



Manchester-By-The-Sea Meeting Posting

Notice of Public Meeting – (As required by M.G.L.Ch.30A §18-25)

Board/Committee: Water Resources Protection Task Force

Day & Date: Wednesday, July 19, 2023

Time: 7:00 PM

Location: VIRTUAL

Signature: Sue Croft

Attendees: Steve Gang, Scott Horsley, Tom Kehoe, Ron Mastrogiacomo, Ron Parker, Jeff Cochand, Jessica Lamothe, Lynne Atkinson, Olga Hayes, David Lumsden, Gordon Turner, Mike Carvalho, Ann Harrison, John Round, Helen Bethell, Chuck Dam, Sue Croft

Public: Phil and Donna Furse, Mary Foley, Karen Bennett, Lily Wainwright, Tim Braier, Jack Burke, Christine Delisio, Sarah Pierce

MINUTES

- Steve Gang welcomed attendees to the final Task Force meeting and called the meeting to order. There were no announcements.
- Minutes from the June 14 meeting were unanimously approved.
- Steve introduced the topic of the Select Board vote on proposed new water rates. He summarized that the decision to adopt the new rates and rate structure proposed by the Task Force was deferred to the September timeframe. In the meantime, the standard 2.5% increase of water rates was approved until the new rates and tiers can be further communicated. John Round noted that it is very likely that the SB will adopt the new rates/tiers effective Oct 1. Jeff Cochand added that multi-family and commercial accounts will be taken into consideration between now and September. Steve explained that Task Force updates (including water rates) were given to the SB during regular SB meetings in April, May and June with the June meeting culminating with the decision to notify the users in the top 20% that the rates will potentially be changing and to give them an opportunity to ask questions and seek assistance. Those letters were mailed in the beginning of July. Phil Furse (8 Blossom Lane) asked why the Town is asking residents to conserve water and reduce water consumption. He wanted to know what the end goal of this effort would be. Steve replied that MBTS consumes significantly more water than neighboring towns. Phil claimed that this approach did not reward efficiency and focused only on less consumption. Jeff Cochand pointed out that the Task Force did carefully look at efficiency. John Round stated that rates are just one of the many recommendations in the Task Force's final report and as such it should be considered only one of the "tools in the toolbox" and that it's best to consider all the recommendations as a whole. Scott Horsley stated that MBTS is in a tight spot with regards to water given the PFAS situation at the LSW. A logical first step in addressing potential water-related issues is to make sure that people are not using more water than they need. Irrigation is a highly inefficient use of water resources. Ann Harrison stated that tighter PFAS regulations will require MBTS to remediate and that conservation had little impact on that reality. Steve stated that reduced usage would work in tandem with any remediation efforts. Mary Foley (Pulaski Dr) noted that there were mixed messages surrounding water-related issues and that it would be helpful if clarity and continuity could be provided

around issues such as: PFAS, taking LSW offline, and the need for conservation despite the Town's supposed abundance of water. She also asked, if irrigation is the primary issue, why not target those homes with irrigation only meters. Steve responded that many of the highest-use households aren't on Town sewer and therefore don't have irrigation/deduct meters. He also asserted that conservation requires reducing irrigation first and foremost and shouldn't target larger households and families.

- With regards to feedback from the letter that was sent to Top the 20% of water users, John Round explained that 80-90% of the responses to the letters were positive and the vast majority volunteered to be part of the water meter pilot program. Others had questions along the lines of "what does this mean for me?" Steve showed a slide with a list of Reactions & Questions from Heaviest Users. Jeff Cochand mentioned that there's a preliminary plan in place to consider multi-family and commercial usage but not the schools. Tom Kehoe noted that they are partnering with Greenscapes and plan to include Greenscapes information with upcoming water bills to help educate the community about water conservation. He also pointed out that the schools partner with them as well. Chuck Dam noted that the Town is a member of Greenscapes. Steve noted that Chuck had previously suggested that the DPW help individuals who are interested take a forensic look at their water usage data to identify opportunities for conservation. Jessica Lamothe pointed out that the Task Force is not suggesting that people plainly can't water their gardens, etc., but that they just want to help people understand better and more efficient ways to irrigate. Karen Bennett (28 Lincoln St) asked what the situation is with Town irrigation and if that should be a focus of conservation. Chuck responded that the Town does irrigate at Sweeney Park and the new field on Pine St in an effort to protect those investments and make sure they are usable and safe. When the Town renovated the Town Common, they actively decided not to include irrigation. The Town's irrigation systems are metered and monitored on a use case basis. It is not wasteful and there is not a massive amount of water used for these purposes. Much consideration went into choosing the most efficient type of irrigation system to be used at the new Pine St field. Ann Harrison noted that unaccounted for water (UAW) recently went from about 25% to 8.7% thanks to careful research done by the DPW. This difference is more than half due to accounting for water used at the WWTP and Town Hall. She went on to say that the voters will likely be asked at the next Town Meeting to support protecting the WWTP from flooding as well as making the WWTP more efficient. Tom Kehoe added that replacement of leaky pipes, especially in certain areas of Town has significantly contributed to lowering our UAW. The DPW continues to keep those infrastructure replacements and repairs moving in the right direction.
- Status of smart meter pilot test – Steve said that about 100 people have volunteered for the pilot but can only accept about two dozen or so. They will need to review and refine the criteria used to identify the pilot users. Chuck said the DPW is reviewing two potential candidates looking at the size and location of the meters for the volunteer population. Although the focus would likely be on the smaller meters it possible to add some larger meters as well keeping in mind that those will cost more. Funds can be made available through the Task Force's remaining budget. Chuck added that he was only aware of about 70 volunteers and asked that he and Steve compare their lists to make sure they were in synch.
- Steve stated that there was a new company that he recently became aware of that claims to be able to eliminate contaminants such as PFAS organically (without filtering), at much lower capital and operating cost than any other methods being proposed. That company is willing to make their compounds

available to MBTS through jar testing and the plan is to try it. Sarah Pierce (9 Friends St) pointed out the inconsistency of the Town requiring a permit for a curb cut in a buffer zone, but no consideration is given to the chemicals people who live in buffer zones are putting on their lawns. After reaching out to the EPA, she was told that this issue is handled at the local level. She encouraged the Town to create new by-laws focused on this issue.

- Corrections to Final Report of Findings & Recommendations, then Vote to Approve – Other than the feedback given prior to correct typos in the report there were no additional changes. John Round made a motion to approve the final version of the report and Tom Kehoe seconded. It was approved unanimously.
- Acknowledgement and Recognition of Task Force Accomplishments – Steve stated that the group did a “bang up!” job and thanked everyone for their efforts. John Round thanked Steve for helping the Task Force persevere and for making it enjoyable. Steve also thanked the staff (Chuck, Nate, Sue) for their support as well and said he considers Chuck and Nate courageous and appreciated their ability to innovate change. He also thanked Scot Horsley for his decades worth of commitment to this effort. Ann asked who would handle the revisit of rates in September. It is expected that the Sustainability Committee will take responsibility for most of the recommendations but likely will not be responsible for rates.
- Next Steps & New Opportunities – Steve encouraged current Task Force members to participate on the Sustainability Committee to ensure this good work can continue. Jessica Lamothe expressed interest and concern regarding passing this baton to the Sustainability Committee as they seem to be the repository for some other recent efforts including Net Zero and the CZM Coastal Vulnerability Action Plan. This is significantly more than this committee has historically needed to focus on. She said she would be interested in taking part but would need more information on how this transition will work. Steve agreed that a new level of effort would be required by this committee. John Round pointed out that the Sustainability Committee will need 2-3 more people to handle the next steps.
- Steve introduced Lily Wainwright, a new graduate of Union College who is interested in serving as an intern for the next few months of planning implementation of the Task Force recommendations.
- Mike Carvalho thanked Steve and then pointed out that people tend to overuse resources because they think they are infinite. He spoke of conservation as a value proposition. Steve agreed and noted the importance of taking action ahead of crisis.
- After a motion by Tom Kehoe and seconded by Mike Carvalho, the meeting was adjourned at 8:22 PM.