

WELLESLEY BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS RECORDS
October 17, 2023

The Wellesley Board of Public Works held a duly posted open online remote meeting beginning at 5:00 PM.

Remote participants included Chair Ellen Korpi, Commissioners Jeffrey Wechsler and Scott Bender; Director David A. Cohen; Assistant Director Jeff Azano-Brown, Town Engineer David J. Hickey, Jr.; Water & Sewer Superintendent Stephen Olson; Executive Assistant Debra Sumner; and Advisory Committee Liaison Pete Pedersen.

Chair Korpi called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Following reference to the minutes from the most recent Board of Public Works meeting proposed for approval and upon motion duly made by Mr. Wechsler and seconded by Mr. Wechsler, the Board was polled and it was unanimously,

VOTED: To approve the Open Session Minutes of the meeting of September 19, 2023, as presented (3-0).

Mr. Wechsler – Yes
Mr. Bender – Yes
Ms. Korpi – Yes

CITIZEN SPEAK

Chair Korpi provided anyone participating remotely with the opportunity to speak regarding matters pertaining to the Department of Public Works. There were no participants in response to this invitation.

Advisory Committee Liaison Update. Mr. Pedersen conveyed that the Advisory Committee is primarily interested at this time in budgets and if there has been any elaboration on the Recreation Division's request for potential approval by Special Town Meeting for a Feasibility Study to be related to the proposed site at the Morses Pond for a portion of the parking lot to be used for pickleball courts. There is also interest in any additional information related to the Stormwater Enterprise Fund, including any variances from the 2024 budget, as well as any update related to the PFAS contamination.

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Mr. Pedersen acknowledged each of these items are reflected on the Agenda to be covered in later discussions.

Chair Korpi invited Mr. Cohen to report on Director's Items.

BPW Meeting Dates. Director Cohen inquired if the Board would be amenable to rescheduling upcoming meetings to start at 5:00 PM on Monday nights due to the need for a hard stop to be imposed at 6:15 p.m. due to schedule conflicts with other Board meetings covered by Wellesley Media.

Morses Pond Parking Lot Pickleball Courts Discussion. Director Cohen referred to feedback submitted by residents via e-mail, copies of which were included among other items in the Board package for review in advance of the Board meeting.

Mr. Cohen noted he would attend a meeting tomorrow with Recreation Director Chin to learn of the latest plans and approach to be taken in advance of the discussion at Special Town Meeting.

Chair Korpi commented that the primary concern for the Board of Public Works is to make certain the Town's water source is not compromised. It was also reconfirmed that funding for this proposed study is from another source, not the DPW budget. Following a brief discussion, it was the consensus of the Board that its role is limited to facilitating the pathway for the Recreation Commission to pursue approval by Special Town Meeting for a Feasibility Study to be conducted, unless in the course of the study a reason is identified that would cause the Board of Public Works to change that position.

Stormwater Issues and Discussion. Director Cohen deferred to Town Engineer Hickey to provide a brief update on the Geraldine Drive project and anticipated next steps.

Town Engineer Hickey confirmed that the stormwater annual report was submitted to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Mr. Hickey conveyed that the Engineering Division staff continues to prepare details related to initiating the Stormwater Enterprise Fund, including establishment of a credit policy. He confirmed Engineering Division staff are responding to various issues received over the summer. Mr. Hickey is also preparing a response, including four recommended mitigation steps to be included in the response to the Pettigrew's as they strive to reach an agreement on the next step to be taken related to their concerns, as well as to provide a hydrologic model response document.

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Chair Korpi emphasized the importance of identifying the higher priority areas such as Geraldine Drive where the most vulnerability could be experienced during an extended rain event and, going forward, to monitor proactive steps being taken while remaining mindful of tangible areas in which to prioritize investments.

Mr. Hickey thanked the Board for its support of the efforts being made. He then shifted the discussion toward resiliency and hardening of the key infrastructure. Mr. Hickey also referred to the impact climate change is making and the need to determine how we protect bridges, culverts, private property and Town systems. He conveyed this challenge will remain part of our future.

PFAS Update. Director Cohen conveyed that the results for October have not yet been received but confirmed information would be provided to the Board upon receipt. Mr. Cohen reported that interesting information has been received related to class action settlements from both Dupont and 3M. He explained that Wellesley, as well as other public water suppliers, are evaluating that information to determine, with the Town's legal team, what the amount of the settlement would be coming back to Wellesley prior to deciding to accept or to opt out of the settlement. It was noted that the deadline to opt out is in early December. Director Cohen reported that settlements are for drinking water impacts, only. The Town would need to pursue its own litigation for other impacts, such as stormwater and wastewater.

Director Cohen conveyed that a fall replacement of the filter media is planned at Morses Pond, which will provide an excellent data point. He will share that information with the Board once that information has been received. It was acknowledged prior to entering into any type of settlement, consideration needs to be weighed as to what may be forfeited by accepting what may be offered in an early settlement.

Recycling & Disposal (RDF) Update. Director Cohen referred to the Transfer Haul Building and confirmed that the installation of the fabric replacement has been completed and the t-walls are back in place. With regard to the baler, challenges continue as the unit continues to malfunction for extended periods of time. The frequency of its being down presents an issue, which raises the question of the potential need for replacement of that unit.

Director Cohen inquired if Chair Korpi wished to provide any comments about the 3R Working Group's progress accomplished to date. Ms. Korpi conveyed the group is close to launching a one-page flyer to be mailed to residents who have signed up for utility account, which speaks of benefits of public works and the Municipal Light Plant.

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Area merchants have offered to provide coupons to be included in the package for new residents. She conveyed it is estimated there are approximately 600 new accounts per year. Ms. Korpi conveyed this extended welcome to new residents will provide an additional dividend in that it is a way to build community. The Director extended his appreciation to Chair Korpi for her efforts on that work.

Special Town Meeting (STM). Director Cohen conveyed he has prepared a placeholder for this topic in case of a need for discussion. Mr. Cohen confirmed he plans to attend the October 26 Moderator's Meeting, though there are no BPW Articles, he will be there to provide support on two articles – the appropriation for the DPW Production and Supervisory Units collective bargaining settlement and will stand by for inquiries and the proposed Feasibility Study for Pickleball Courts in a portion of the Morses Pond Parking Lot.

DPW Building Renovation Projects Update. Director Cohen reported he has been working with Facilities Management Division (FMD) and Permanent Building Committee (PBC) staff to advance renovations of portions of two DPW Division properties. Mr. Cohen conveyed he would attend a PBC Meeting the evening of October 26 to obtain an update on these projects and discuss next steps, as well as the budget. He also confirmed the design has been included in FMD's budget for FY25.

FY 2025 DPW Tax Impact Capital Budget – V.1. Director Cohen referred to the initial version of this budget prepared by Assistant Director Jeff Azano-Brown, which summarizes the anticipated capital needs of the Department of Public Works for FY25 through FY29. The total FY25 Tax Impact Capital Budget's anticipated request from all sources is \$7,990,000. The FY25 cash capital request of \$6,200,000 is \$80,000 more than the \$6,120,000 FY25 projection in last year's five-year budget. The amount proposed to be funded through borrowing and the anticipated use of Chapter 90 funds and bonding funds is \$1,790,000.

Also referenced was a Capital 5 Year Plan Changes summary to help identify the changes from last year's plan. The Director confirmed Staff would be working with the Finance Department in the near term to balance the DPW capital budget needs with available funds. Mr. Cohen then referred to specific line items, which have changed from last year's plan for FY25. Those changes include Crosswalk Renovations; Road Reconstruction; Private Ways; DPW Facilities – Storage Shed Design; Elementary School Field Improvements; High School/Hunnewell Field; basketball court; and High School/Hunnewell Field Irrigation Improvements; Tennis & Basketball Court Improvements; and Vehicle and Equipment Replacement.

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Following the review, Director Cohen responded to specific inquiries from the Board. He also confirmed DPW staff will continue to refine the plan, will work with Financial Services to meet Town guidelines, and will provide a revised budget with more detailed information at the next BPW meeting.

FY 2025 DPW Tax Impact Operating Budget. Director Cohen referred to Version 1 of this budget prepared by Assistant Director Azano-Brown, which provides an overall sense of the anticipated tax impact operating needs for FY 2025. The total FY 2025 tax impact request, including RDF Business Initiatives, is \$8,125,220, which is an increase of \$302,048 (3.9%) over the FY24 budget.

Director Cohen then referred to the specific line items which reflected an increase for Personal Services in the amount of \$233,799, which included Management Pay Plan increases; Production Unit salaries; Supervisory Unit salaries; and the net effect of position changes, salary adjustments and staff hired at different amounts.

Mr. Cohen also referred to the Expense Budget increase in the amount of \$49,290. He conveyed that of that total amount, \$47,250 was due to an increase in the RDF Expense Budget due to a contractual increase in trash disposal costs. Director Cohen conveyed the remaining increase of \$2,040 is for Water and Sewer price increases.

The Director conveyed that no changes in allocations have been made from last year's budget. He confirmed those allocation details would be included in the next version of this budget, which will meet the Town guidelines.

FY 2025 Water & Sewer Budgets. Director Cohen referred to the initial version of the Water and Sewer Operating and Capital Budget, which provides the projected anticipated needs for FY 2025. The total FY 2025 combined request is \$34,330,867, which is an increase of \$10,781,646 or 45.8% over the FY24 budget. Mr. Cohen explained the significant increase is primarily due to capital investments including additional PFAS treatment upgrades and design and construction costs for a potential second connection to the MWRA water supply.

Mr. Cohen then reviewed the highlights of the increases in each of the following categories -- Personal Services – increase of \$101,573; MWRA Expenses – increase of \$494,296; and, All Other Expenses – increase of \$17,927.

For the Capital Budget, the Director conveyed the preliminary Five-Year Capital Plan for both Water and Sewer includes \$1.7M for a PFAS treatment solution at Longfellow, and \$1M for continued operation and filter media replacement of the interim system that is currently in place at Morses.

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Mr. Cohen explained an additional \$8M has been budgeted for additional design and possible construction for a second connection to the MWRA water facility.

Other water capital expenses include water distribution system improvements such as cleaning, lining and replacement of water mains.

Sewer system capital will address sewer manhole and pipe rehabilitation as well as improvements to ejector stations.

Mr. Cohen conveyed no changes have been made in allocations from last year's budget and those details will be included in the next version.

FY 2025 Stormwater Enterprise Fund Budget. Director Cohen referred to the initial version of the FY25 Stormwater Operating and Capital Budget, which provides a preliminary view of the DPW's anticipated needs for FY 2025. The total FY 2025 request is \$1,869,002, which is a decrease of \$105,230, or 5.3% compared to the FY24 budget.

Mr. Cohen summarized the highlights, starting with Personal Services – increase of \$19,770. He explained the Stormwater Enterprise Program is managed and operated by the DPW Tax Impact employees whose costs are charged to the Enterprise Fund as they support the program. Planned changes to the salaries include Management Pay Plan increases; Production Unit salaries; and Supervisory Unit salaries.

Mr. Cohen explained no changes are planned for Expenses at this time.

Capital Budget – decrease of \$125,000 – Director Cohen referred to the Five -Year Capital Plan which includes recurring programs for Drainage System Rehabilitation, Repairs, Infrastructure Improvements, and Equipment Replacement.

Allocations – No changes have been made in allocations from last year's budget. the details will be included in the next version of this budget.

As is the case for the other budgets, staff will continue to work to make further changes and reductions in this budget before the next submittal.

Based on this budget, the Director conveyed no rate increase will be required next year.

At the next meeting Staff will provide more refined versions of the four budgets reviewed tonight.

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Statement of Fact Activity Report. Director Cohen acknowledged the standing placeholder for this item on the agenda and confirmed there were no recent purchases to report within this category.

DPW Monthly Report. The Director referred to division highlights listed in the current report for the month of September, including Key Performance Goals, Key Challenges and Opportunities and Key Metrics. Information reflected in this report is from the Department's Engineering; Highway; Park & Tree; Recycling & Disposal Facility; Water & Sewer; and Health & Safety Divisions, as well as a listing of Coming Events and Additional Information.

It was noted by the Board that the number of street opening permits was down during this most recent season. Staff will attempt to determine why that was the case and report back at the next meeting with their findings.

Ms. Korpi gave kudos to Water & Sewer Superintendent Olsen on work related to the goals for that division.

Following the Director's conclusion referencing the Monthly Report, the Board thanked Mr. Cohen for providing such an outstanding recap of current activities.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Bender and seconded by Mr. Wechsler, the Board was polled and it was unanimously,

VOTED: To adjourn (3-0).

Ms. Korpi – Yes
Mr. Wechsler – Yes
Mr. Bender – Yes

The meeting adjourned at 6:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Scott Bender
Secretary

DISCUSSION ITEMS
WELLESLEY BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS REMOTE ONLINE MEETING
October 17, 2023
5:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER. It is _____ PM and I am going to call to order the October 17, 2023 meeting of the Wellesley Board of Public Works. This meeting may be viewed via live stream on Wellesley Media.org and on Comcast Channel 9 and Verizon Channel 39. It is being recorded by Wellesley Media for subsequent viewing on Wellesley Media.org. This is a ZOOM meeting with the following members of the Wellesley Board of Public Works present and participating remotely -- myself, Ellen Korpi, Jeff Wechsler and Scott Bender.

A. APPROVAL OF BPW MEETING MINUTES. Board to review the Open Session Minutes of the meeting of the September 19, 2023 meeting. **BOARD APPROVAL AND SECRETARY SIGNATURE REQUIRED.**

B. CITIZEN SPEAK. Chair Korpi to inquire if any participants have called in to the meeting.

C. ADVISORY COMMITTEE LIAISON UPDATE. Mr. Pedersen to be invited to bring any information to the attention of the Board and Staff. **NO BOARD ACTION REQUIRED.**

D. DIRECTOR'S ITEMS

E. MORSES POND PARKING LOT PICKLEBALL COURTS DISCUSSION. Director to refer to presentation and request made by Recreation Department representatives at the September 19 BPW meeting. References to include e-mail correspondence received since the last BPW Meeting. **BOARD FEEDBACK REQUESTED.**

F. STORMWATER ISSUES AND DISCUSSION. Director to initiate discussion on recent issues encountered and future planning preparations. **BOARD FEEDBACK REQUESTED.**

G. PFAS UPDATE. Director to refer to most recent activity related to this matter. **NO BOARD ACTION REQUIRED.**

H. RECYCLING & DISPOSAL FACILITY UPDATE. Director to provide update on recent activity at the Facility. **NO BOARD ACTION REQUIRED.**

I. SPECIAL TOWN MEETING (STM). Director to initiate discussion on any Article that could impact the Department of Public Works. **NO BOARD ACTION REQUIRED.**

J. DPW BUILDING RENOVATION PROJECT UPDATE. Director to review status of current project planning. **BOARD FEEDBACK REQUESTED.**

K. FY 2025 DPW TAX IMPACT CAPITAL BUDGET. Director to refer to Version 1 of this budget. **BOARD FEEDBACK REQUESTED.**

L. FY 2025 DPW TAX IMPACT OPERATING BUDGET. Director to refer to Version 1 of this budget. **BOARD FEEDBACK REQUESTED.**

M. FY 2025 WATER & SEWER BUDGETS. Director to refer to Version 1 of these budgets. **BOARD FEEDBACK REQUESTED.**

N. FY 2025 STORMWATER BUDGET. Director to refer to Version 1 of this budget. **BOARD FEEDBACK REQUESTED.**

P. STATEMENT OF FACT ACTIVITY REPORT. Director to confirm there are no recent purchases to report within this category. **NO BOARD ACTION REQUIRED.**

Q. WATER & SEWER RATES. Director to engage the Board in a follow-up discussion related to the most recently approved rate increases. **BOARD FEEDBACK REQUESTED.**

R. DPW MONTHLY REPORT. Director to refer to division highlights listed in current report. **NO BOARD ACTION REQUIRED.**