

**Town of Fairhaven  
Board of Public Works Meeting  
September 8, 2020**

**Present**

Brian Wotton, Commissioner  
Robert Hobson, Commissioner  
Cameron Durant, Commissioner  
Frank Coelho, Commissioner  
Marcus Ferro, commissioner  
Vincent Furtado, BPW Superintendent  
Rebecca Vento, Office Manager  
Gary Lavalette



**I. Call to Order**

Mr. Wotton called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

Mr. Coelho notified the chairman that he was taking an audio recording of the meeting.

**II. Routine Matters**

**A. Signing of Departmental Bills**

**III. Approval of Minutes**

**A. August 3, 2020**

Mr. Hobson motioned to approve the minutes of August 3, 2020. Mr. Durant seconded. Vote unanimous.

**B. August 17, 2020**

Mr. Ferro motioned to approve the minutes of August 17, 2020. Mr. Durant seconded. Vote unanimous.

**C. August 25, 2020**

Mr. Hobson motioned to approve the minutes of August 25, 2020. Mr. Ferro seconded. Vote unanimous

Mr. Coelho – There really is nothing to approve for this meeting since this meeting was not posted properly.

Mr. Coelho motioned to rescind and eliminate the minutes of August 25, 2020. Mr. Durant seconded. Vote unanimous.

**IV. Appointments**

**A. Eric Smith, WC Smith & Son – New Driveway Contractor**

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**V. Items for Action**

**A. Covid-19 Matters**

Mr. Durant – Is the beach officially closed?

Mr. Furtado - Yes, and at a future meeting we should discuss what was found this year and make some changes for next year.

Mr. Wotton - I would like to see that done sometime around the New Year. Maybe we will be more in person at that time.

Mr. Hobson - There are some issues that we definitely need to discuss for next year. I guess that this past weekend we had issues with the parasailers. I think that next year we need to make sure they are not near the beach.

**B. Fall Town Meeting**

Mr. Furtado – I handed out a packet with the budget and article requests that we are requesting for the Fall Town Meeting. Since the last meeting there has been one addition to the budget request. We had to add money to the Park budget because the septic system at the Town Beach is failing and we will need to upgrade it prior to next year.

Mr. Furtado reviewed the budget and articles for the Fall Town Meeting with the Board.

Mr. Durant - I saw something on Facebook that the Town was looking to meet with ABC to see about possibly getting the recycling picked up weekly.

Mr. Furtado – Weekly recycling pickup would be for FY22. I think that another alternative might be that residents could purchase a second recycling cart from ABC.

Mr. Durant - Is that something that we could discuss at another meeting? Can we currently allow residents to purchase another bin?

Mr. Furtado - I would have no issue with that. There would be some logistics with it since the carts belong to ABC. I think that it would be an easier way to fix the problem rather than doubling the cost for recycling by picking up every week.

Mr. Durant – I know that I would happily pay out of my pocket to get another recycling cart.

Mr. Hobson - Do we have a place at the recycling center that the residents could bring their recyclables?

Mr. Furtado -We do not have a single stream container at the Recycling Center. If a resident wants to bring their recyclables to the recycling center they would have to keep everything separate.

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Mr. Wotton – Maybe doing the cost analysis would be in our favor if we provide a dumpster for residents to drop their single stream recyclables.

Mr. Durant – I think the solution would be at the new transfer station that we have to build. If you could look into the possibility of being able to purchase another recycling cart.

Mr. Furtado – In regards to the Raw Water cost we invited the Water Superintendent from Mattapoisett to come in and discuss this.

Mr. Hobson – I do not want to pay them \$100,000.

Mr. Furtado – Maybe we could negotiate that.

Mr. Wotton – If they are going to charge us for the raw water we need to make sure that we are keeping tabs on how much water we borrow from them.

Mr. Furtado – When the Tinkham Lane Well was running at full capacity this never happened. We are receiving this bill because our well was down for repairs and we were not able to supply them with water during the winter months as we have done in the past.

Mr. Coelho - I was speaking to a gentleman that works for DEP and I asked him a question about the well. I told him that we put a new well along side of the old well and was wondering why we had to abandon the old well and why we could not keep both wells online. He said that he would check with someone that knew about that. The gentleman that he spoke with said that he did not understand why we cannot use the old well and why we would not keep it online. In the past, I asked you to check on this and you said that we could not keep it online. I would like to see the report that you got saying that we could not use that well. I think that when we have the meeting with Mattapoisett we should ask them if we can repay them for the water that we used by supplying them with water through the winter.

Mr. Furtado - I do not disagree with that. We could ask Mattapoisett if we could supply them with the water until we repay them back.

Mr. Hobson - Who keeps track of how much water they supply us?

Mr. Furtado - There are records at the Mattapoisett treatment plant.

Mr. Hobson – Would it be cheaper to buy water from New Bedford

Mr. Furtado - No. We have always had to pay for the treated water and the raw water was always a wash. This is the first year that we ever had to pay for the raw water.

Mr. Wotton - I am a fan of repaying for water with water.

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Mr. Coelho - That is why I would like a copy of that report before we shut the well down. I would like to see why we have to shut it down and I would like to contact the person that says we have to do so. The only time that they shut wells down is because they do not meet the DEP's requirements with the water levels coming out. I think that report is going to tell us if we can run that well.

Mr. Furtado - The new well is almost built on top of the old well.

Mr. Coelho - It is still two different wells and what I understand is if the water quality does not conform than we have to shut the well down. If it still passes the test, I do not understand why we are shutting it down.

Mr. Furtado - Because it is drawing from the same source.

Mr. Coelho – It should say that in the report. I would like to check out the report and if it is not feasible then we can move on.

Mr. Ferro motioned to approve the Articles for the Fall Town Meeting. Mr. Durant seconded. Vote unanimous.

**C. Water & Sewer Rates**

Mr. Furtado - Last year Tighe and Bond presented the water and sewer rate study to the Board. At that time, the Board voted to adopt the water and sewer rates that were recommended. I am putting this in front of the Board because I did not want to raise the rates without talking to you first. For the water rates in FY21 the study recommended that we increase the water rates by 10%. In FY20, they did not recommend a rate increase but we increased it 10%. If the Board wants to forgo the FY21 water rate increase, we could do so. As for the sewer, I think that we should follow the rate schedule and increase the sewer rate 5% as recommended due to all the improvements that we have coming up.

Mr. Wotton - We are not putting ourselves in a bad situation in the next few years if we do not increase the water rates this year?

Mr. Furtado – We have the 1.5 million dollars earmarked for the Automatic Meter Reading proposal. We used some of that money to except the proposals and the article that you just signed is a not to exceed number, and I am hoping that we do not need it all. When we install the new meters, we should get more revenue from them. Our current meters are older and those meters slow down over time. What that means is the older meters do not read as accurately as they should and it is working in the residents favor and they are paying less than what they should for water. As long as Town meeting approves us to go forward with the AMI, we should be ok. I think since we increased the water rates last year we do not need to raise the water rates this year.

Mr. Durant - Will Tighe and Bond come in halfway through the 8 years and revise the numbers?

Mr. Furtado - We do not have that planned at this time but we could invite them in.

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Mr. Durant - I would like to see them come back in FY24 to look at the numbers. At that time, they could make sure that the original numbers that were presented are still correct.

Mr. Coelho – The only question that I have is because of the virus and more people being home and using the water that they will be paying higher bills this year. Maybe we could bypass the rate increase this year due to the virus and people on a fixed income.

Mr. Ferro – I agree. I think that we should forgo the rate increase this year for the water based on the situation that we are in.

Mr. Ferro motioned to forgo the projected water rate increase for FY21. Mr. Coelho seconded. Vote unanimous.

Mr. Hobson motioned to raise the sewer rate 5%. Mr. Durant seconded. Vote unanimous.

**D. Sewer Cleanout Policy – Section 3(H)**

Mr. Coelho motioned to accept the amended sewer cleanout policy. Mr. Ferro seconded. Vote unanimous.

**E. Recycle Center Hours**

Mr. Coelho motioned to keep the recycle center open on the current schedule until December 31, 2020. Mr. Durant seconded. Vote unanimous.

**F. BPW Independent Study**

Mr. Coelho – I requested for this to be on the agenda. I noticed that Town Hall has been looking to do the same kind of study. I feel that the BPW should do an independent study to see if we can eliminate things in various departments and save money. Take the Sewer Department Digester for example. The digester has been closed since February 2016 and the thing is a total disaster. The gas tank needs a new inner tube. The two big tanks one of them needs a liner and I am sure that the other one is not far behind since they are the same age. I also think that the structure shifted on the inside and cracked one of the tanks. Since we have had the digester that the town has put two million dollars into it. We also had to put money into the plant when we shut the digester down. When we were running it we were having an issue with the nitrogen. That is just one department.

Mr. Hobson - Who is telling you all of this? Why are they not telling Mr. Furtado this?

Mr. Durant – Mr. Furtado has talked about this in previous meetings.

Mr. Coelho – What difference does it make? I found out this information when I took a tour. As a Board member, you have the same privileges as I do and if you wanted to you could take a tour of the facility, you could.

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Mr. Furtado - The only person that was on this board when the digester was built was Mr. Hobson.

Mr. Hobson – It was a waste of money.

Mr. Furtado – The Sewer Superintendent and Assistant Sewer Superintendent did not want the digester but the Board did because we received a grant for eight million dollars. Mr. Furtado explained to the Board how the digester works.

Mr. Wotton – Mr. Coelho I am thrown off by this. I was under the assumption that this BPW Independent Study was a way to see if we could cut operating costs within the BPW. We are aware of the breakdowns that happen in each department. I thought that this was to bring in a cost management company to try to cut costs.

Mr. Coelho – That is why I was asking for a study to be done. The company that we hire would recommend how we could fix the broken items and help save the Town money.

Mr. Wotton – Would it be more of an Engineer that could come up with a plan to fix the items that need to be fixed?

Mr. Coelho - Mr. Espindola is looking to do this study down at the Town Hall.

Mr. Hobson - I am against it. We do not need to keep having studies done.

Mr. Wotton - I am all for cost savings and saving the Town money. Maybe the right thing to do is get estimates for repairs to get everything back up and running. I am not sure if the study does something that I do not understand.

Mr. Coelho - I am just looking to save the Town money.

Mr. Durant - When the Town had the Department of Revenue come in to do the study, how did it affect us down here?

Mr. Ferro left the meeting at 7:17 p.m.

Mr. Furtado - The DOR recommended that we eliminate the Board.

Mr. Wotton - I think that it is a good idea to see if we can find someone that does this.

Mr. Ferro entered the meeting at 7:19 p.m.

Mr. Coelho motioned to table this until a future meeting. Mr. Durant seconded. Vote 4-1 with Mr. Hobson opposed.

**B. Sign Contract Agreement, GCG Associates – 250 Bridge Street \$15,060**

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Mr. Furtado – This is the Engineering contract agreement for the work being done at the Mazda Dealership at 250 Bridge Street.

Mr. Coelho motioned to sign the contract agreement with GCG Associates in the amount \$15,060 for 250 Bridge Street. Mr. Durant seconded. Vote unanimous.

**H. Century Paving – Green Street Reconstruction Phase III**

**1. Sign Contract Agreement \$618,923.15**

Mr. Furtado – This will complete the road reconstruction on Green Street. The bids came in and the lowest bidder is Century Paving and their bid is over one hundred thousand dollars less than what the Engineer estimated the work to cost.

Mr. Wotton – Are we going to notice a difference in the road since the lowest bidder is not the same contractor that has done the other two phases?

Mr. Furtado - I do not think that we will notice a difference since they will be using the same materials.

Mr. Durant motioned to sign the contract agreement with Century Paving in the amount of \$618,923.15 for Green Street Reconstruction Phase III. Mr. Coelho seconded. Vote unanimous.

**2. Notice of Award**

Mr. Hobson motioned to sign the notice of award for Century Paving, Green Street Reconstruction Phase III. Mr. Ferro seconded. Vote unanimous.

**VI. Tabled Matters**

**A. n/a**

**VII. Public Comments / Open Forum**

Mr. Lavalette – I am not sure if the Board is aware of this but the condos in Town do not have recycling carts and they do not recycle.

Mr. Ferro - I know that Nasketucket Condo's does not recycle because they have a dumpster.

Mr. Furtado – They do not have carts because they are private pickups.

Mr. Wotton - The people that live in the condominiums have to pay for the trash pick-up through their association fees.

**VIII. Old Business / New Business**

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**A. Superintendent**

Mr. Furtado reviewed with the Board some of the things that came up last week.

**B. Board Members**

Mr. Coelho - A few meetings ago we assessed a fine for a driveway that was put in without a permit. We imposed a fine of three hundred dollars for both the contractor and the homeowner.

Mr. Ferro – I think that we ended up bringing the fine down to three hundred dollars for the homeowner.

Mr. Coelho – I am asking the Board to reduce it to one hundred and fifty dollars. At the next meeting, there was a fine of one hundred fifty dollars assessed to both the homeowner and the contractor for the same violation. We need to make it fair.

Mr. Hobson - First, we have the contractors that are on the Town approved list abide by the rules. Why would a contractor even come here to get a permit if they could just do the work and except a hundred and fifty dollar or three hundred dollar fine? As far as I am concerned it should be a five hundred dollar fine.

Ms. Vento – Past practice we have assessed a fine of one hundred dollars to the homeowner and three hundred dollars to the unapproved contractor.

Mr. Hobson – I do not have a problem with the homeowner paying a one hundred dollar fine. I have a problem with the contractor paying only one hundred and fifty dollars.

Mr. Durant – What does the by-law read?

Mr. Furtado – It reads three hundred dollars per violation. Typically, the Board has assessed a fine to both the homeowner and the contractor.

Mr. Hobson - Most of the homeowners do not even know about getting an approved contractor. I feel the contractor's fine should be five hundred dollars.

Mr. Furtado – Maybe this is something that we should put on a future agenda for discussion.

Mr. Ferro - I had someone approach me and ask if they could put on a play in Cushman Park.

Mr. Furtado - They would have to fill out the Request to use Town Property.

Mr. Hobson – I was approached by a resident on Billy's Way. She wanted me to check to see when the road will be started.



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Mr. Furtado - The drainage is scheduled to be done by the end of the year.

Mr. Wotton - I would like to see us go around and weed whack before we send the sweeper out. Another thing is I would like to see us call the State because the condition of Route 6 is unacceptable. Also, I did have a resident from Judson Drive reach out to me to see if we could cut some brush back from the first left turn. I guess it is all overgrown and it is hard to see if someone is coming from the other direction.

**C. Marine Resources Committee – BPW Related Matters**

Mr. Hobson - The Marine Resource is looking to see if we can get water at Union Wharf for the small lobster boats.

Mr. Wotton - Who is going to pay for the water?

Mr. Hobson – The Marine Resources could raise their fees and then they could pay for the water out of the fees.

Mr. Furtado - I have no problem providing the water as long as we are paid for it.

**IX. Set Date for the Next Meeting**

Mr. Ferro motioned to set the date for the next meeting on September 21, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. Mr. Durant seconded. Vote unanimous.

**X. Adjourn**

Mr. Ferro motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:59 p.m. Mr. Durant seconded. Vote unanimous.

**XI. Executive Session**

n/a

Respectfully submitted,

*Rebecca L. Vento*

Rebecca L. Vento  
Office Manager

Minutes approved on September 21, 2020