



781-585-4058
781-831-6783 FAX

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

Elaine A. Fiore Chair
William E. Watson, Vice Chair
Brian M. Donahue

Minutes
08/06/24

A meeting of the Board of Sewer Commissioners was held in room 203. Members in attendance were Commissioners: Elaine Fiore, William Watson, Brian Donahue, Superintendent Dave Walsh and Jeanne Dunn.

Ms. Fiore call the meeting to order at **4:30PM**

The commissioners discussed the complexities of sewer system fees, rates, and capital costs, emphasizing the need to reconcile historical data and future. They reviewed the 1/3 two-thirds split between town and user contributions, noting historical documents dating back to the 1970s. Recent issues included a \$350,000 shortfall in revenues, the need for better understanding of betterment revenues, and the importance of separating operating expenses from betterments. Updates on maintenance and repairs, such as air relief valves and pump station seals, were provided. The leaching fields project is on schedule, with a delay in the primary distribution tank affecting the completion timeline.

Action Items

- [] Review the financial history and accounting details with the town administrator and finance team to better understand the betterment revenues versus user fees.
- [] Provide a timeline for implementing and testing the new rate structure.
- [] Schedule a meeting in the week of August 27th, as the regular meeting date falls during vacation time for some members.

Outline

Historical Context and Initial Updates

- Elaine Fiore opens the meeting and asks Brian to provide an update.
- Brian Donahoe discusses the complexity of the issues with fees, rates, and capital costs, and mentions reaching out to Keith Hickey, the town administrator.
- Brian Donahoe details a pre-meeting with Keith and a follow-up meeting with Dave to discuss the history and status of the sewer system.
- The conversation touches on the history of the sewer commission, including the 1/3 two-thirds split and the involvement of various committees and town officials.

Historical Overview and Involvement

- Brian Donahoe emphasizes the extensive history involved in the sewer system, mentioning the original Sewer Commission and the 1/3 two-thirds split.



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- Bill Watson recalls being part of the advisory committee in the 1990s and the process of handing over the project to the Selectmen.
- Brian Donahoe highlights the involvement of various town officials and the state DEP in the project's history.
- The conversation includes anecdotes about the team involved and the challenges faced during the project's development.

Challenges and Historical Perspective

- Brian Donahoe discusses the challenges faced in the past, including delays in the second and third phases due to the recession.
- The conversation touches on the fights over capacity and the decisions made to continue with betterments.
- Bill Watson shares a letter from Charles Scott, VP of the Kingston Shores Association, detailing the issues with sewage contamination in the area.
- The conversation highlights the improvements in sewage counts and the impact of the sewer system on the local environment.

Current Status and Financial Concerns

- Elaine Fiore discusses the shortfall in revenues last year and the need to reconcile user fees and betterments.
- Speaker 4 offers to help with understanding the accounting of betterments and working with the finance team.
- The conversation includes a discussion about the historical context of the 1/3 two-thirds split and the current financial implications.
- Elaine Fiore emphasizes the need to understand the distinction between user fees and betterments to reconcile the accounts.

Maintenance and Operational Updates

- Bill Watson provides updates on maintenance and operational issues, including air relief valves and the Jones River effluent line.
- The conversation includes details about a failed blower in the plant and efforts to resolve the issue.
- Bill Watson mentions a leak in the Marion Drive pump station and ongoing efforts to work with the manufacturer for a resolution.
- The conversation highlights the importance of maintaining the sewer system and addressing any issues promptly.



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Leaching Fields and Future Plans

- Brian Donahoe discusses the progress on the leaching fields and the schedule for completing the project.
- The conversation includes details about the final sign-up on the primary distribution tank and the impact on the project timeline.
- Brian Donahoe emphasizes the importance of protecting the South Street wells and the long-term benefits of the sewer system.
- The conversation touches on the need to figure out a rate structure and the ongoing efforts to understand the historical and current financial implications.

Coordination and Next Steps

- Elaine Fiore and Bill Watson discuss the need for coordination and understanding the historical context to address the financial shortfall.
- The conversation includes a discussion about the importance of separating operating expenses and betterments in the accounting.
- Bill Watson mentions the need for a timeline and the importance of understanding the historical context to address the financial shortfall.
- The conversation concludes with a discussion about the next steps and the importance of teamwork in resolving the issues.

Adjourn: Upon a MOTION made by Mr. Watson and SECONDED by Mr. Donohue, it was unanimously VOTED to adjourn at 5:30PM.