
Town of Portland Water and Sewer Commission

May 8, 2023, Regular Meeting

Buck Foreman Community Center – Second Floor

265 Main Street, Portland, CT

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

Absent:

Also Present: Norman Ward, Ryan O’Halpin, Public Works Director;

Devon Arce, Revenue Collection Assistant

Board of Selectman: Ralph Zampano, Shaun Manning

1. **Call to Order**

Chair Jim Tripp called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m. in the Buck Foreman Community Center.

2. **Review & Approve Minutes of April 10, 2023 Regular Meeting**

Jim Tripp entertained motions to approve the minutes of the April 10, 2023 meeting. A motion was made by Jim McCabe, seconded by Dave Kuzminski to approve the minutes. Vote unanimous. Motion passed.

3. **Correspondence and Communication:** None.

4. **Report from Director**

Ryan O’Halpin noted that the town received 6.42 million gallons (\$35,000 billed from MDC. The usage from the well was 12.2 million gallons. Well up to 9 feet at end of month.

5. **Old Business**

a. Development of an Alternate Water Source: Jim Tripp noted that both sites were visited. Ryan O’Halpin stated that Test drilling work (Cascade Drilling) is expected to start at the end of May or early June (which is dependent the need for a track machine). Depending on the depth of drilling, there may be a third test drilling (subject to GZA budget).

b. Maintenance:

i. Water System: Ryan O’Halpin noted there were no emergency leaks this past month. The cost to the town for the Perry Avenue (Brainard Place) project will be approximately \$35,000-\$40,000. Test pits to determine location of rock will be done on May 11. The contractor will put \$10,000 toward any changes, with the town covering any additional costs. There will be a six-inch line to the south, a 12-inch line to the north. The services on Perry and the main on Perry will be abandoned. All other water main work for the Brainerd project have been completed. Service tied to each (Brainard Place) building and metering for each building is yet to be determined. There will be five hydrants on the location, each building will have sprinkler service.

Russel Avenue engineering is in progress. Plans are expected by the end of the month. Ryan has sent specifications. Construction is expected to start late in August or early September.

Hilltop Drive – Ryan O’Halpin noted that he has Jacobson looking at replacing the asbestos cement pipes. He will present to the Board of Selectman once he has numbers.

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ii. Sewer System: Regarding the clarifier upgrades, Wright Pierce will have specs ready for bid by the end of the month. We reviewed the 30% plans for the Coe Ave & Riverview Pump station last week. It will be a few more weeks to get to 60%/90% plans.

c. Meter Updates, Budget Rates: Ryan O’Halpin stated that the non-revenue report shows 20 and 21 million gallons lost for the last two quarters, respectively. Asbestos cement pipes often leak, and Ryan noted that additional personnel would be needed to detect/locate & fix the leaks. He will get quotes from contractors to detect leaks starting in the next fiscal year.

Ryan O’Halpin stated that \$303,319 was collected over the last few weeks from delinquent accounts. 5 more shut off letters will be sent this week.

6. New Business:

7. Committee Reports/General Discussion: None

8. Public Comment: Norm Ward, 54 Lake Road, asked if the current year ended in the black of the red. Jim Tripp stated that year ended in the black. The overall debt has been reduced by nearly 50 percent. Norman Ward asked about the last rate increase. The last rate increase was two years ago in April 2021. Mr. Ward asked why a rate increase isn’t being proposed. Jim Tripp stated that Brainard Place will increase usage which will help revenue. He reiterated that both Portland Water and Sewer are running in the black and, given the existing tax burden on residents, it is prudent to avoid an increase. Ryan O’Halpin noted that Portland is already at a higher rate than surrounding towns. Mr. Ward stated that a 2-3 percent increase would not be a major burden on customers. Ralph Zampano noted that MDC rates had been steadily increasing, which pushed up water cost for residents. Ryan O’Halpin stated that a rate increase would need to be part of the total budget discussion. Norman Ward asked if the town could seek assistance from Middletown as we have in the past. Dave Kuzminski noted that every town is running short staffed.

9. Adjournment

Dick Cote made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Jim Nursick. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Next Meeting: June 12, 2023

Respectfully submitted,

Jon D’Arpino
Board Clerk