

Minutes of 9/29/26 Sewer Commission meeting-- via Zoom (Video Conference)

Attendees: Chair- Brett Ramsden, Vice-Chair- Scott Dall, Clerk- Dan Proctor, Member- Chip Wilson, DPW Director- Bill Bernard, Sewer Business Manager- Andrew Valliere, Minutes Clerk- Jane Ranley

Dan opened the meeting at 6:06 pm. and Brett did a roll call of attendees. The Commission began the meeting by saying the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT/ANNOUNCEMENTS - none

CURRENT BUSINESS –

---Minutes of 09/08/26

Motion: Chip W.

Second: Scott D.

To accept the minutes of 09/08/26.

Roll Call Vote: Scott-aye, Chip-aye, Dan-aye and Brett-aye.

--- Sewer Business Manager/ DPW Director Updates--

-- **Sewer Demands Q1 FY27-** Andrew sent the demand notices out last week. Some people have called and some have paid their bills.

--**Delinquency Rate Q1 FY27-** Andrew reported the amount still owed is \$56,505.94 which equals a delinquency rate of 16.63%. There are still 195 unpaid bills out of 961 that went out. They would like to see the delinquency rate lower but with the way things are today- with high oil prices- it may not come lower. It is usually the same people that do not pay their bills because they are choosing which bill to pay. Dan asked what information was on the demand notice and Andrew replied the delinquency notice gives the customer their full balance due but does not state the demand charge which is a Munis thing. The demand charge is \$10 and has been that for about 15 years.

--**Sewer Demand Fee Rate-** Andrew noted this is for an open discussion. The demand fee of \$10 is much lower than surrounding towns. Lunenburg has the lowest interest rate and late fee, except for Shirley that charges \$5, but adds 18% interest. Andrew stated that he thought the \$10 fee was not high enough to entice someone to pay their late bill. He clarified that a late bill accrues 12% interest every day after the due date and the \$10 fee is added for each quarter late. Scott agreed that a \$10 fee may not motivate someone to pay but a higher fee may not either. However they are in a unique situation that the sewer will eventually be paid when the property is sold and the interest will accumulate. Scott suggested looking at increasing permit fees and the interest rate but keep or get rid of the \$10 late fee. Andrew said his goal is to be understanding of the customers. The Commissioners discussed the rates and fees for Fitchburg (*\$50 fee, 14% interest*), Townsend (*\$30 fee, 14% interest*) and Shirley (*\$5 fee, 18% interest*). Dan asked if there are customers that are consistently delinquent and the town is not paid until the house is sold. Andrew replied yes and the balance eventually gets added as a tax lien on their tax bill. Andrew noted this was just an open discussion and the Commission is able to vote on any rate changes. They can also look at grease trap fees and other fees. He added that there have been some issues with the pump stations and costs are increasing. Bill noted that there may be limitations on how high interest can go and he will talk to Town Counsel about this. The Commission can make changes but it needs to be a publicly posted hearing. He added that the fees are supposed to cover their costs. Chip suggested adding this topic to the future agenda, with a suggested 2% increase to discuss. Scott suggested looking at the fees charged by the water department. The Commission agreed to discuss a 14/15% interest with a \$25 fee at the next meeting. Bill and Andrew will consult with Town Counsel also.

--**CTE O&M Contract** – Bill reported they are still on contract with CTE until 11/25. He talked to Procurement who has not sent it out for bid yet but hopefully it will be out by the next meeting or have a date for its release.

---Future Agenda Items- Demand Fee rates, O&M Contract

PUBLIC COMMENT – Brett thanked Dan for getting the meeting started and for everyone's participation.

UPCOMING SCHEDULED SEWER COMMISSION ACTIVITIES:

October 13, 2026 @ 6pm – Regular (Hybrid) Meeting at DPW

October 27, 2026 @ 6pm – (Zoom) Meeting

November 10, 2026 @ 6pm – Regular (Hybrid) Meeting at DPW

November 24, 2026 @ 6pm – (Zoom) Meeting

Motion: Scott D.

Second: Dan P.

To adjourn at 6:49 pm.

Roll Call Vote: Dan-aye, Chip-aye, Scott-aye and Brett-aye.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane L. Ranley

Minutes Clerk