



TOWN OF KINGSTON
Office of the Sewer Commission/Wastewater Department
26 Evergreen Street
Kingston, MA 02364

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Elaine A. Fiore - Chair
William Watson – Vice Chair
Brian M. Donahoe

Minutes 11/26/24

The Sewer Commission meeting on November 26 focused on budget updates and operational costs. The budget for FY 26 was kept under a 4% increase, with significant savings from chemical cost reductions and payroll adjustments. Electricity usage for FY 24 was lower than anticipated, leading to a slight increase in the FY 25 budget. Contract services and laboratory costs were also discussed. The commission considered transferring an old crane truck to the highway department for maintenance. Additionally, the need for capital improvements and the potential for selling treated wastewater to light industries was highlighted to address financial needs and future planning.

Action Items

- [] Transfer the old F350 crane truck to the highway department.
- [] Investigate the potentially buried sewer line on Country Club Way.
- [] Repair the pump station on Bradford Ave, including replacing the failed pump.
- [] Finalize the budget and article money allocation before the spring town meeting.
- [] Establish a sewer advisory committee to help with planning and communication.

Outline

Budget Update and Labor Costs

- Elaine Fiore and Jeannie worked on getting the budget numbers together, entering them into an Excel spreadsheet.
- The budget was kept under a 4% increase for the year, including labor and town-allocated costs.
- Laboratory costs increased due to chemical cost savings from joining a Co-op.
- Payroll increased due to reclassification to grade five operators but offset by other adjustments.

Electricity and Contract Services

- Electricity usage for FY 24 was lower than anticipated, with a budget of 295,000 and actual usage of 243,000.
- Anticipated an increase in electricity usage due to more blowers with a full operation of four tanks.
- Contract services increased due to sludge contracts, with budgeted amounts for 2024, 2025, and 2026.



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- Lab work costs were increased to cover all the increases in salary while keeping within the budget.

Equipment and Maintenance

- Elaine Fiore discussed the upgrade of older equipment, which should soften equipment repair costs.
- Town Center valves and pressure relief valves from 2006 were repaired.
- An old F3 50 crane truck from 2012 was replaced, and there is an additional truck needing maintenance.
- The highway department was considering taking over the maintenance of the truck, which would be off the sewer department's budget.

Capital Improvements and Free Cash

- No additional capital improvement projects were put in for next year, with 100,000 set aside from last year.
- Free cash was certified at 411,000, with potential allocation for the first payment of the leaching fields.
- Elaine Fiore mentioned the need for reserve funds in case of unexpected issues with air relief valves and pressure gages.
- The total amount of article money is around 873,000, with 411,000 in free cash.

Septage and Country Club Way

- Septage numbers have been high, with a project in Plymouth bringing in additional influent.
- Elaine Fiore discussed the need to determine the location of a sewer line on Country Club Way.
- The sewer line was shown on an old map, but the manholes might be buried.
- The importance of finding and fixing the sewer line was emphasized, especially before any paving on Country Club Way.

Pumping Station Repairs and Staff Skills

- Elaine Fiore shared a story about repairs at the Bradford Ave pump station, where a pump handle disintegrated due to corrosive action.
- The staff's skill set was praised for handling unexpected repairs.
- The need for regular maintenance on equipment was highlighted to prevent future issues.
- The corrosive nature of the station's environment was attributed to hydrogen sulfide and possibly increased by the discharge of hops.



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Sewer Advisory Committee and Planning

- Brian Donahoe discussed the formation of a sewer advisory committee to help with budget reconciliation and planning.
- The committee would include key people from the town, the planning board, and Kingston Business Association.
- The goal is to have a comprehensive plan for sewer expansion and budgeting, with a focus on protecting wells and addressing environmental concerns.
- The map and plan would help identify priority areas and ensure all lines are accounted for.

Letters and Public Hearings

- Two letters were discussed: one for Country Club Way and another for public hearings on rate increases.
- The Country Club Way letter would offer connections to the municipal sewer system.
- The public hearing letter will explain the rate increase and provide examples of the increase for different customer classes.
- The letters would be sent to all property owners in the affected areas, based on the assessor's database.

Revenue Options and Collaborative Efforts

- Brian Donahoe suggested exploring other revenue options, such as selling treated wastewater to light industries.
- The idea is to attract industries that need water but don't require potable water, reducing the burden on the town's water supply.
- The potential for collaborative efforts between the sewer department, water department, and other town agencies was emphasized.
- The importance of making intelligent decisions and understanding the reasons behind them was highlighted.

Meeting Adjournment

- A motion to adjourn the meeting was made and seconded.
- The meeting was adjourned with all members in favor.