tripp also

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noted that the audit results should have been finalized so we should know by our next meeting the 2022-2023 financial results for Water and Sewer.

6. **Committee Reports/General Discussion:** Jim Nursick raised the topic of delinquent accounts (over 90 days), with a dollar threshold. Delinquent notice letters were sent in the fall of 2022.
7. **Public Comment:** Matthew Coronella, owner of the Portland Laundromat, LLC, located at 137 Marlborough Street, addressed the commission regarding a water leak in the hot water line. He experienced a significant increase in the water bill. He currently has the hot water shut down and requested a discount on the sewer (since the water is not going into the sewer) or getting terms on the payment. Chairman Tripp noted that he will consult to see the scope of authority that the Water and Sewer Commission has to address Mr. Coronella's requests. He provided a copy of a letter that he had previously submitted to the commission.
8. **Adjournment**  
Dave Kuzminski made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Jim McCabe. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 8:22 p.m.

**Next Meeting: March 13, 2023**

Respectfully submitted,

*Jon D'Arpino*  
Board Clerk