



Town of Rockland

SEWER COMMISSION

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Michael Mullen, *Chair*
Matthew Ryan, *Vice-Chair*
Walter Simmons, *Commissioner*
David P. Taylor, *Interim Superintendent*

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Rockland Sewer Commission Meeting
February 27, 2025

In Attendance: Michael Mullen, Matthew Ryan, David Taylor, Robyn Day, Katie Milan, Megan Lynch, Chris Kenney, Robert Galvin, Adam Higgins, Kevin Olson, Ryan Bodnaruk, Kim Quam, Gary Quam, Mary Parsons, John Ward

Call to Order

Michael Mullen calls the meeting to order at 5:36 PM.

Approve Minutes

Motion made by Matthew Ryan, 2nd by Walter Simmons, to approve meeting minutes of January 28, 2025. All in favor 3-0.

Regulatory Matters

EPA Administrative Order – Chris Kenney

The Town is currently under an EPA Administrative Order with our NPDES permit. The initial Administrative Order was issued in 2006 and included a modification to the NPDES permit that changed reporting from a 12 month rolling average of 2.5M GPD to a monthly average of 2.5M GPD. At that time, there were issues of going over the 2.5M GPD discharge limit of the permit. In 2007, the Town responded with a compliance plan, which included a sewer moratorium implemented in 2006.

More recently, between 2017 and 2022, the Town exceeded the 2.5M GPD monthly average limit 32 months out of that 60 month period. As a result, the EPA contacted the Town and on July 14, 2022, a new Administrative Order was issued which supersedes the 2006 Administrative Order. The EPA wants to see steady and consistent efforts to maintain compliance. The Sewer Department has conducted lots of I&I investigative work over the last several years. No fine has been issued and any potential fine(s) would be directly related to how the Town moves forward complying with the permit.

In November and May of each year a Semi-Annual Compliance Report is due. The report captures historical data from the past (6) months and outlines the Town's plans for the next

(6) months. Meetings have been held between the EPA, Legal Counsel, Interim Superintendent, Engineers and the Town Administrator to review our compliance and reporting. Updates to the EPA included the resignation of the previous Sewer Commission, the current appointed Sewer Commission, the current appointed Interim Superintendent, plant issues, the cost of pending upgrades and moratoriums issued in July of 2021 and October of 2023.

By September 30, 2025, an additional alternatives report is due into the EPA, to include other discharge options and flows to alternative potential water bodies, etc.

Local Sewer Moratorium – Robert Galvin

The EPA did not require the moratorium in 2006, nor any of the additional moratoriums. The EPA is not interested in micro-managing the Town, although they want to see a reduction in I&I and they understand the conundrum of not collecting I&I fees when development is on hold. The Chair mentioned that the EPA has recognized the moratorium as a tool to help the Town comply with the Administrative Order. The moratorium also helps to keep us focused on the flow vs. the upgrades at the plant. We need recurring revenue either through the rates or development fees. The moratorium limits our ability to approve some projects which, in turn, keeps us from collecting development fees. Legal counsel acknowledged that the EPA understands our situation. The Chair acknowledged that the Select Board directed much of the ARPA funding to the Sewer Department over the last several years, though this is not recurring revenue.

There was a brief discussion of the Shingle Mill project. The original design included \$1.7M in I&I remediation fees per the 11:1 ratio in the 2006 moratorium. As part of a settlement with the developer in July of 2024, the Town provided approval for 199 units, subject to approval by the Sewer Commission for a sewer connection. The developer agreed to join the waiting list as of July 2024 and agreed that the fees in place as of July of 2024 are binding and would need to be reconfigured with the Sewer Commission.

The previous Sewer Commission approved the Shingle Mill project in October of 2023, subject to availability of capacity; there was no available capacity at that time. Legal Counsel recognizes that the Naval Air Base offered some funding previously for smoke testing to locate inflow into the sewer system. Shingle Mill would like to meet with the Sewer Commission to offer the Sewer Dept. significant funding to locate capacity in the system for 199 units subject to discussing the fees as of July 2024. There is no option for septic for this project due to its proximity to the reservoir.

We're not at the 10% threshold for affordable housing yet. Still, every project must adhere to the 11:1 ratio, including 40B projects. The Sewer Commission will need to balance the waiting list, including 40B projects, and weigh the pros and cons of moving projects around on the waiting list, while recognizing that the Shingle Mill project cannot be treated any differently than single family residential housing.

There was mention of several development projects that we received minimal or no I&I remediation fees from. Also, additional bedrooms were approved for multiple existing homes during the moratorium that we did not receive I&I remediation fees from.

There was also discussion about setting up rules and a fee schedule around ADU's and how they factor into our existing moratorium. We've had several Sewer System Overflows (SSO's) over the past few years and ADU's can potentially make this problem worse. Further discussion to be had on this subject in the future.

The interim Superintendent mentioned that the EPA made it clear that they want us to be more pro-active with I&I rehabilitation. The EPA spoke to the original AECOM Sewer System Evaluation Study and noted that the original I&I identified was remediated. There was an additional 119,000 gallons identified and scheduled to be removed this Spring/Summer at the cost of \$1M. Following that, the next I&I remediation project will focus on an additional 114,000 gallons.

Legal Counsel mentioned that there are homes dumping directly into the Sewer System from their sump pumps. Maybe some of the funds being offered by developers could be used to address this issue.

Wright-Pierce – Kevin Olson / Adam Higgins

Wright-Pierce has been working with the Town for about 5 years. They began by doing a deep dive at the plant, which included a comprehensive WWTP Assessment and Evaluation, creating a Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan (CWMP), NPDES permit review and compliance/reporting assistance, EPA Administrative Consent Order assistance, an assessment of the Tertiary Phosphorous system, funding assistance, generator replacement and WWTP Phase 1 upgrades which includes 2ndary treatment and electrical system upgrades, which is where we are now.

The Wright-Pierce is currently working on the preliminary design phase of the plant upgrade.

Phase 1 (phosphorous) was abandoned in favor of a 2ndary treatment/electrical upgrade. The phosphorous work that was conducted still counts toward the overall project.

The electrical system is 40+ years old and many of the parts are now obsolete. The main electrical service coming into the plant needs to be replaced. Tanks/clarifiers/aerators need refurbishment or replacement. It became clear that these issues were more important than the phosphorous requirement, which is why the electrical system upgrades were pivoted to Phase 1. The phosphorous requirement is currently being met with chemicals.

The plan is to complete the preliminary design by May, with Final Design by June, allowing time for the OPM to get up to speed.

The estimated schedule is:

Preliminary Design Completion	May 2025
Commence Final Design	June 2025
SRF Loan Funding Application Submittal	October 15, 2025
Final Design Completion	March 2026 (estimated)
General Contractor Award	June 30, 2026

Total project cost for this phase is estimated at \$35M. \$1.5M bond funding was approved at 2023 Town meeting (preliminary design), \$12.5M bond was approved at 2024 Town meeting and \$21.5M is scheduled for 2025 Town meeting.

Existing ARPA and Development Fees are to be used, as well. Although, the design phase is not eligible for State Revolving Funding, the actual contracting work is covered. Our Intended Use Plan, filed with the DEP, was approved. We can now move forward with our final application to the state for SRF low interest loan. We must certify to the DEP that we have all of the funding in place by June 30, 2025, and at that point, would expect to receive a Project

Approval Certificate from the DEP. The deadline for applying for SRF funding is October 15, 2025.

Wright-Pierce has not had any success with earmark (grant) funding. Any federal funding opportunities are likely on hold due to current Federal Administration initiatives.

While 20 years of growth is factored into the preliminary design, the upgrades will not increase the capacity at the plant. Hydraulic review of the entire plan may allow for more flow in the future but our permit limit is still at 2.5 MGD.

The next update from Wright-Pierce will be scheduled for the April 2025 meeting.

Administrative Update

Drainlayer License Renewal(s)

Four Drainlayer applications were presented for renewal; Sealund Corp, D.S. Benoit, Elm Company and ALFA Excavation, Inc.

Motion made by Matthew Ryan, 2nd by Mike Mullen, to approve 4 drainlayer applications. All in favor 2-0.

Well Water Customers

We have customers on Town sewer that draw water from their own personal well. Each year we send a letter to those customers requesting a current picture of their water meter reading to determine their consumption over the previous year. In the letter, we state that we will charge \$525 to any customer that does not respond. The \$525 fee is outdated, as most annual consumption bills are more than \$525. The request was made to raise the \$525 fee to \$1,000 to encourage well water users to respond with a current meter reading.

A brief discussion was had regarding setting a schedule to review all rate increases at the beginning of each calendar year to ensure that we have enough time to advise residents of upcoming rate increases as of July 1 of the next fiscal year.

Motion made by Matthew Ryan, 2nd by Mike Mullen, to approve raising the non-response charge for well water users that do not provide a current reading each year to \$1,000. All in favor 3-0.

Abatement(s)

An overview of our current abatement procedure was given. The sprinkler abatement and pool abatement programs were both discontinued over the past 4-5 years to discourage the excessive use of water during water restricted periods.

102 Josh Gray Road requested an abatement for a documented water leak. The leaked water did not enter the sewer system for treatment. An abatement would bring her consumption down to the average of her last 3 cyclical quarters.

Motion made by Matthew Ryan, 2nd by Walter Simmons Mullen, to approve an abatement of \$824.94. All in favor 3-0.

23 Millbrook Road requested an abatement for a leaking toilet. The homeowner replaced the broken flapper in the toilet. Although the leak was documented, the leaked water entered the sewer system for treatment.

Motion made by Matthew Ryan, 2nd by Walter Simmons, to deny an abatement. All in favor 3-0.

Superintendent Update – David Taylor

FY2026 Capital Requests

Pump Repair and Replace: \$50,000 ~ Broad based to replace any pump at facility and/or in field (broad)

Open Drainage: \$75,000 ~ To engineer, design, construct or upgrade any open drainage areas. Currently, the (3) priority areas are East Water Street, French Road and Rice Avenue. Behind 500-900 area of Hingham Street also needs some work but it is not a priority.

WWTP Upgrades: \$100,000 ~ To replace, refurbish and/or repair any component of the Plant.

Budget

The Superintendent Salary budget was raised to attract qualified applicants that have collections, procurement and management skills. The Senior Clerk and Senior Admin budgets were raised to meet contractual obligations. The legal budget was lowered to previous levels as we don't require as much legal consultation. R&M was raised to cover the cost of maintenance of the collections system in the streets. Most of the other budget items were modified slightly.

The Chairman suggests that we provide public education on SRF loans and how they have to the potential to become bonds.

RFQ/OPM

Proposals are due at the WWTP by February 26, 2025, at 2:00pm. There will no public "bid opening." One hard and one electronic copy of each proposal will be provided to the members of the initial Review Team, which includes, David Taylor, Interim Sewer Superintendent, Megan Lynch, Veolia Plant Manager, Courtney Bjorgaard, Assistant Town Administrator, Allyson Quinn, Town Planner and Mike Mullen, Sewer Commissioner. The proposals will be reviewed per the criteria in the RFQ and scored using the Town's RFQ review tool.

After each proposal is scored, the group will come to a consensus of the top (3) ranked firms and vet their references. The finalists will be recommended to the Board of Sewer Commissioners to be interviewed in a public meeting of the Sewer Commission.

After completion of the interviews, the Sewer Commission should come to their own consensus of the ranking of the top (3) firms.

The Sewer Commission should then vote to delegate authority to the Interim Sewer Superintendent to contact the top firm to begin fee negotiations and execute the final

contract based on a pre-determined upper fee limit, generally a percentage of the total cost of the project.

The Interim Superintendent should request a formal fee proposal, and then negotiate, if necessary, to arrive at the final fee. If an agreement on the fee cannot be reached, then negotiations should be abandoned and negotiations should move forward with the 2nd firm.

Once a final fee has been agreed upon, the Interim Superintendent should work with Town Counsel to finalize the contract language and execute the contract with the OPM. Once the contract is executed, the OPM should attend the next Sewer Commission meeting to kick-off the project with the Commissioners and Wright-Pierce.

The Chairman suggests that we have a special meeting within the next (2) months so that we can tighten up the interview process.

Miscellaneous

Wastewater Treatment Plant:

The Generator Project is coming to an end. We are currently working out punch list items and credits/debits with vendors.

Two pumps are being replaced at the Plant. We switched from Seacoast Supply to Blanchard Electric for electrical repairs on equipment.

New conference room technology is being installed for future meetings.

Parking is being reconfigured at the main building; moving the ADA spot to a more convenient location.

We are adding a new storage container for Godwin pump storage at the rear of the building and an additional storage container for storage of safety equipment. We are also adding a new storage/archive area to the rear of the building.

We are sourcing a new gate and redoing the landscaping at the road entrance. This will coincide with a Highway Dept. walk-way crossing project, including ADA compliant ramps.

We are starting an inventory project of Town owned equipment at the Plant.

Collections:

We are working with Weston & Sampson on the rehabilitation of previously identified I&I. In March we will be targeting 119,000 gallons, then we will focus on the other 114,000 gallons identified.

The EPA has requested that we track fees collected and how we're spending same. This will include us tracking additional bedrooms that are approved for projects that fall below the 440 gallon threshold of the moratorium. These smaller fees can be used for manhole rehab. We can then apply for manhole rehab credits through the EPA.

Lots of parameters need to be discussed for ADU structures/additions to existing residential properties. These parameters include size of mainline, grinder pump requirements, responsibility for stub installations, cutting into main sewer lines, etc.

The Centre Avenue manhole project will be starting in late Spring.

Starting in late Spring/early Summer we will be conducting maintenance of sewer lines beginning with Hingham Street, Reservoir Drive and Webster Street.

Inspections:

We have on-going connection inspections on the projects at Dyer Street Pat Rose Way (Concord Meadows).

Out of Town Tie-in Request:

The resident at 52 Gardner Street is a Hingham/Rockland resident looking to tie into Town sewer.

Veolia Update

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

We treated an average of 2.1 MGD in January for a total of 66 MG treated for the month.

1.6 inches of rain during the month.

We processed 522,000 gallons of sludge, producing 138 wet tons of sludge.

The daily flow for February was 2.3 MG

The RAS pump rebuild, transferred from Seacoast to Blanchard Electric, needs to be installed.

We had Blanchard Electric replace the seal bearings on the wash press which de-rags the flow coming into the plant.

The generator is being tested weekly and is operating fine.

Future / Upcoming Meetings

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 Walter Simmons, to adjourn at 7:58 pm. All in favor 3-0.