



TOWN OF HOPEDALE

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**Board of Water & Sewer
Commissioners**

Ed Burt, Chr
Christine Burke
James Morin

Hopedale Board of Water & Sewer Commissioners Minutes of October 22, 2020

The Hopedale Board of Water & Sewer Commissioners met on October 22, 2020 at 7:00 P.M. in the Draper Room of the Town Hall. Members present were Chairperson Burt (via Zoom) and Commissioner Morin.

Consent Items

Minutes of the September 10th meeting – Commissioner Morin made a motion to approve the minutes of September 10th, Chairperson Burt made unanimous but asked that one of the last paragraphs be amended to state it was in regards to the Open Space Committee.

Correspondence: None

New Business

- A. Joint Meeting with Town of Mendon Water Commission** – Mendon Commissioner, Kevin Rudden and Water Administrative Assistant, Dan Byer were present via Zoom. Chairperson Burt stated that the Hopedale Water/Sewer Commissioners had not received a letter sent from Mendon Commissioners back in March. Mr. Rudden stated that it must have been misplaced or lost at their end. Mr. Rudden stated they have a suggestion that may benefit both towns. Mr. Rudden stated that two of the houses that were torn down had 5 bedrooms. Would we allow replacing them with a bank or gas station since they would use a lot less water and Mendon would get additional business in town? Chairperson Burt stated he appreciates that they are concerned with our water usage but feels we would be making Mendon's commercial more attractive than Hopedale's. Commissioner Morin stated one of his concerns is that we declined other builders in the past. Tim stated that he understands where the Mendon Commissioners are coming from. Mr. Rudden alluded that it would be less water but Tim feels we have control over commercial lots at first but then we lose that control. There is a lack of communication between the 2 boards so we may approve 1 bathroom and a small kitchen, then it sells and the new owner expands. Per our current contract it is not allowed. Tim stated we are happy with the terms of the contract at this time. Tim did want to mention that we are in dire need of water usage reduction. Mendon's quarterly bills were higher than last quarters so Tim feels Mendon did not abide by the ban but feels neither did Hopedale. Tim stated he knows that Mendon is trying to find other sources. Chairperson Burt stated sewer is something else, we do not have sewer capacity so Mendon would have to pay for upgrades for lines from Mendon to the Hopedale plant. Dan Byer asked the Board about fire connections to 35 Cape Rd and 49 Milford St. Commissioner Burt stated those would be allowed but must follow

current contract that states no more than a 1" line. Tim does not feel we need to amend the contract regarding firelines since we are setting a precedence. Both Chairperson Burt and Commissioner Morin agreed but both feel we need to be made aware of any connection before it is allowed.

B. Greene Street Well – skipped

- C. Assistant Chief Operator position filling** – Ken Webb retired as Chief Operator, Mike Brown the Assistant Chief Operator then took that position. We had put off filling the Assistant Chief Operator's position but will need to hire for this position so we can hire the 4th sewer employee which is DEP required. The Assistant Chief Operator position was posted in house and had 2 applicants, Marc Wing and Paul Wilson, both currently Hopedale Sewer employees. Tim stated both have the required licenses and experience. We will fill with the most qualified and senior employee which is dictated by the union contract. The position was given to Paul Wilson who has seniority. His new rate of pay will be \$27.50 per hour. Commissioner Morin asked if there is a probationary period and Tim stated there would be no additional monetary increase after 6 months but there would be a review.

Commissioner Morin made a motion to elevate Paul Wilson to Assistant Chief Operator at the Wastewater Treatment Plant and made unanimous by Chairperson Burt.

We will still be short staffed and will need to hire the 4th person. Tim stated they should have a minimum of a grade 2 license.

Diana Schindler, Town Administrator joined the Zoom meeting stating she just came from the FinCom meeting. She informed the Board that our general funds were short for health insurance by an estimated \$29,000. Chairperson Burt mentioned to Ms. Schindler that when Ken Webb retired, we did not see any of that money come back. Tim stated he budgeted for an additional family plan for the sewer employee he has yet to hire so unsure how we can be short. Ms. Schindler stated she gets her numbers from the Treasurer/Collector so would go back and verify with Stephanie. Tim stated he's never had an issue with Stephanie's numbers.

Old Business

- A. Secondary Tank Painting** – the Board was informed that this has been completed, both have been sand blasted, inspected and are good to go.
- B. Wastewater mediation** – Tim informed the Board that he and Commissioner Burke have a conference call scheduled with Methuen Construction.
- C. Draper Building Demolition** - the Board was informed that the demolition process is going very well.

D. West Street land update (Ed to discuss) – Ed shared his screen to show write up regarding the West Street land acquisition.

- 1) Recap of the land
- 2) Should Hopedale acquire this property? Per the experts in the field this property is an essential part of the water shed so yes we should acquire the property.
- 3) Can we afford it? Yes, it can be afforded. With donations from the Hopedale Foundation it would cost the taxpayer approximately \$25 per year.
- 4) Lost revenue – Chairperson Burt stated we have yet to see anything in writing regarding lost revenue.
- 5) Conclusion – it is our recommendation that the Town acquire this property.

Chairperson Burt stated the wetlands are approximately 25 acres. The Board stated we are absolutely saying we should accept our right of first refusal. Commissioner Morin asked that the handout be corrected. The part that came from the Environmental Study should state it came from them and not from us. Commissioner Burt to correct that line and email to Sandra to post on website.


Commissioner Morin made a motion to accept the land acquisition recap with change previously discussed and to have posted on our webpage and made unanimous by Chairperson Burt.

Chairperson Burt stated he has received an information request directly from Jon Delli Priscoli from Grafton Upton Railroad. He stated he has started to put together and will email all his records and attachments to the Town Administrator.

Manager's Report – Tim stated all day to day operations going well.

Commissioner Morin made a motion to adjourn at 8:26 P.M. and made unanimous by Chairperson Burt.

I attest to the best of my knowledge that this is a true and accurate recording of the minutes of October 22th, 2020.



Ed Burt – Chairperson

Christine Burke



James Morin