

## WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

The Board of Water Commissioners met on Tuesday May 11, 2021 via telephone conference. The meeting convened at 7:05 PM via teleconference

Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 1, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §20, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitation on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the City of Westfield Water Commission & Board of Public Works will be conducted via remote participation. Specific information and the general guidelines for remote participation by members of the public and/or parties with a right and/or requirement to attend this meeting can be found on the City of Westfield website at [www.cityofwestfield.org](http://www.cityofwestfield.org). For this meeting, members of the public who wish to listen to the meeting may do so by tuning into Channel 15 or online at [westfieldtv.org](http://westfieldtv.org). No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings in real time, via technological means. In the event that we are unable to do so, despite best efforts, we will post on the City's website an audio recording, transcript, or other comprehensive record of proceedings as soon as possible after the meeting.

The meeting was broadcasted on local channel 12 and the Westfield Community Youtube channel.

### AGENDA ITEMS:

#### **Public Participation**

Kathleen Hillman of 179 Susan Drive- Kathleen asked the Commission to take a look at the outstanding bills that have not been collected when it came to making their decision on the rate increase. She is concerned that some people are not paying their bills and when they get lien they are not being collected. She wishes for the Board to take a look at that balance to see how much money is still out there that the Department could benefit from.

#### **Discussion of Water Rate Study and possible vote**

Christopher Bone, Jennifer Gilbert, and William Yan from Tighe & Bond were present at the meeting to answer questions in regards to last meetings water rate presentation. The Department has recommended the Commissioners take into consideration option three which was the tier rate increase. It is Tighe & Bonds recommendation that if this is the option the City goes with that they take a look at the model on an annual basis to adjust the rate as needed. The Commission and Department went back and forth on some of their concerns and the Commission asked the vote be tabled until next meeting so they can see a model of what a low, moderate, and high residential user's bill would look like if this was the option the City went with.

#### **Discussion of Water Ban Restrictions**

Deputy Superintendent Steve Fernandes informed the Board that the reservoir is currently full and flowing over the flashboards. Wells 7 & 8 are currently on and providing more than enough water to the north side of the City. The City is currently in a non-drought status due to the large amounts of rain within the past month. The Board agreed to remove the current water restrictions and review the need of a new one on a month-to-month basis.

**Motion was made by Commissioner Cole** to lift the current water restrictions with the expectation of reviewing them on a month-to-month basis with the needs of the Departments. Motion seconded by Commissioner Niedzielski. Motion approved.

Roll call vote:

Commissioner Cole- YES

Commissioner Popielarczyk- YES

Commissioner Niedzielski- YES

**5 Westminster St- Outstanding balance**

Office Manager Hannah Larkham informed the Board of a utility bill account with a rather large outstanding balance. Currently in the City, when liens are processed, the City does not lien bills under condominiums due to the nature of the account holder. Because of this, this account has unpaid bills that have added up over the past 6 years. The Department reached out to the condo association's manager and she has asked that when the bills are lien this coming November that the balance be put on to her specific property tax 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter bill. The Department reached out to the City Law Department to see what options they had and they advised that if the resident wishes to do this than they would like it in writing that she is taking the full balance as her responsibility. To alleviate this issue moving forward the Department is recommending that the association put in individual services to each unit so they have their own meter and their own water bill. The decision on this is being tabled until next meeting so the Department can investigate the plumbing and if it is possible to provide five services.

**Approval of Contract Signature Authorization Form**

Hannah presented to the Board two forms to be approved by the Commission. The form is requesting that in the absence of Acting Director Francis Cain, the Department nominate a designee to sign contracts. This process is done every year for the new fiscal year. The Department is recommending to nominate the Deputy Superintendents for each division; Water and Sewer/Waste Water.

**Motion was made by Commissioner Cole** to nominate Jeff Gamelli to be the authorized signee for the Sewer/Waste Water division pertaining to all contracts in fiscal year 2022. Motion approved by Commissioner Niedzielski. Motion approved.

Roll call vote:

Commissioner Cole- YES

Commissioner Popielarczyk- YES

Commissioner Niedzielski- YES

**Motion was made by Commissioner Cole** to nominate Steve Fernandes to be the authorized signee for the Water division pertaining to all contracts in fiscal year 2022. Motion approved by Commissioner Niedzielski. Motion approved.

Roll call vote:

Commissioner Cole- YES

Commissioner Popielarczyk- YES

Commissioner Niedzielski- YES

**Approval of Minutes:**

**Motion was made by Commissioner Cole** to approve the minutes dated March 3, 2021. Motion seconded by Commissioner Niedzielski. Motion approved.

Roll call vote:

Commissioner Cole- YES

Commissioner Popielarczyk- YES

Commissioner Niedzielski- YES

**Motion was made by Commissioner Cole** to approve the minutes dated April 20, 2021. Motion seconded by Commissioner Niedzielski. Motion approved.

Roll call vote:

Commissioner Cole- YES

Commissioner Popielarczyk- YES

Commissioner Niedzielski- YES

## Project Updates

Water Deputy Superintendent Steve Fernandes spoke to the Board about the current project updates. The Dry Bridge Water Treatment Plant project is moving along. The City has received state revolving funds (SRF) for this project and one of the requirements is to hold a public meeting. The Department is requesting that at the next scheduled meeting this requirement is met. The Board agreed to schedule this for the next regular meeting.

Wells 7 & 8 have been running and the new treatment plant has treated 102 million gallons of water.

Approximately 320 million gallons of water has been treated through the temporary vessel at Well 2. This number has remained the same from mid-November, as we have not run Well 2 to the distribution system since then due to low demand, desire is to run Owen District Treatment Plant.

The new water tank on East Mountain Rd has been installed. The old tank has been demolished and removed from the site. The site work is about 80% complete. The security fence around the tank is just about done and the access road is being prepped for paving in the coming weeks.

The next big project for the Department will be the new bridge being installed on South Maple St. The contractor will be looking to install two butterfly valves so the water can be isolated at each end of the bridge. The Department ran a mock shut off last year and it went smoothly. When the project gets underway, any disturbance to the service will be after hours while water demand is low. The biggest concern is the traffic flow that construction will cause.

The next meeting will be scheduled for June 1, 2021

## Adjourn

**Motion made by Commissioner Niedzielski** to adjourn; Motion seconded by Commissioner Cole, Motion approved.

Roll call vote:

Commissioner Cole- YES

Commissioner Popielarczyk- YES

Commissioner Niedzielski- YES

ADJOURN: 8:19 P.M.

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Chairman

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Secretary

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Member



