

## LINCOLN WATER COMMISSIONERS

September 13, 2017

### **Regular Meeting**

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Water Commissioners was held at the Lincoln Town Hall with Commissioners Edward Fox, George Hadley, Julie Labreche and Louis Long present. Also present were Water Superintendent Romeo Mendes, Lewis Prescott and Anna Nascimento. Chairman Eric Fox was absent.

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT –None

### CONSENT AGENDA

Motion to approve the consent agenda passed unanimously. (Ed.F/LL)

The following items were approved with the consent agenda for the September 13, 2017 meeting:

- August 9, 2017 Regular Meeting Minutes
- Capital Accounts – August 2017
- Abatements – August 2017
- Account Transaction Report – August 2017
- Correspondence

The meeting returned to the regular order of business.

### AUGUST 9, 2017 EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES

The Board reviewed the Session minutes. Motion to approve same passed unanimously. (Ed F/LL)

### SUPERINTENDENT REPORT OF DAILY ACTIVITY

Superintendent Mendes relayed that the radio read program was presently at 96% and obviously 100% was the goal. The Superintendent reiterated that the Commission should consider initiating monthly billing upon the program reaching 98% completion. With regard to sale of water, the gap between previous years and this year is closing. The drop off was due to the fact that sufficient rain was received during the summer and that curtailed outdoor water use. The last thing he would mention is that discussions regarding improvement of water mains in Smithfield Avenue are continuing. Presently, the Pawtucket contractor performing work in the area is assisting the Commission in evaluating cleaning and lining of 1800 feet of Cast Iron Water Main in Smithfield Avenue. Completion of the work will improve water quality to the Read Avenue plat greatly. Lastly, the Commission discussed with the Town of Smithfield the potential to increase supplies to both systems as well as interconnect the two systems.

Commissioner Fox inquired as to the actual number of radio read units presently in the system. Superintendent Mendes replied that of the 5800 to 5900 residential accounts in the system, approximately 5600 are radio read and we have about 300 more to go. Once all our residential accounts are radio read, usage data will be able to be collected much more quickly. We would need to read the entire system in three (3) days or less in order to go to monthly billing. Commissioner Fox asked if radio read units were still being installed in the system and at what frequency? Superintendent Mendes replied that remote read units are installed throughout the week and may be installed on a Saturday if there are appointments for other work scheduled. Commissioner Fox said thank you and asked if the potential interconnect with Smithfield would be on Twin River Road? Superintendent Mendes replied yes and that there would be a second interconnect on George Washington Highway. Commissioner Fox relayed that Twin River Road was where the Town of Smithfield explored a connection a few years ago. Superintendent Mendes replied yes, both Smithfield and Lincoln have water mains in close proximity to one another in that area that could be connected. Acting Chairman Hadley inquired as to whether or not a metered connection would be installed? Superintendent Mendes replied yes. Acting Chairman Hadley stated he remembers the same about 6 years ago, the area in question is in the vicinity of Douglas Lumber. Acting Chairman Hadley inquired as to the timeframe anticipated for the proposed connections. Superintendent Mendes replied that more than likely planning for same would begin sometime in the next 9 months. One of the issues is how to bring more water into Smithfield. Once an approach to achieve that is finalized, Lincoln would be able to partner with Smithfield to also bring more water into its system. The short answer is that what Smithfield has preliminarily proposed could bring more water to both Lincoln & Smithfield. Acting Chairman Hadley thanked the Superintendent.

Motion to accept the Superintendent's report passed unanimously (Ed F/LL)

#### MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT

The August 2017 operating and revenue report was presented to the Board for approval.

Motion to accept the expenditure and revenue report for the month of August 2017 passed unanimously (Ed F/LL)

Motion to send the August 2017 financial status report summary letter to the Town Finance Director passed unanimously. (Ed F/LL)

#### OUTSTANDING BALANCE REPORT

Acting Chairman Hadley stated a little higher than usual. Superintendent Mendes replied our Collection Clerk has been doing an excellent job and is keeping up with her notices.

Motion to accept the August 2017 account balance report passed unanimously (LL/Ed F)

#### CAPITAL ACCOUNTS

The capital Accounts report for August 2017 was passed with the Consent Agenda and will be placed on file.

## MONTHLY INVOICES

Motion to pull Larry's Auto Repair transactions (2) from the payments passed unanimously (JL/LL)

Motion to approve payment of the August 2017 Accounts Payable in the amount of \$242,841.08 as well as Direct Payments in the amount of \$597,808.01 passed unanimously. (JL/LL)

Motion to pay Larry's Auto Repair passed unanimously (JL/LL) Commissioners Edward Fox abstained from that vote.

## ABATEMENTS

Monthly Abatements were passed with the Consent Agenda and will be placed on file.

## ACCOUNT TRANSACTION REPORT

The Account Transaction Report was passed with the Consent Agenda and will be placed on file.

## CORRESPONDENCE

Monthly correspondence was passed with the Consent Agenda and will be placed on file.

## UNFINISHED BUSINESS

### a. New employee handbook

Superintendent Mendes relayed that the new employee handbook had been printed and Commissioners that would like a copy were welcome to take one. A copy will be provided to each employee who will acknowledge receipt in writing.

### b. Repair to High Service Tank Paint System

Superintendent Mendes relayed that there was a slight change in the labor rate that the contractor quoted. He had quoted \$68 per hour but did not take into account prevailing wage which is actually \$92 per hour. The Change increases the total for the work by approximately \$2,000 so the total expenditure will be \$14,800 and not \$12,700. Acting Chairman Hadley asked if there was any discussion. Commissioner Fox inquired as to whether or not the contractor was strictly required to adhere to prevailing wage at all times. Superintendent Mendes replied yes.

### c. Request for waiver of TON fee – Jason Drive

Superintendent Mendes relayed that the issue was related to a customer residing on Jason Drive that attended our last meeting. Superintendent Mendes stated that he researched the customer's history and determined that the balance triggering the termination was indeed small. While the customer had a point in that regard, the Water Commission was still correct in taking the action that it did as there was no response to the correspondence that was sent and contact by phone or email was not possible. All that being said, the Superintendent would still recommend a waiver of the TON fee on behalf of the

customer. The waiver would be a one-time courtesy and would come with a notification that any future occurrence would lead to the fee being immediately reinstated. Commissioner Long inquired as to what happened exactly. Superintendent Mendes replied that the customer had a balance of more than 90 days old in between us sending past due notices 1 and 2. Payments that covered the majority of the outstanding balance were received while past due notice 3 was in route to the customer. At this point there was a very small amount remaining that was more than 90 days past due which technically placed the account in the termination protocol. The customer petitioned the Commissioners to consider waving the TON fee in light of the fact that the outstanding balance was very small. Superintendent Mendes relayed that the Commission did follow the correct protocol in implementing the termination but his recommendation would be to waive the fee as a one-time courtesy and notify the customer that greater vigilance of the account needed to be maintained. Commissioner Fox inquired as to the frequency that the account was in the collection protocol. Superintendent Mendes replied the account notes indicate that the account is frequently issued first and second past due notices. Acting Chairman Hadley questioned how long same had been occurring. Superintendent Mendes replied that the situation had been going on for more than two years but that the customers had recently brought their account to a zero balance.

Motion to waive the \$100 fee with the stipulation that customers be notified of the one-time courtesy and that a future occurrence would lead to reinstatement of the fee passed unanimously. (Ed F/LL)

#### NEW BUSINESS

##### a. Rehabilitation/abandonment of Smithfield Avenue CI Watermain

Superintendent Mendes relayed that the item related to the rehabilitation or abandonment of a water line on Smithfield Avenue. The reasoning for considering the work now is to provide higher quality water to the Read Ave plat upon replacement of existing water main in that neighborhood. Two options are being evaluated. One is to clean and line that section of watermain approximately 1,800 feet and the other is that to abandon same and connect to the ductile Iron water main on the opposite side of Smithfield Ave. At the present time the Superintendent is requesting that the Commissioners conceptually approve an expenditure somewhere between \$100,000 and \$200,000 for either the rehabilitation or abandonment of the cast iron. Acting Chairman Hadley inquired as to what approach would be taken regarding paving of the water line trenches. Superintendent Mendes replied that the Commission would repair any trench that resulted from our work to DOT specifications. The Superintendent indicated that he would consult with DOT regarding any plans for rehabilitation of the entire width of Smithfield Avenue. The approach will be to continue with the evaluation of both cleaning/lining and abandonment and then bring something to the Commissioners for final approval. Funding for this project or another that the Commission may consider important has been budgeted for in our capital projects budget. The Commission earmarks approximately \$400,000 each fiscal year for water system improvements. Superintendent Mendes informed that the Commissioners that the minimum expenditure would be \$100,000 no matter which option was chosen. Acting Chairman Hadley stated, so that being the case, will the fact that the Commission sold 10,000,000 gallons less water this August than last August have any bearing. Superintendent Mendes replied the present rate structure

put us in a good position in terms of building reserves. With the present rate structure and a healthy reserve in place the Commission is in a good position to undertake this and other projects. Acting Chairman Hadley inquired as to whether or not the Superintendent believed this was a high priority project. Superintendent Mendes replied yes. The only other higher priority project would be Colonial Drive if there were another break there. Commissioner Labreche inquired as to the exact source of the funds for the project. Superintendent Mendes replied that funding totaling \$400,000 for capital improvement work is budgeted as a non-operating commitment in our infrastructure rehabilitation account. The approach would be to investigate either the rehabilitation or the Abandonment of the cast iron water main in Smithfield Ave and bring a recommendation including anticipated cost back to the Board for approval.

Motion to gather the necessary information to determine how to proceed with the project and bring a recommendation back to the Board passed unanimously. (LL/Ed F)

b. Emergency Interconnections – Town of Smithfield

Superintendent Mendes relayed this was the same item described in the Superintendent’s report. The Emergency connections are on George Washington Hwy at the Lincoln/Smithfield line and at Twin River Road. The Town of Smithfield will bring additional water into its system and at that point Lincoln would partner on the project to potentially bring more water into its system. Having emergency or permanent connections in place with Smithfield would allow for water to be more efficiently delivered to the section of Smithfield requiring additional supply. No action needed at this time.

c. Any other business that may properly come before the Board

Commissioner Fox inquired as to the condition of Colonial Drive after the recent water main breaks. Superintendent Mendes replied that there had been at least 3 breaks over the last 10 years and the combination of the excavation required to repair the pipe and damage caused by the water has left the travel surface in very poor condition. Top dressing at minimum will be required at some point in the next three to six months but the real solution is to replace the water line in Colonial Drive and pave half of the road. Commissioner Fox suggested that the Commission work with Town DPW to address Colonial Drive as anticipated plowing during the winter would only make the condition worse.

CLAIMS

- a. None

NEWS ARTICLES –

- a. None

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion to seek to adjourn to Executive Session per RIGL 42-46-5 (a) (2) passed unanimously. (EdF/JL)

Public Vote on matters from Executive Session

Motion to add a Flexible Spending Account program as an employee benefit passed unanimously.  
(Ed F/LL)

Motion to seal the minutes of Executive Session according to RIGL 42-46-7(c) passed unanimously.  
(LL/GH)

ADJOURN

Motion to adjourn passed unanimously. (Ed F/JL)

There being no further business before the board the meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.