Town of Rowley

Municipal Water Department
401 Central St., Rowley, MA
Office: 978.948.2640

May 20, 2025
Meeting Minutes

Present: Chairperson, Bernie Cullen, Commissioner Mark Emery, Commissioner John Manning, Superintendent, Rob Swiniarski

Chairman Cullen opened the meeting at 6:30.

Agenda Items:
Chairperson Cullen congratulated Rob Swiniarski on his new position as Water Superintendent.

1. **Organize the Board of Water Commissioners:**
   Commissioner Manning motioned to keep the status for another term. Commissioner Emery seconded. **All in favor at 6:35.**

2. **Update on the Fenno Dr.:**
   The Superintendent explained that directional drilling will begin this week. He also said that he received a quote for paving Fenno Drive and that we have funding for the project.

3. **Discuss water availability for the summer months:**
   The Superintendent said that well #2 is off, and it will be quite a while before it is working again. again. He explained that, on paper, the treatment plant will be able to keep up with demand if Wells 3 and 5 remain operational. He said that if we needed to turn Well #2 on, it would take several months for the DEP to approve. Commissioner Manning proposed that the department determine the cost of installing temporary filters at Well #2 and implement a water surcharge, which would be referred to as the PFAS surcharge.

4. **Review of the status of the appointment of the Superintendent and associated duties:**
   Chair Cullen said this item is moot, as Rob has been appointed to the position.

5. * **Vote on the retroactive pay differential for the duties of the Superintendent, carried out by the Primary Treatment Operator, dating back to the day after the former Superintendent retired, November 14, 2024:**

   Chair Cullen said that under the union contract, Rob would have been entitled to the retroactive pay differential if he had taken over a higher-level position. He said he negotiated favorable conditions, and the position will be step three instead of step one. Commissioner Manning said it may not be a union position, but Rob has been functioning at a higher level, so we should do the right thing ethically. Rob said that when he wrote the contract with the Town, this was written specifically in case someone had to take over the Superintendent's duties. Commissioner Manning made a motion to vote on the retroactive pay differential for the duties of the Superintendent, carried out by the Primary Treatment Operator, dating back to the day after the former Superintendent retired on November 14, 2024, and the differential between his existing rate and the former Superintendent's rate. Commissioner Emery seconded. **All in favor at 8:00.**

6. **Discuss Budget:**
   Chair Cullen said that some of the expenditures in the maintenance line were spent before he and Superintendent Swiniarski had a chance to look at the budget. Overall, he projects the revenue will be approximately 2.4 million by the end of the year, and the budget surplus should be around $70,000, which is good. We had a lot of expenses in the maintenance line. Commissioner Manning said it was good to project out so far into the year.

7. **Superintendent's report on current and future operations of the department:**
   Rob said his goal is to understand every expense. The phone system and the cable/internet bills will be the first expenses to be reviewed. Superintendent Swiniarski will also be reviewing the department's revenues.
   Commissioner Manning offered to assist.

   Rob said he would like to start using a form of Artificial Intelligence to translate the Board meetings. Commissioner Manning said he uses an AI method for the same purpose and is pleased with its capabilities. He said the Department needs an AI policy because when the staff use computers, they do not have the authority to use AI without direct permission from their manager. This is for security purposes. Commissioner Manning proposed that he speak with the PRS Group about developing a policy for the Department.

   He also said a new State grant is available to municipalities to fund cybersecurity technology. Commissioner Manning has continued working with Gus Serino, our cybersecurity expert, and he has been making great progress for the Department.

Adjourn:

Commissioner Emery motioned to adjourn. Commissioner Manning seconded. All in favor at 8:00.

Documents provided/discussed at the meeting are available at the Water Department office:
Meeting Agenda
Budget reports

Minutes respectfully prepared by Kathy Bento

Open Meeting Law,' G.L. 39, S.23B, the approval of these minutes by the Board constitutes a certification of the date, time and place of the meeting, the members present and absent, and any actions taken at the meeting. Any other description of statements made by any person, or the summary of the discussion of any matter, is included for context only, and no Certification, express or implied, be made by the Board as to the completeness or accuracy of such statements.