



Town of Rockland

SEWER COMMISSION

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Michael Mullen, *Chair*
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Walter Simmons, *Commissioner*
David P. Taylor, *Interim Superintendent*

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Rockland Sewer Commission Meeting
January 28, 2025

In Attendance: Michael Mullen, Matthew Ryan, David Taylor, Robyn Day, Megan Lynch, Doug Lapp and Lori Turenchalk

Call to Order

Michael Mullen calls the meeting to order at 5:34 PM.

Approve Minutes

Motion made by Matthew Ryan, 2nd by Mike Mullen, to approve meeting minutes of December 10, 2024. All in favor 2-0.

Status of Permanent Sewer Superintendent Job Posting & Description / Hiring Process

The Superintendent position has been posted for quite some time on Indeed, Town website, etc. We've had some applicants but none have been a good fit. The current Interim Superintendent provided feedback which the HR Director has incorporated into the newer job description. The job description is now more flexible and focuses more on attracting the correct skillset to match the position.

The Chair thinks it's important to use language in the posting that states there is a new re-organized Sewer Commission and that the Superintendent works under the direction of the Commission; but should emphasize the collaboration with the Town Administrator and other Departments and Department Heads.

The Town Administrator suggests that the new job description should include definitive time frames to obtain the required certifications for the position.

The new job posting will be published on MMA, Town website, Indeed, Job Boards and Industry Boards, such as MA Water Environment Association, NE Water Environment Association, and Water Environment Federation. The HR Director suggests that we consider reaching out to local universities and schools that might have alumni with the specific skills

that we're seeking. The Interim Superintendent suggests that we consider Mass Maritime, as well, as they may have alumni that match what we're seeking.

The Board will agree with any changes made to the job description by the HR Director.

The Chair suggests that we use a group approach to interviewing the pre-screened applicants to include the HR Director, Town Administrator, Interim Superintendent and a member of the Sewer Commission. The team will recommend finalists to the Sewer Commission for final public interviews. This approach will demonstrate to the applicants that we work as a team, that we empower employees to lead the process and that the new Superintendent will not be micro-managed. It was agreed, by everyone, to keep the position open until filled and to use that language in the posting.

Owner Project Manager (OPM) / Plant Upgrades - Discussion

The Town Administrator shared a packet, including the legislative requirement for an OPM to be used on any municipal project costing \$1.5M or more. The OPM will be an expert in construction law, represents the taxpayers, and will ensure the design is efficient, costs are reasonable and value added, best practices are used, and provides detailed paperwork of the project.

The Town Administrator has drafted and posted the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to the Patriot Ledger, Town website and the Central Register for the State. Applicants need to provide at least (7) hard bound copies. With an RFQ for architects, engineers or project managers we must pick the most qualified firm (with no pricing discussed). Once a firm is chosen, the price is then negotiated. If we cannot come to an agreement on price we will then move on to the next most qualified firm.

The RFQ describes the entire project for the Sewer Plant upgrades, including time frames and timelines and is seeking qualified engineering firms to bid. This RFQ is for the design phase and does not include overseeing construction. However, it does give us the option to move forward into the construction phase with the chosen engineering firm, if we choose.

Applicants must have minimum requirements, references and previous projects. Applicants will also be required to provide a Statement of Qualifications (SOQ). These qualifications will be compared using an analysis tool that the Town Administrator will provide.

The deadline for submission is Wednesday, February 12, 2025 at 2:00 PM. No responses will be accepted after 2:00 PM that day.

Interviews are anticipated to be held between February 13 and 24. The interview team will include the Interim Superintendent, Plant Manager, Assistant Town Administrator, Town Planner and one member of the Sewer Commissioner

The Sewer Commission will review the team's recommendation(s) and award the contract. The Interim Superintendent, along with Town Counsel, will negotiate the fees, and execute the contract.

The approval to hire an OPM was approved by vote at the December 10, 2024, Sewer Commission meeting.

Administrative Update

Drainlayer License Renewal(s)

Eight Drainlayer applications were presented for renewal: Tascon Corp., Sandstone Construction, Inc., Guaranteed Builders, McDougall Bros. Enterprise LLC, Sean Farrell Excavation, Inc., Glenn R. LaPointe Inc., C. Spirito, Inc., and T.A. Iaria Corp.

Motion made by Matthew Ryan, 2nd by Mike Mullen, to approve 8 drainlayer applications. All in favor 2-0.

Abatement(s)

One abatement request was presented for 3 Birch Street to lower the bill to normal usage based on account history. The owner found a water leak below her home. She provided a write-up and invoice for the repair. The water never entered the sewer system.

Motion made by Matthew Ryan, 2nd by Mike Mullen, to approve an abatement of \$759.34. All in favor 2-0.

Miscellaneous

There was a brief discussion on the new MA Law regarding Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU's) and how that could play out with our moratorium and other developments in town. We will have an opportunity to discuss this with Land Use Counsel at our February meeting.

Superintendent Update – David Taylor

Miscellaneous

Day to Day Operations:

We're getting caught up with the day to day operations, including any paperwork at the office and also field work.

Field Projects:

Once the weather improves, we will repair and/or replace a couple of sewer manholes (to avoid inflow & infiltration) that are breaking apart due to salt and traffic. The Centre Avenue manhole rehab project will also be done this Spring.

Open Drainage:

Still working on East Water Street (headwall) and Rice Avenue (easement areas) projects. Both projects are in the engineering phase, which includes survey and easements to start.

Industrial Pre-treatment Program (IPP):

The IPP program includes grease trap inspections at restaurants, inspections of dental offices, car wash facilities and commercial discharge companies. The program has been pushed aside in the last few years and we're getting caught up with inspections and paperwork. For commercial businesses, we have (5) zero discharge companies, and (2) discharge companies in Town.

We are in the process of submitting the annual IPP Compliance Report (due March 1) to the EPA. The Interim Superintendent took a webinar class on submittals and has started entering data into the State (CDX) portal. Veolia also enters information into the portal on behalf of the Town. Moving forward this report will be easier to submit, using the portal.

Semi Annual Compliance Report:

The Veolia Management team created and submitted the November Semi-Annual Report to the EPA on behalf of the Town. We have a meeting with the EPA and Veolia this Thursday, where we will be reviewing items from that report, to prepare for our next report, due in May.

The Superintendent will create the May report with input from the Plant Manager. The report will be presented to the Board, then Legal Counsel. Legal Counsel will submit the final report to the EPA.

WWTP Projects:

The **Digester Boiler Gas Piping Project** with Wilkinson Group is wrapped up. This is the gas piping associated with the digester boiler. Veolia plant staff have been micromanaging the project.

The **Generator Project** is also coming to a close. We have a week or two of punch list items and the project will be finished.

A weird dynamic to the project is that the previous Board purchased the generator, hired Wright-Pierce to put out the bid docs for installation, and to oversee the installation project. Veolia was also micromanaging this project.

The bid was awarded to Tilton Electric for installation. A few items on the generator had to be replaced as they were not adequate for the installation. There was some back and forth between the Contractor, Engineer and the Supplier on what is covered by each. Veolia took the lead in ensuring the project was executed properly.

We are currently working through what fees should be covered by contractors, and what should be credited to the Town. We should have put the entire project out, including supplying the generator. It did not save us any money purchasing the generator directly, given the increased task orders and change orders. We anticipate going over budget by approximately \$150k.

WWTP Upgrades:

Wright-Pierce is in the preliminary design phase for the electrical upgrades. This includes the building for electrical and mechanicals associated with the upgrade. The Interim Superintendent recommends keeping the project at the preliminary design phase until an OPM is hired. The Board is in agreement.

On-going Projects:

Dyer Street: The contractor is still working on phase (2) of a (4) phase project. The Interim Superintendent visits the site weekly. Pressure testing of manholes and laterals are completed.

Concord Meadows: The contractor has been submitting house lots for tie-in and we have been following up with sewer inspections. The remediation fees assessed for this project were minimal, based on the original fees, when the project first came before the Board. The Chair questions if the moratorium was in place when this project came about. We've had a moratorium in place since the 2006 Administrative Order but the most recent moratorium is more comprehensive. Part of the 2006 moratorium included an agreement for the Town to implement an 11:1 removal ratio when giving out gallons for a project.

The Interim Superintendent explained the approval process and timeline for projects, which includes pricing a project and providing the same prior to approval of a project, so that the project and the pricing are approved by vote at the same time.

There was brief discussion of how additional bedrooms and/or ADU's could impact our moratorium threshold of 440 gallons. Meanwhile, we have other projects pending that will need gallons, as well.

53 Airport Drive: The sewer portion of the project is completed. Pressure tests are complete and final inspections were performed.

School House Apartments: The developer has informed us that they are waiting for Spring to start work on the project.

FY 2026 Capital Requests

The Interim Superintendent will meet with Capital Planning on 1-29-2025 on the following:

Pump repair and replace: \$50,000 to be used on any miscellaneous pump in the field or plant.

Open drainage: \$75,000 to be used to upgrade open drainage areas.

WWTP upgrades: \$100,000 to upgrade/replace equipment that is becoming obsolete and rehabbing existing projects to bring up to standards.

The previous Commission submitted (2) capital requests. The first one is for treatment plant upgrades FY26 for \$2.5M. The Interim Superintendent explained that we will need to look at SRF loan(s) or we could partially fund with sewer receipts, ARPA, and Bond funds. Slowing down the design phase will buy us some time for funding.

The second one is for treatment plant upgrade FY27 for \$20M. This moves us out of the design phase and into the construction phase. We have a 10% rate increase pending for July 1, which should help to fund some of this, as well.

Budget

For FY26, we increased the salary lines for the Superintendent, Administrative Assistant and Senior Clerk for contractual obligations. The Contract Operations budget was increased based on the CPI. We also increased the drainage and repairs and maintenance line items.

The previous Commission did a good job of steadily increasing the I&I budget to its current \$400k, so we kept steady at \$400k.

We lowered the budget for legal services.

Revenue projections are based on rates and the intergovernmental agreement with Abington. Smaller revenue items (approximately \$10k) are not included in the revenue calculation. Abington has 110,000 gallons under the agreement but is not using that full amount.

We also have (2) revolving accounts. One for sewer development (\$50k) and the other for I&I remediation (\$368k). Previously, revenue from sewer development and I&I remediation was used to fund the budget. Now those funds are available in revolving funds for development and I&I remediation expenses.

Weston & Sampsons' rate study included plant upgrades but unclear if they factored in the funds for retirement/insurance/compensation. At some point we need to start funding our stabilization fund, as well.

Veolia Update

We are allowed a maximum flow of 2.5 MGD, per our NPDES Permit.

We treated an average of 2.424 MGD in December for a total of 75 MG treated for the month.

We had 6.0 inches of rain during the month. December 12 and 13 were high rain days but we stayed under 2.5 MGD with no violations.

We processed 363,421 gallons of sludge, producing 66 wet tons of sludge which was hauled away.

We replaced (2) belts in the sludge process this month which will increase our efficiency. We expect to remove 116 wet tons of sludge after replacing the belts.

The annual generator service was performed this month.

Future / Upcoming Meetings

Capital Planning - January 29, 2025

EPA - January 30, 2025

Finance Committee - February 5, 2025

Sewer Commission (Wright-Pierce and Town Counsel) - February 27, 2025 (Thursday)

Sewer Commission (Weston & Sampson) - March 24, 2025 (Monday)

Going forward we will hold the Sewer Commission Meeting on the 4th Monday of each month.

Adjourn

Motion made by Matthew Ryan, 2nd by Mike Mullen, to adjourn at 7:29 pm. All in favor 2-0.

These minutes are a brief synopsis of discussions that occurred during the meeting. For more in-depth information, please refer to the meeting video on <https://www.youtube.com/WRPSRockland>