

**Meeting Minutes – Sewer Commission
Northfield Town Hall**

69 Main Street, Northfield MA

Feb 20, 2024– 4:30 pm - Conference Room First Floor

Commission:	Present	Additional:	Requested:
Chair – Dan Gray (DG)	A	Eric Lehan	P
Tom Walker (TW)	P	Zach Chornyak – T&B	P
Karen Boudreau (KB)	P	RCAP - Rural Community Assistance Partnership	P
Chief - Isaac Golding (IG)	P	Bernard Boudreau (SB)	observe
		Sarah Kerns (SB)	observe

Call to order: Tom Walker – 4:30 pm

Review and Approval of Minutes: Minutes Approved.

Motion KB, 2nd TW, Approved

Citizen's Communication: Sarah Kerns and Bernard Boudreau (both from Select Board joined the meeting as observers).

Business:

- **RCAP – Question and Answer 4:30 – 4:50**
Asset Mgmt Plan – Application for grants but needs must be addressed. There needs to be engineering involvement and municipal partnership. Northfield Sewer needs large amounts of money but cannot do loans. RCAP is also working with the possible future Grandin reservoir. USDA funding is open ended. SRF, State Revolving Funds is due in August, a Project Eval Form (PEF) of chosen project,
 1. Determine Funding sources available.
 2. USDA - RDAPPLY, they get materials and add it to RDAPPLY. Rural Development has a life term of payment usually at 30 years but can go up to 40 years. Payback term.
 3. SRF – the funding is loans (we cannot do them due to extreme rate increases) and the payback is 20 and sometimes 30 years.
 4. The Town Admin is the Procurement Officer that presses send from the Town.
 5. Congressional Direct Spending. We need to petition McGovern and other Senators. Send Letters from the community.
 6. 19% grant equivalent. USDA cap value as a grant is 75%. Hardwick Mass is an example of funding.
 7. Eric asked if it was negotiated.
 8. RCAP contributed that there is not a lot of grant money available.
 9. Eric asked where USDA funding can co-op with SRF monies. Purna staed that RCAP does not have a lot of numbers on this.
 10. Per RCAP, loan forgiveness happens at the beginning on the loan. Purna spoke to tiered forgiveness criteria of 6-10%.for Tier 2. Tier 1 loan forgiveness can be up to 19%.
 11. RCAP – Northfield needs an Income Survey for the Rate Payer area, not the entire town. The entire town does not support the Collection system and the Plant. RCAP provides for free a double-blind Income Survey for just the services areas. RCAP is paid by the Federal government. Questions were asked where the data would come from. The Survey data collection is based on an honor system and is sent to just the residential account payors. The Commission will need a PR campaign and repeatedly let people know that we are doing this and it's ok to supply an answer. We could also bring this program and survey to the economic development committee. Coordination will occur amongst, Karen, Sarah and econ dev, Michele Turner(treasurer) and RCAP.

- Additional Work with Zach/T&B and DEP. No vote needed.
 - Implementation Schedule to DEP. This is due by 3/1/24 to DEP per their request in January to T&B and Sewer Comm/Dept. Three drafts have been inspected and final adjustments are being made. We should hit the 3/1 end date.
 - The DEP asked the Commission to provide assurances on Item F (Consent Order), “The Ticking Bomb”. Their Question: “Can the Commission/Department provide assurances that the Plant will operate beyond 2030 without seizure or total failure?”. The Commission was run by our Admin Engineer Eric Lehan and we all agree that we cannot possibly provide an assurance like that.
 - **Motion to have Tighe&Bond (Zach) to review the Implementation Schedule and provide feedback by KB, 2nd by TW, All Approved.**
 - **Motion to deny the assurance of longevity, no seizure by KB, 2nd by TW, all Approved.**
 - IG asked Eric (Admin Engineer) to look over the Plant plans Condition and Assessment. To T&B, Isaac feels that 637,000 to study a 52-year-old plant is a joke. The Northfield Plant/Dept need a construction schedule.
 - Status of the Consent Order revision from DEP. Once they have time to review the Implementation schedule, DEP will return with a revised consent order.
- Part time operator resignation. Motion to accept the resignation of the part time operator.
 - **Motion by KB, 2nd by TW, All Approved**
- Eric Lehan – project updates. update on small towns and funding vs costs. He spoke with Joe D from USDA. Eric covered that Engineering Firms have a memo from USDA regarding all the steps for Project Eval Forms through the PER/ER (Prelim Eng Rpt/Environmental Rpt). A full engineering firm should be able to supply these services for approximately \$30,000. Additional hiring/funding are needed for the full design phase. No vote needed.
- Reorganization. Chair re-org and potential 2 seat expansion. The request was submitted to the State Legislature by the Town Administrator. As previously informed by Andrea, this can be a lengthy process, several months up to a year. No vote needed.
- FY24 Budget Review, as of 02/20/2024. The budget is tight due to excessive storms, and equipment replacements. No vote needed.
- FY25 Budget status. We wait for the Town Meeting to see if it passes. No vote needed.
- Water Line Update and Railroad by TW. Arc Energy is handling the design plans and application process. They are informative and keep us up to date. Moving along very well (TW).Boring occurred today, 2/20/24. Cost containment was provided by TW digging the holes. Steve Malch from the Water Dept was on site. He brought down a copy of the Water Main location. There is an RR easement bill for \$150.00 for the Sewer Department. No vote needed.
- Grants – MVP funding possibility. Expression of Interest for the Mill St Siphon analysis and for Dickinson XC Sewer. No updates as of the meeting.
- EDU to Metered Citizen Team. Will start in March as Consent Order Revision/Imp Schedule is the higher priority. No vote needed.

Billing:

- Abatements - none
- Questions/Correspondence/Applications - none

Operator Report: Isaac Golding

The plant is severely aged and under a Consent order. Emergencies can occur between posting and the meeting.

- Status only – no discussion/deliberations
- Status with discussion/deliberation- Known before the meeting.
- Items not reasonably anticipated by the Chief Operator:

Items not reasonably anticipated by the Chair/Commission.

Next Meeting Agenda: same Next Meeting Date: 3/20/2024

Adjourned 5:46 PM: Motion by KB, 2nd by TW, All approved.

Approved:

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature: *John Walsh* Date: 3/20/24

Signature: *Shen Boudreau* Date: 3/20/24

Signature: _____ Date: _____