



CITY OF CHICOPEE

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS



Jeffrey A. Neece
Superintendent

Joseph Kietner
Chief Operator

Quinn T. Lonczak
Project Supervisor

Sewer Commission Meeting April 6, 2016

Present: Sewer Commissioners: Joseph Carriveau, Chairman
James Raschilla, Vice-Chairman
James Carabetta
Chung Liu

Jessica Dzwonkoski, Excused

Also Present: Joseph Kietner, Chief Operator, WPC
Quinn Lonczak, Project Supervisor, WPC
Jennifer Harazmus, Financial Administrator, DPW
Thomas Hamel, Project Advisor, WPC

Mr. Raschilla motioned to approve the minutes of the March 23, 2016 meeting, seconded by Mr. Carabetta, Approved 4-0.

Abatements:

Jacinto & Maria Paulo – 267 East Street – High Usage/Toilet Leak – Amount Requested \$430.00, Amount Recommended \$501.51, Mr. Carriveau motioned to approve the abatement, seconded by Mr. Liu, Approved 4-0.

Anna Daponde – 1822 Westover Road – High Usage/Water Heater Leak – Amount Requested None, Amount Recommended None, Mr. Raschilla motioned to deny the abatement, seconded by Mr. Carabetta, Denied 4-0.

The above abatement was denied because Ms. Daponde didn't submit any documentation showing repairs had been made nor did she meet the usage criteria as stated in the abatement policy.

Westover Trailer Park – 1286 Granby Road – Billing Error – Recommended Amount \$3,353.19, Mr. Carabetta motioned to approve the abatement, seconded by Ms. Raschilla, Approved 4-0.

St. Rose De Lima Convent – 15 Chapel Street – Stuck Outside Register - \$634.64, Mr. Raschilla motioned to approve the abatement, seconded by Ms. Carabetta, Approved 4-0.

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Water Pollution Control

Maria Tylek – 254 East Main Street – Stuck Outside Register - \$1,478.75, Mr. Raschilla motioned to approve the abatement, seconded by Ms. Carabetta, Approved 4-0.

Donald & Shirley Isabelle – 59 Factory Street – Interest Charges – \$5.86, Mr. Raschilla motioned to approve the abatement, seconded by Mr. Carabetta, approved 4-0.

Amandio Fernandes – 22-24 Monroe Street – Interest Charges – \$13.64, Mr. Raschilla motioned to approve the abatement, seconded by Mr. Carabetta, approved 4-0.

Commitments:

There are no commitments at this meeting as the April 2016 Water/Sewer/Storm bills have not been processed yet.

Sewer and Storm Fee Revenues through March 30, 2016 total \$9,819,217.94 which is \$22,332.71 ahead of what had been projected.

Mr. Raschilla brought up again, the topic of informing the public about the 30% summer discount on sewer usage which was previously discussed at their January and March meetings where it was requested that a special message be added to upcoming Water/Sewer/Storm bills. Mr. Raschilla and Mr. Carabetta talked about the possibility of potentially adding a note in the special comment section of the actual bill. Tom Hamel informed them the bills are pre-printed with general information on the front and back and the billing company just inserts individual data that the Water Department sends them, therefore there's no way to add a special message onto the bills at this point. Additionally, Tom Hamel explained there's a limit to the number of characters that can be added in the special comment section of the bills. Mr. Raschilla then mentioned the possibility of inserting an information flier with the bills. Jennifer responded that per their contract with the billing company, they're only allowed to add one insert with the bills at a time and the Water Commission is currently working to add a flier for the next few billing cycles. After some discussion, the Sewer Commissioners decided to add this information to an upcoming information pamphlet Joe Kietner is working on in regards to sewer fees.

Tom Hamel informed the Sewer Commissioners about a postcard that he's preparing to send to all Chicopee residents requesting they go online to take a short two minute survey about sewer backups to get a more accurate account of how many residents are still experiencing sewer backups. Quinn Lonczak explained they are taking this survey in hopes of identifying individual streets experiencing sewer backup problems and hopefully scheduling those streets for sewer separation individually as opposed to a whole neighborhood project.

Quinn Lonczak read aloud an email correspondence from Sewer Commissioner Jim Raschilla in regards to a newspaper article he read about a \$1.25 million dollar grant the cities of Chicopee, Holyoke and Springfield will share from The Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) to aid in the long term efforts to reduce combined sewer overflows. The PVPC received these grant monies from Governor Baker.

Mr. Raschilla's correspondence goes on to say Representative Joseph Wagner was quoted in the news article as stating "the funds are providing much needed assistance to the City of Chicopee in absorbing costs that would otherwise be borne by the City's Ratepayers". The Sewer Commission recently approved sewer rate increases for the next two fiscal years and given the statement made by Representative Joseph Wagner, Mr. Raschilla requested the WPC provide the Sewer Commissioners with a breakdown of the grant monies received by PVPC and how they will be spent. Additionally, Mr. Raschilla requested the WPC provide the Sewer Commissioners with a revised sewer rate increase proposal as reduced by the amount of the grant so that the Sewer Commission may reconsider its prior rate increase approval.

Mr. Carriveau then mentioned that he had responded to Mr. Raschilla's email with a link to the news article showing it was stated the City of Chicopee can only use the grant money for specific work. It further mentioned the work this grant is intended to be used for is the design of the Chicopee Center Sewer Separation Project and it also stated the amount of the portion of the grant Chicopee received is \$508,000.00. Tom Hamel explained the grant money will be used to pay engineering design costs already incurred from the aforementioned project and further explained the City was originally informed there would be no grant money available this year. However, Tom Hamel explained during a meeting with the Mayor, Massachusetts Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs Matthew Beaton and City Officials it was proposed that if the City of Chicopee could show they would be able to use the grant money for the specific purposed of design work prior to July 1, 2016 then Secretary Beaton would ensure he could provide the City with the grant money. Tom Hamel explained the grant money is being used to pay costs that have already been incurred and therefore have no effect of the sewer rate increased the Sewer Commission recently approved.

Mr. Raschilla then questioned if a statement could be made to the public clarifying the specific use of the grant money and although the grant money has financially helped the City of Chicopee, it won't have any effect on the sewer rate increases. Tom Hamel explained the Mayor intends to have a press release in the near future regarding this.

Tom Hamel presented the Sewer Commissioners with a spreadsheet he uses to show the prioritization of individual streets with immediate needs of sewer separation. He explained they are in the design phase of the next sewer separation project with the goal of having it go out to bid by January 1, 2017 and contracts awarded by April 30, 2017. He further explained they are hopeful they'll be successful in scaling back on major sewer separation work after the completion of the Chicopee Center Phase 5 Sewer Separation Project and instead start working on the individual streets as mentioned above. Additionally, Tom Hamel explained he, Joe Kietner and Quinn Lonczak are currently working with the DEP who is supportive of the City of Chicopee's plan to slow down the major projects that are a financial burden and start working on smaller street by street projects.

Next, Joe Kietner presented the Sewer Commissioners with a list of WPC, Collection System and Pump Station improvement projects that have immediate needs. Joe Kietner explained the estimated total of all projects is approximately \$32 million and he hopes to complete at least two projects this year. In order to design these projects, special appropriations are needed.

Joe Kietner presented the Sewer Commissioners with a special appropriation request to the Mayor in which he prepared on their behalf. Joe explained the secondary clarifiers are one component of the larger biological system that is at the end of its useful service life. The four Secondary Clarifiers are the final settling tanks that remove fine solids from the wastewater just before the water is discharged to the Connecticut River. The four units were installed in 1974, are 42 years old, and have reached the end of their service life. The mechanical solids collection mechanism needs to be replaced and the concrete tanks need to be repaired.

Joe explained the estimated cost of upgrading the biological system is very high and in order to make this project more financially manageable, he plans on repairing and replacing the entire biological system over the next 10 years. The cost for the work on the four secondary clarifier tanks alone is estimated to be over \$4,000,000 and to make it a more financially manageable project he is proposing to break the secondary clarifier project up into two phases; refurbishing two clarifier tanks at a time. Joe informed the Sewer Commissioners that in order to fund this work he is asking they request an appropriation of \$2,400,000 from the Sewer Fund Balance to the Wastewater Special Account for WPC Biological System Upgrades. Mr. Raschilla motioned to approve to forward this request to the Mayor for approval, seconded by Mr. Carabetta, approved and forwarded 4-0.

Joe Kietner then presented the Sewer Commissioners with a special appropriation request to the Mayor in which he prepared on their behalf. Joe explained the estimated cost for the James Street Pit #2 and Paderewski Street Sewage Pump Station Improvement project is \$915,000.00. The work will consist of new pumps, electrical controls, wet well modifications, new piping, wet well ventilation, pump retrieval system, and valve vaults, as well as bring up both stations to meet worker health and safety standards. Joe explained they have a dedicated line item for this work that currently has a balance of \$839,000.00 for this project; however additional funds are needed for the total cost as well as to provide a contingency. Joe informed the Sewer Commissioners that in order to fund this work he is asking they request an appropriation of \$125,000.00 from the Sewer Fund Balance to the Wastewater Special Account for Pump Station Repairs. Mr. Raschilla motioned to approve to forward this request to the Mayor for approval, seconded by Mr. Carabetta, approved and forwarded 4-0.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 18, 2016 at 5:30 P.M.

Mr. Raschilla motioned to adjourn the meeting at 5:57 P.M., seconded by Mr. Carabetta, adjourned 4 - 0.

Copies: Mayor
City Council
City Clerk
DPW Superintendent

Accepted	
Vote	<u>3</u> - <u>0</u>
Date	<u>5/18/16</u>