

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
171 Worcester Rd
Sterling, MA

Minutes of July 29, 2020

Present: Gregg Aubin, Blaine Bershad, Deane Day, Paul Lyons, Paul Gerardi, Norman Gamblin, Lisa DeCiero, Sean Hamilton, Darren Borge

Meeting called to order at 7:05 pm

Deane Day, Gregg Aubin, Blaine Bershad present

Minutes of July 14, 2020 were read. Gregg Aubin made a motion to accept the minutes as read, Blaine Bershad seconded the motion. All in favor 3-0.

Superintendent Report DPW

- Bonds for construction forestry a suggestion to make sure that the bonds are at an amount that will cover the cost to fix any problems that are encountered as a result of work on a project not done correctly. Paul Lyons stated that a \$5000 bond for driveways covers it. Gregg Aubin suggested when going into a road there should be a bond. Concern was expressed pertaining to the need to follow a format to get a building permit; building permit covers new build. Paul Lyons explained that he has added more to the gas permit requirements than what was originally on the application.
- Rte 140 and Legg Rd paving the DPW will cut and prep the road, a paver will be rented and the work will be performed at night. More than half the intersection across will be paved.
- Paving to take place this year on Sandy Ridge Rd; there are two 200' sections to rip out and redo. Meetinghouse Hill Rd will be paved. Paul Lyons suggested that he wants to get the roads passable and in doing so there will be sections of good roads.
- Campground area was paved after the water break occurred; repaired section of road on each end.
- Sterling Ave and Gates Terrace there will be consideration to forego and not continue the practice of plowing by Waushacum Village in exchange for sand and salt.
- Roadside mowers the trackless is sort of running. There was a repair of \$2500 that was needed because the mower is oversized and there was damage done to the rear side end of the Kubota.
- Peg's Pond is a walking trail for Seniors. The DPW helped a bit with the rough stuff: took out brush, a tree, cleaned out for culvert pipe at swale.
- Spark Park the DPW helped the Recreation Dept. by digging out the old wood chips, put in new wood chips that the Recreation Dept. had ordered and paid for. Repaired the equipment that was there. Recreation paid for the materials and supplies; the DPW just did some of the work for them which consisted of time and labor. Paul Lyons stated that the DPW is willing to help the departments, this building (the DPW) makes it happen. Paul Lyons wants people in town to see the good things that are being done. The DPW assisted the Facilities Coordinator by moving desks and shelves to the Town Hall from Devens per the Facilities Coordinator request.
- Washouts occurred due to a couple of days of big storms recently. The DPW did not go back and refill as has been past practice; instead they dug out wider and deeper and put in compacted stone to slow the water flow. Did this method in an attempt to improve the situation and not have to repeatedly keep going back to fix.
- Drainage edging on Albright Rd near Pratts Junction Rd on the right side got a structure for it the other side works great.
- Cemetery signs "No Dogs Allowed" have been purchased and have arrived. They will be installed at the cemeteries.

- Casella Trash for two years in a row has run short of funds. It has been determined that the curbside recycling cost was added in with the regular curbside trash pickup cost which should not be the practice. Last year Casella gave us a credit. This year it ran short again with the amount of \$13k available to pay the last invoice for the fiscal year. The town accountant and Treasurer/ Collector are the departments that process the warrants, produce the checks, and mail the checks to the vendors. The town sent full payment to Casella, after doing so the town realized the error and stated that a stop payment would be placed on the check that was sent. The town additionally sent \$13k to Casella because of the stop payment. It was determined that the town never had put a stop payment on the check because Casella had cashed it. The town hall issue suddenly became the DPW Superintendent's problem. Per the town accountant Paul Lyons was asked to contact Casella and ask for the funds to be returned to the town in the form of a check in the amount of \$48K. As of now the next move is Casella's.
- Blaine Bershad asked the Board members their thoughts on having the DPW Board meetings at the Town Hall meeting room. Both Gregg Aubin and Deane Day stated they do not want the meetings downtown but rather they be held at the DPW building. The discussion ended at that.

Superintendent Report Water

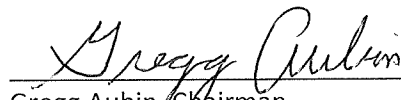
- Blaine Bershad inquired why does the DPW pay for the street lights in the town. Blaine stated it doesn't make sense. Sean Hamilton, SMLD General Manager, explained it is taxpayer not ratepayer and that Terri Ackerman former Town Administrator moved that expenditure to the DPW budget years ago. There is a formula used for the streets lights per the Department of Public Utilities. Sean mentioned that the cost of street lights has decreased in half since ten years ago. He stated there are 496 street lights in the town. In conclusion Sean stated that it is a budget placement with the town as to where the funds are appropriated to and paid from and in doing so it holds the town accountable when it comes to the number of streets lights in town.
- Water meters and the current Mueller system will not be as effective when SMLD no longer uses that system starting in the fall of this year. The water meters work off of the SMLD Mueller system. Paul Lyons stated we have to do something, we will lose 500 or more meter reads according to a propagation study. The frustrating part about this is that the water dept just about finished over the course of 4 or so years installing these meters at a cost of \$400K. Paul Lyons expressed he is not comfortable with the thought of the upgraded phone system which is how this system works. Paul feels an option would be to go back to the Badger drive by system. Mueller will expect an annual support fee of \$40k. This adds up to \$500K over ten years as compared to no annual cost for the drive by Badger system. This will potentially require another billing software system and going into every house on town water to change the nodes. Sean Hamilton explained the when SMLD went out to bid for the new system with Eaton it included the water and the cost per meter would be \$90. Sean explained the history of the Mueller meters as such: back in 2008 AMI meters were being considered, in 2010 negotiated a contract, 2013 the project was finished it was considered phenomenal. In 2015-2016 water department jumped onto the system because a meter upgrade program had not taken place for many, many years and the DEP was requiring upgrades to all the meters. Fast forward in time Mueller and the multi speed platform to get read time was not operating and they shut down multi speed time so as a result Mueller didn't get contracts and it was and will fizzle out. Last year SMLD went out to bid for a new system. The big names in the industry are Eaton and Honeywell. Eaton had a price that SMLD went with. Sean explained that it is top of the line meters with the ability to predict where outages start. The Mueller system has twelve year old technology. Because of the change that SMLD will be doing this year in the next few months it has created a dilemma for the water side and the water meters that are currently in the locations around town. It was suggested by Sean and Darren Borge of SMLD that the 13 collectors currently located around town can be moved to create a daisy chain system which will buy some time for the water department because the radio system with Mueller is failing. When the time comes to upgrade/change out the meters to become compatible with the new reading system it will require changing the register and splicing three wires. The cost will be capital intensive for the water department which just spent the past five years setting up appointments, changing out meters, and working the bugs out of the system. In light of this and what is to come Deane Day made a motion to

conduct a bid for consulting regarding the situation. Blaine Bershad seconded the motion. All in favor 3-0. Arden Sonnenberg via telephone call in asked if there is an entire work flow process that is mapped out for the change. The response was start to iron it out for the water meters.

- Discussion regarding renters paying the water bill took place with the suggestion to start slowly weeding out renters from signing on for water and that the water account will be in the landlord's name and the landlord should pay. Going forward this suggestion will be implemented.
- Test well on John Dee Rd permission was given by DCR to test for potential well site. The testing to date results : static 5 feet, 62 feet down good gravel, pumps 42 gallons per minute 2", put an observation well next to it, then pull a sample, there is a stub down that road already.

Next posted meeting date TBD

Motion to adjourn at 9:00pm



Gregg Aubin, Chairman
Department of Public Works Board