


Bob E.


Carl L.


Jay S.


Butch B.

Dave M.

**TOWN OF LUNENBURG
SEWER COMMISSION
960 Mass. Ave.
LUNENBURG, MA. 01462**

approved 1/11/12

Minutes of December 14, 2011 Meeting held at Ritter Memorial Building

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm, with Carl Luck, Jay Simeone, Butch Billotta, Dave MacDonald and Bob Ebersole in attendance. Also in attendance were Paula Bertram and Tom Alonso from the Board of Selectmen and John Male from the Finance Committee.

Executive Session – by roll call vote each member voted to enter Executive Session to discuss strategy related to contract negotiations and to return after conclusion of Executive Session. This session ended at 7:55 pm, and the Commission continued the meeting.

Appointments

8:00 pm Weston & Sampson Steve Pedersen and Pat Cotton reported out as listed below

- **Smoke & Dye Testing** – the official printed report was distributed with the following highlights:
 - No buildings not connected to the system showed smoke in the vent pipe.** It is possible that some are so connected but we could not prove it as they may have a trap or other block in the piping. No further action is proposed at the moment.
 - 54 buildings who are connected did not smoke** – It was determined that these tend to be in similar neighborhoods, and may be due to their construction. Weston and Sampson will draft a letter for the Commission to send to these property owners, explaining the risk of sewer gas due to an unknown blockage.
 - 20 defects in the system were found** – most were depressed manhole covers allowing water to enter the system in a rainy situation. Two sump pumps were noted, one at the high school and one at 26 Pierce Avenue. Four service connections need to be fixed – three in the Wallis Park manhole and one in the connection between the Brooks House and the High School. Two manholes in the street had additional I/I issues beyond the cover seal.
 - Dye testing was performed in several sections** – this confirmed the results of the smoke tests, and did not change the info listed above.
 - Corrective action** – it was noted that most of the \$62,000 cost for correcting the problems will be the responsibility of the property owners or school department. The expenses that the Commission would oversee would be to add seals to the manholes and repair the internal I/I problem in two manholes. It was noted that the school was already working on the Brooks House connection and was developing a plan to reroute the high school sump pump. There was much discussion about the formula used to determine the value of corrective action versus future costs of sending the added waste water to Leominster. Weston and Sampson were going to revisit their calculations but in any case, the Commission plans to perform the corrective actions. It was also decided that if there are any other manholes in the system outside of the study area that are also depressed and collecting water, we will pay for the cover seals for them – estimated to cost \$200 per cover. All of these corrections are expected to fix only about one third of the excess I/I.
 - Internal building inspections** – Weston and Sampson recommended that our next step to address the rest of excess I/I would be to perform internal inspections of all properties to see if sump pumps or other sources are connected to the system. Their estimate of the cost for 450 buildings was \$61,000. The commission stated that we would prefer to have Corey perform such inspections over the winter. Weston and Sampson are researching our authority to make such inspections, but we will proceed for those property owners who are willing to allow the inspection. It was noted that some communities use the Plumbing Inspector to make such inspections.
- **Pump station analysis** – the official report will be submitted early January, but needed repairs were performed for unexpected breaks due to normal wear and tear.
- **Rules & regs & fees review status update**- this will be completed in the early part of 2012 allowing us to make any changes at town meeting
- **FY12 contract proposal** – it was noted at all their work detailed above have been performed under specific contract, but that we need a contract for general advice for the rest of the fiscal year. They will send us a copy and we will review it at a meeting in January.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

357 Electric Avenue - the Special Town meeting 12/5/11 unanimously approved extending sewer service area for this property as shown on the map – Barb will contact Cartographics for revised map

Grease traps

- **Schools records received** —there is a scheduled appt for next cleanout on 12/27, it was requested that Corey attend the clean out and take pictures of each trap once opened and after cleaning. It was also requested that the cleaning firm follow the 25% rule and let us know how full each trap is. If it is more than 25%, we will expect cleaning at a more often schedule as opposed to twice a year.
- **50 Mass Ave. - Bootlegger expansion**
 - Bob talked with Jamie at Whitman & Bingham who stated that they are close to submitting a plan to Weston and Sampson, they just need to verify information with Jack. They did determine that there was an old external grease trap when they had a septic system.

Grease Trap Fee & Review policy - VOTE (As a result of the Bootlegger review process, it was determined that we needed a policy that allowed the Commission to hire a firm to review future grease traps and to have the applicant pay for such review. A policy similar to that used for reviewing subdivision sewer plans was adapted to cover this topic and it was unanimously approved by the Commission.

BUDGET FY13- The Commission will cover this topic at our January meetings.

Rate increase 2012 – as a result of the Fitchburg increase in rates and the expected continuing draw on retained earnings, the Commission discussed raising the rates effective January 1, 2012. It was noted that the impact of the Fitchburg increase was about 11%. We expect that Leominster rates will increase, and we will have additional costs through the budget process. As a result, it was unanimously voted to increase the rates by 20% effective January 1, 2012, but to keep the current minimum usage charge. This will be communicated through a flyer in the January billing as well as a communication to the Lunenburg Ledger. The Commission wants to explore other rate structures in the future and would like additional information on how other communities set up their rates – commercial vs. residential, volume, etc.

Leominster Clay pipe issues/ Wallis Park & Pierce Ave –

- Three of the four property owners have either completed or are in the process of addressing these issues. Legal Counsel has been contacted about the remaining property, and it is expected that the Board of Health will need to be involved in the process.
- The Commission discussed camera-ing of lateral pipes from the street to each property – Weston and Sampson estimated that would cost \$200 for each property, and that it is recommended that this be done in the spring to be able to see the I/I during the wet season. This will be discussed further, and may qualify for use of the remaining project funds as it relates to the start up of the system.

Administrative Matters

Next meeting – Regular Sewer meeting – January 11, 2012 at the Ritter Building. The December 27th meeting was cancelled.

Executive Session – through a unanimous roll call the Commission voted to enter Executive Session for the purposes of discussing litigation (Hollis Hills), adjourn the regular meeting and not return at the end of the executive session.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Ebersole