

Town of Wilmington
Water & Sewer Commission
August 26, 2020 Meeting
(Rescheduled from August 20, 2020)

The Water and Sewer Commission met via ZOOM on August 26, 2020. The meeting was called to order at 5:31 PM. Roll Call: Present were Chairman Joseph Balliro, Commissioner George Allan, Commissioner Robert LaVita, Utility & Business Manager Joseph Lobao, and Recording Secretary Diane Forest. Also present was Michael J. Woods, DPW Director and Bryan Perry, Town Finance Director.

ZOOM Meeting

Read Into Record by Chairman Joseph Balliro: Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c 30A, section 18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, the meeting of the Water & Sewer Commission will be conducted via remote participation. Members of the public who wish to watch and listen to the meeting may do so in the following manner: WCTV. **No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted**, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings in real time, via technological means. Members of the public who wish to listen to this meeting while in progress may also do so via telephone by dialing **(312) 626-6799** and entering meeting ID 851 6229 0116 then press # and press # again at the next voice prompt.

Members of the public attending this meeting virtually will be allowed to make comments if they wish to do so, during the portion of the hearing designated for public comment, by following the steps previously noted then press *9 on their telephone keypad. This will notify the meeting host that the caller wishes to speak. All callers using this feature will be placed in queue in the order they entered the prompt. In the event that despite our best efforts, we are not able to provide real-time access, we will post a record of this meeting on the Town's website as soon as we are able.

Approval of Minutes – July 16, 2020 – ON A MOTION MADE BY COMMISSIONER LAVITA, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER ALLAN IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO APPROVE THE WATER & SEWER COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES OF JULY 16, 2020.

Water & Sewer Rates

Bryan Perry, Town Finance Director was present to discuss water & sewer rates.

Sewer Rates: The last sewer rate increase was voted on April 14, 2017 and became effective with the May 2017 sewer bill. This was a 9% increase from \$5.14 to \$5.60 per hundred cubic feet for residential customers and \$6.70 to \$6.83 per hundred cubic feet for commercial and industrial customers. As of July 1, 2020, the sewer budget is now an enterprise fund which means that it will be self-sustaining so it will need to be fully supported by the sewer rates. Mr. Perry recommended a 2% rate increase for residential, commercial/industrial sewer customers as well as for septage disposal. This will hopefully generate some revenue in order to balance some costs in the foreseeable future and prevent a deficit. In addition, Mr. Perry would like to stabilize the rate increases.

ON A MOTION MADE BY COMMISSIONER ALLAN SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER LAVITA IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO INCREASE THE SEWER RATE FOR RESIDENTIAL,

COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL CUSTOMER AS WELL AS FOR THE SEPTAGE DISPOSAL BY 2% AND TO BECOME EFFECTIVE WITH THE NOVEMBER 2020 SEWER BILL.

ROLL CALL VOTE: COMMISSIONER LAVITA – YES
COMMISSIONER ALLAN– YES
CHAIRMAN BALLIRO – YES

Water Rates: The last water rate increase was voted on June 21, 2018 and became effective with the August 2018 water bill. This was a 5% rate increase on all rate tiers as well as for fire protection. The Water Division has approximately \$1.6 million dollars planned for FY2021 and approximately \$800,000 planned for FY2022 in Capital Outlay projects. In order to ensure that there is enough money to cover the budget for these projects, Mr. Perry recommended a 4% rate increase for the first tier of rates and a 5% increase for the remaining tiers, as well as a 5% rate increase for fire protection.

ON A MOTION MADE BY COMMISSIONER LAVITA SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER ALLAN IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO IMPOSE A 4% RATE INCREASE FOR THE FIRST TIER OF WATER RATES AND A 5% INCREASE FOR THE SUBSEQUENT TIERS, AS WELL AS A 5% RATE INCREASE FOR FIRE PROTECTION TO BECOME EFFECTIVE WITH THE NOVEMBER 2020 SEWER BILL.

ROLL CALL VOTE: COMMISSIONER LAVITA – YES
COMMISSIONER ALLAN– YES
CHAIRMAN BALLIRO – YES

Billing Adjustments & Corrections – There were none

Abatement Request - 24 Freeport Drive

Ann Carideo, owner of 24 Freeport Drive, was present to discuss her concerns of high water usage that is reflected on her August 2020 water bill.

Chairman Balliro, in the interest of being transparent, disclosed that both Commissioner LaVita and Commissioner Allan know the owner of 24 Freeport Drive and communicated via email relative to this agenda item. They appropriately informed Chairman Balliro of their association with the owner.

Commissioner Allan stated that he has known Ann Carideo and her family for many years, however feels that he and the other Commission members can address and vote on this issue fairly, as they always have and that the members have always worked fairly with the consumer to come up with a fair resolution and is confident that they will do so that in this case.

Commissioner LaVita stated that he has lived around the corner from the Carideo family for many years and that Ann is a very close family friend. Commissioner LaVita stated that he did not feel comfortable voting on the agenda item due to his close association with the family and wishes to abstain.

Mrs. Carideo explained that this bill is excessively higher than her typical bill and expressed concern about the proper function of the register. Mr. Lobao explained that:

- The quarterly reading for the August 2020 water bill indicated a usage of 16,116 cubic feet of water between 3-31-2020 and 6-26-2020. The Collectors office sent a high usage notice for the August 2020 water bill. The resident responded to the notice and scheduled a check reading.
- July 10, 2020 - Check Reading indicated a usage of 2,305 cubic feet of water between 6-26-2020 and 7-10-2020. The register did appear to be jumping. Meter register was replaced with

a new one and tested. The new register appeared to be working properly. A video of the register was recorded.

- August 10, 2020 - Check Reading indicated a usage of 6,539 cubic feet of water between 7-10-2020 and 8-10-2020 (Meter was sealed at this time)
- August 18, 2020 - Check Reading indicated a usage of 1,160 cubic feet of water between 8-10 and 8-18-2020
- August 26, 2020 - Check Reading indicated a usage of 690 cubic feet of water between 8-18-2020 and 8-26-2020. A brand-new meter base and register was installed at this time.

Mrs. Carideo asked whether the meter register was tested when it was removed in July. Mr. Lobao explained the meter register would not be tested independently and that we just received the original meter base today. The goal is to monitor the usage on the brand-new meter register and meter base from this point going forward. Discussion took place relative to previous bills being high. One quarter in 2018 was due to a pool leak. Mr. Allan explained the process of how to calculate what normal usage should be, and that all of the history for the inside use appears to be realistic.

Based on a recommendation by Mr. Lobao, the following motion was made:

ON A MOTION MADE BY COMMISSIONER ALLAN SECONDED BY CHAIRMAN BALLIRO, IT WAS VOTED TO TABLE THE ABATEMENT REQUEST UNTIL THE OCTOBER 2020 MEETING SO THAT THE WATER USAGE CAN BE MONITORED BASED ON THE NEW METER AND REGISTER THAT WAS INSTALLED ON AUGUST 26, 2020. IN ADDITION, IT WAS REITERATED THAT LATE FEES WOULD BE WAIVED ON THE USAGE BILLED ON THE AUGUST 3, 2020 WATER BILL.

ROLL CALL VOTE: COMMISSIONER LAVITA – ABSTAIN
COMMISSIONER ALLAN– YES
CHAIRMAN BALLIRO – YES

Abatement Request – 186 Faulkner Avenue

No action taken without prejudice

Nassau Avenue Water Storage Tank Lease – AT&T

The Town has officially awarded the Nassau Avenue Water Storage tank antennae lease to AT&T. The contract documents are in the process of being executed.

Monthly Reports

The July 2020 monthly report was presented to and reviewed by the Commission members.

Drought Conditions

Mr. Lobao explained that the Town has received notification from the Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs back on August 13th that they issued a level 2 drought declaration. The Town of Wilmington already has water conservation measures in place throughout the year. No outdoor water use is allowed between the hours of 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM. Above and underground sprinklers are only limited one day per week. It is not anticipated that this will be an issue for the Town. We will continue to monitor the situation and keep the Commission informed.

Olin/WPA Update

Mr. Lobao informed the Commission that The Environmental Protection Agency held an informational meeting on August 25, 2020 to discuss the clean-up of the Olin Superfund Site. This meeting is available online at the EPA's website and on YouTube. The proposed plan is to begin the cleanup of the aquifer by constructing a groundwater treatment and extraction systems. This is an interim measure specifically about groundwater while the EPA continues to study and assess the information they receive on follow-up testing. There is a Public Written Comment Period beginning August 26, 2020 and the EPA will continue to accept them through September 25, 2020. To review the plan and presentation, one can go to www.epa.gov/superfund/olin. This will be available on the Town's website as well. There will also be a virtual public hearing on September 22, 2020 @ 7:00 PM.

Other Business

The next meeting will take place via Zoom.

Public Comment Period – There were no requests for public comment.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled to be held on September 17, 2020.

There being no further business a motion to adjourn carries at 6:45 PM.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Diane Forest, Recording Secretary