

NORTH SAGAMORE WATER DISTRICT
MEETING MINUTES MARCH 15, 2023

The North Sagamore Water District Board of Water Commissioners held their monthly meeting on Wednesday, March 15, 2023 at 4:15 pm at the North Sagamore Water District office, 14 Squanto Road, Sagamore Beach, MA.

Those in attendance at the start of the meeting were Commissioner Mark Melchionda, Commissioner Mark Bergeron, Moderator Stephen Mealy, Superintendent Matt Sawicki and Treasurer Maureen Fruci. Commissioner George Sala joined the meeting remotely.

Chairperson Mark Melchionda called the meeting to order at 4:17 pm with a roll call attendance: Commissioner Sala - yes, Commissioner Bergeron – yes, Commissioner Melchionda - yes.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES DATED 1/25/23 & 2/8/23

Commissioner Melchionda asked for one change to the meeting minutes dated 1/25/23 in the Superintendent’s report, regarding potassium permanganate. It should read: Fortunately, there was an order already in place so there should be enough on hand moving forward. Commissioner Sala made a motion to approve the meeting minutes dated 1/25/23 with the change as noted. Commissioner Bergeron seconded the motion. All Board members were in favor. Roll call vote: Commissioner Sala – yes, Commissioner Bergeron – yes, Commissioner Melchionda – yes.

Commissioner Sala made a motion to approve the meeting minutes dated 2/8/23 as written. Commissioner Melchionda seconded the motion. Commissioner Bergeron abstained from the vote because he was not able to attend the meeting on 2/8/23. Roll call vote: Commissioner Sala – yes, Commissioner Melchionda – yes.

DISCUSSION & POSSIBLE VOTE ON FY24 BUDGET & CAPITAL ARTICLES

The Superintendent provided the Board with the updated FY24 budget information. He explained that he provided 2 budget alternatives, one includes the new laborer position. He said it has been the most difficult budget to work on because there are so many projects upcoming. He told the Board he has thought a lot about the addition of the new laborer position and is thinking that it may not be the best course for the District at this time. He said with the retirement of former Asst. Superintendent, Geoff Ray, the District lost 16 hours of production. However, he stated currently the District has the most experienced staff in the field that they’ve ever had. He said he would like to see how things go before hiring another field employee. He asked the Board to consider bringing the position of Assistant Treasurer to full-time in order to help with some of the increased administrative duties. He said that would also free up some of his time so he could spend a bit more time out in the field.

Superintendent Sawicki said the addition of the laborer position would have added approximately \$90,000 to the FY24 budget including insurance, retirement and salary. Increasing the Asst. Treasurer position to full-time would add approximately \$50,000 to the budget and better utilize existing staff. Commissioner Sala said his concern is he doesn’t want to see the Superintendent get injured because he’s working in a trench because of staffing issues. Commissioner Melchionda said he trusts the Superintendent’s leadership and added there is a great group of employees here and thinks it would be a win win situation for the District to bring the Assistant Treasurer to full-time. Commissioner Melchionda said he is concerned about the maintenance in the District going forward. The Superintendent said he will have a better idea of how everything is going in a year from now. He continued on to say there is always work to be done, but he doesn’t want to create a situation where they are looking for things to do to stay busy.

The Superintendent said he would also like to consider doing less excavation, eventually having all new services installed by the builders. He said it will take several years to get to that point, but this year he would like to reassess the rates and regulations for services installed by builders and developers. This will mean there will be no cost to the District for new service installations and will help keep more stock on hand. Commissioner Melchionda said he is concerned about developers that can't do the installations themselves. The Superintendent said he has a list of contractors to give to those developers that cannot do it themselves. Superintendent Sawicki said he spoke to Plymouth and Buzzards Bay and they've never had an issue with contractors installing services and of course the District will inspect all of the work.

Superintendent Sawicki said after careful consideration he is asking the Board to think about postponing the Phillips Road water main project. He explained that after looking at the proposed budget, the numbers are huge. Additionally, the District has not replaced a water main in over 20 years and doing 3 water main projects at the same time could be a bit overwhelming. He said it may be a good idea to focus on the projects that will benefit more people such as the Norris Road transmission line and obviously the Cape View Way project that will be done with the MassWorks grant.

The Superintendent continued on to say he prepared two alternative budgets. The first has all of the projects on it including the Phillips Road water main. The other budget takes Phillips Road off and no COLA etc. He said if the Phillips Road project is taken off the table for now, then Black Pond well can be done more quickly with less of a financial hit to the customers. Commissioner Bergeron asked if he is thinking about postponing the project for more than a year. The Superintendent suggested waiting approximately 10 years until the entire road can be done all at once. Commissioner Sala said 10 years is too long to wait. He said Phillips Road has the worst infrastructure in the District. He asked how many leaks there have been in the last 2 years. The Superintendent said maybe 5 in 2 years.

Commissioner Sala said the price will more likely be even higher if the project is put off that long. Commissioner Melchionda said the Norris Road transmission line is more important and will benefit more residents. He too is concerned about doing all three projects at the same time. He said an inspector will be necessary for the Cape View Way project. Commissioner Sala said the District can hire an inspector for the project. Superintendent Sawicki said part of the grant was in-kind services because it was money that would help the District. Commissioner Sala said the District has already spent money and time on the Phillips Road project and he doesn't like the idea of kicking the can down the road. Superintendent Sawicki said he is fine with doing the project but he is especially concerned about the cost. Commissioner Melchionda said borrowing could get cheaper and doing three major projects at the same time is not a good idea. Additionally, a new satellite well is more important than the water main on Phillips Road. The Superintendent said he is fine doing the project but just wanted to put the idea out there. Commissioner Melchionda said he doesn't think the project should be done now. Commissioner Sala said he doesn't have a problem waiting a year or 2 but he thinks 10 years is too long. Superintendent Sawicki said if the Board only wants to wait a year or two then the project should just be done now, because the District could not do the entire road in a year or two. Commissioner Bergeron asked if he is waiting to see if the town of Bourne is going to be paving Phillips Road. The Superintendent said yes, but its off the table for now. Mr. Mealy said perhaps the Board can wait until after their meeting with the District's financial advisor to make the decision. Commissioner Melchionda asked the Superintendent if the Phillips Road water main will be okay if the project waits 5 years. The Superintendent said he thinks it would be fine for another 20 years. Commissioner Bergeron asked about the engineering that has already been completed for the project. The Superintendent said the District can keep and use the engineering.

Commissioner Melchionda said there are other areas in the District that should be a priority over the Phillips Road water main. Most important is the satellite well because the District needs redundancy. Commissioner

Sala said maybe the District can reassess the Phillips Road project on a year by year basis. Mr. Mealy said maybe there will be grants out there or perhaps the District can piggyback on the upcoming bridge projects. He also suggested the District could do a one-time surcharge. The Superintendent said maybe the District can consider borrowing for the well and the water mains and borrow twice instead of three times. Mr. Mealy asked how long the Norris Road transmission line project is expected to take. Superintendent Sawicki said approximately 8 weeks. It was discussed possibly starting with the Transmission Main first. The Superintendent said he could ask the engineers to complete the Norris Road line before the Phillips Road main replacement begins. Commissioner Melchionda recommended getting some real numbers from the District's financial advisor first. The Superintendent agreed that would be a good plan. Commissioner Melchionda asked if there are any tie ins on the transmission line. Superintendent Sawicki said there are 3-4 from Clark Road to Norris Road. Commissioner Sala suggested using an inspector from an engineering firm. The Superintendent said using an inspector outside of the engineering firm is a better idea. He will get prices for that part as well.

There was a discussion about the COLA 3% vs. 4%. The Board agreed to a 4% COLA for FY24 due in part to the state of the economy. The Board considered raising the salary of the Clerk and Moderator. The Board decided to leave the Clerk salary at \$450 and raise the Moderator salary to \$200. Commissioner Bergeron made a motion to give employees a 4% COLA across the board and raise the salary of the Moderator to \$200 and retain the salary of the Clerk at \$450. Commissioner Sala seconded the motion. All Board members were in favor. Roll call vote: Commissioner Bergeron – yes, Commissioner Sala – yes, Commissioner Melchionda – yes.

Commissioner Bergeron made a motion to move to agenda item #8 – Barnstable County Retirement. Commissioner Melchionda seconded the motion. Commissioner Sala will abstain from this vote.

DISCUSSION & POSSIBLE VOTE ON PERSONNEL POLICY

Superintendent Sawicki asked the Board if they would like to consider giving part-time employees some vacation time. After a brief discussion, the Board agreed some paid vacation time would be appropriate. Commissioner Sala made a motion to give six days of paid vacation time to the part time laborer, not to be carried over. Commissioner Bergeron seconded the motion. Commissioner Melchionda abstained from the vote. Roll call vote: Commissioner Sala - yes, Commissioner Bergeron - yes, Commissioner Melchionda - abstain.

The Superintendent reminded the Board that part of hiring the Assistant Superintendent was use of a District truck within 6 months. He said even though it has only been 4 months, the Assistant Superintendent has been doing a great job and he would like to ask the Board to permit him to have use of the District truck now. The Board said it was not necessary to have a vote. The Superintendent can make that decision and they agreed it was a good idea.

DISCUSSION & POSSIBLE VOTE ON BLACK POND REPLACEMENT WELL

The Superintendent informed the Board an issue with the water quality at the new Black Pond replacement well location has been discovered. The water quality is untreatable and seems to be worse than the Church Lane well. It was not something they anticipated. Even pumping the water for 6 days straight didn't change the quality. Looking at testing criteria for iron the Black Pond well is .787, the Church Lane well is 3.2 and the new test well unfortunately is 5.1. The Superintendent said unfortunately they didn't see this coming. The next step is to pull the test well up 6-10 feet and see if the water quality is better. If not they will need to do several more test wells, however they are limited in the area because they need to be within 50 feet of the existing well. He said it will be approximately \$30,000 to do the whole thing. Commissioner Melchionda asked if they will have a decision from them soon? The Superintendent said yes they will.

DISCUSSION & POSSIBLE VOTE ON CHURCH LANE TREATMENT PLANT BACKWASH PUMP

Superintendent Sawicki told the Board while having routine maintenance on the pumps that do the backwash inside the tank under the treatment plant, the technician was concerned because he heard a noise that he's never heard before. The Superintendent explained the backwash pump is original to the system and that new systems have redundant pumps. The District only has this one pump and therefore cannot be without it. His recommendation is to get a new, bigger pump and motor and service the old parts and use as spares. He said it is not something that needs to be done immediately, but should be done in FY24. The cost will be approximately \$30,000. He suggested using the property maintenance line item or free cash. He said it will take a day or two to install the new pump. Commissioner Sala said it would be good if there is a way to not push this project off. Commissioner Melchionda asked if it was possible to use the water main maintenance line item. The Superintendent said they could use that line item.

Commissioner Sala said he has another meeting so he will have to sign off from the meeting.

DISCUSSION & POSSIBLE VOTE ON MASSDOT CAPE COD BRIDGE PROGRAM

The Superintendent provided an update on the MassDOT cape cod bridge program. He said he was asked to attend a meeting on March 21st with the town of Bourne engineer and town planner. He explained that they believe there will be mitigation money. He said there was some discussion about a water main that would go over the bridge. The Superintendent said he does not believe that is feasible. The Board suggested finding out what the two other water districts want to do. He said there will be a zoom meeting on 3/22 at 6 pm for the Bourne bridge and on 3/22 for the Sagamore bridge. Commissioner Melchionda said the district does have a large water main under the Sagamore bridge. Mr. Mealy said it would be a good idea to put some thought together for mitigation. The Superintendent asked if it would be a good idea to have a lawyer on board at this point or maybe begin drafting a letter from the District. Mr. Mealy said in his opinion, it is a bit premature to get a lawyer involved at this point. However, when the time is right a letter should be drafted and sent from the District's lawyer. Mr. Mealy said it could be a once in a lifetime opportunity for the District. Superintendent Sawicki said he will continue to attend the meetings regarding the bridge project and keep updated with information that is online.

DISCUSSION & POSSIBLE VOTE ON UPCOMING WATER MAIN PROJECTS – PHILLIPS ROAD PHASE 1, NORRIS ROAD TRANSMISSION LINE, CAPE VIEW WAY WATER MAIN UPGRADES

The Superintendent said the attorneys have made some minor changes to the Order of Conditions. He suggested the District have a public meeting for residents. He asked if it should be done before or after the Annual District Meeting. Commissioner Bergeron said there may be some residents on Phillips Road that may not be here until after the end of May. The Superintendent said he will send a targeted letter to the Phillips Road residents. Commissioner Melchionda said the letter should be sent after the ADM meeting and the meeting should be held sometime in June.

Superintendent Sawicki said Horsley and Witten is working on the survey for the MassWorks grant. Engineer Kristen Berger can then begin the design. There are several water services that the District has been unable to locate. He said they may use radar to find the missing services.

DISCUSSION & POSSIBLE VOTE ON BARNSTABLE COUNTY RETIREMENT ONE-TIME RETIREE COST OF LIVING ADJUSTMENT

Barnstable County Retirement informed the District the Governor of MA approved a one-time adjustment of the COLA for retirees from a maximum of 3% to 5% for FY24 only. BCR has established a maximum of \$18,000 base for the calculation of the COLA which means that if approved the maximum increase to any retiree would

be \$30.00 per month. Barnstable County Retirement retirees will only receive the increase if it is approved by the Retirement Board, Barnstable County Commissioners and 2/3 of the towns within the retirement system. After a brief discussion Commissioner Bergeron made a motion to approve the one-time adjustment of the COLA for retirees from a max of 3% to 5% for FY24 only. Commissioner Melchionda seconded the motion. Commissioner Sala abstained from the vote.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent Sawicki provided the pumping numbers to the Board. He explained there were no real changes year to year.

A copy of the official letter to CPC chairman, Barry Johnson, for the water bottle filling station was provided to the Board for the record.

National Grid pulled the permit with the town of Bourne. The start date for the gas line is a few weeks out.

The EPA announced new PFAS regulations. Currently the Mass DEP MCL is 20 parts per trillion for 6 combined PFAS contaminants. EPA has lowered the MCL. There will be a learning curve for the new regulations. The new EPA regulation will consist of standard MCL's for 2 contaminants and 4 different contaminants will be combined for a Hazard Index MCL. The Superintendent said the Beach Well is at 3.18 so it is close to the MCL. Commissioner Melchionda said it may be a good idea to consider a charcoal filter.

Flushing may be delayed until the new pump comes in.

The Assistant Superintendent is taking the backflow class.

There will be two meetings in April. One early in April to finalize the FY24 budget and one with the District's financial advisor at the end of April.

The Superintendent said he will be taking vacation during the April school vacation week.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer Fruci told the Board there are 238 accounts with outstanding balances totaling \$36,372.48.

Reminder letters were sent to 267 accounts on 3/6/23.

The Treasurer explained to the Board that Cape Cod Five bank has recently exited from Depositors Insurance Fund (DIF) because the bank has become too big and exceeded the threshold to stay in that system. They will be moving to a new system (Intra-Fi) to collateralize all of the municipal deposits and until that time they will use letters of credit from the FHLB of Boston which will show that all of our deposits are insured. The bank stressed that 100% of all deposits are and will be fully insured.

OLD BUSINESS

-CHURCH LANE BOG PURCHASE

The Superintendent informed the Board the owner of the Church Lane bog property asked if there were any new developments with the property. The Superintendent told him to make an offer to the District for the sale of the property.

RATE STUDY

Superintendent Sawicki said he is working with Kristen Berger on the rate study trying to get back to a 50/50 split between water rates and taxes, doing two increases. One increase would be in July of 2024 and a second in July of 2027 or 2028. The proposed FY24 budget will also help slowly raise the tax rates. This will also give the District plenty of time to notify customers of the increase in the July and January water bills.

Commissioner Melchionda asked if that will lower the tax rate. The Superintendent said no because the tax rates are based on the property valuations.

COMMISSIONERS COMMENTS/SELECT ADM MEETING DATE/SELECT NEXT MONTHLY MEETING DATE

The next monthly meeting is tentatively scheduled for April 4, 11 or 12 pending confirmation with Commissioner Sala. The Board will have another meeting the week of April 24-28 to meet with the District's financial advisor.

ADJOURN

Commissioner Bergeron made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:34 pm. Commissioner Melchionda seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Commissioner Bergeron – yes, Commissioner Melchionda - yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Fruci
District Clerk