

**MARION BOARD OF SELECTMEN
WATER/SEWER COMMISSIONERS
Special Meeting
April 22, 2008
Minutes**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. Present were Chairman Roger F. Blanchette, Board members Andrew N. Jeffrey and Jonathan F. Henry and Town Administrator Paul F. Dawson. Also present were Lee Craver, Kenneth J. Souza of *The Wanderer*, Andrea Smith of the *Tri-Town Observer*, Stuart Richardson, A. Lee Hayes, Albin R. Johnson, III, Arnold Briggs, Stephen M. Cushing, Steven Grima, Robert Luchetti, David K. Pierce, Eunice Manduca, Superintendent of Public Works Robert C. Zora, CDM representative William McConnell and Helene Craver, secretary.

Messrs. Zora and McConnell met with the Board. Mr. Blanchette said that he had read the report on the sewer plant, but he is not an engineer. Mr. McConnell explained that the report stated that the plant could handle 393 additional connections at 68,000 gallons per day—121 are grandfathered connections, which leaves 272 residential connections available. Mr. McConnell said that the plant cannot accept the additional load without reducing the I&I, which would take some modifications (flow rate being discharged and permitted). Mr. McConnell said that, right now, the plant is running slightly higher than the permitted level—adding to it would make the plant much more noticeable to the Department of Environmental Protection. Mr. McConnell explained that infiltration was definitely a major limiting factor in the plant's capacity. Mr. Jeffrey asked how much I&I would have to be eliminated before the plant could accept additional connections? Mr. McConnell said that there would have to be a gallon-for-gallon trade.

A discussion followed regarding the current village loop project to replace antique and decayed piping. Mr. Jeffrey asked what kind of flow improvement will this project produce? Mr. McConnell said that there is no absolute number, because when a leak is repaired at one level, there are leaks again the next level up. Mr. McConnell said that his best guess at the gain for the village loop would be approximately 120 connections. Mr. Blanchette noted that 121 connections are already promised and have to be included in the calculations.

Mr. Blanchette said that, about four years ago, there was a rumor spreading that anyone on sewer would have their system checked to see where water was being pumped and there was widespread panic because many people had hoses pumping water out of their basements into the street, driveway or off the property line. Mr. Blanchette said that this is part of the I&I—every time it rains, the sump pumps come on and the water goes into the sewer system. Mr. Zora said that unauthorized connection to the sewer was an illegal practice, which has been detected through smoke tests when the Department of Public Works cleans the lines. Mr. Zora noted that residents have been notified to disconnect, but that people reconnect anyway.

Mr. Henry felt it was important to take the long view. He noted that, in old cities such as New Bedford, sewer and stormwater systems are combined—over the years, it has become necessary to separate the two. Mr. Henry said that he was wondering if the Town should be planning for a stormwater runoff and collection system. Mr. Henry wondered if such a system would require aeration or pretreatment. Mr. Zora noted that the lagoons are aerated now; there is biological activity over a sixty-day period and the lagoons are still working perfectly—they are very lucky to have them. Mr. Zora explained that the lagoons are unlined on clay soil, which prevents them from leaching into the groundwater; however, unlined lagoons are being phased out by the Department of Environmental Protection. Mr. Henry was hopeful that updating the sewer regulations would dovetail with what the plant can do.

A discussion followed on the possibility of receiving industrial waste. Mr. McConnell said that there doesn't appear to be any at the present time. Mr. Zora noted that any industrial waste would require the assistance of the Town's engineers and the State; it would require divided lines to segregate it from the general flow.

Mr. Jeffrey suggested the 121 grandfathered connections be reviewed to be sure they are still needed. Mr. Zora said that the Town should also work on a method of getting stormwater out of people's basements and into the stormwater system, but expressed concern for the Town's liability and private property issues. Mr. Zora said that there needs to be the ability to fine people who are illegally connecting to the system. Mr. McConnell indicated that there needs to be an incentive to solve the problem, not just fines.

Mr. Jeffrey said that he would like to plan the next step, or six months from now, we will all still be talking. Mr. Jeffrey suggested Messrs. McConnell, Zora and Dawson meet to set priorities, costs and timetables. Mr. Blanchette agreed. Mr. Zora felt that the Town should look at the drainage now, before the roads are reconstructed. Mr. McConnell said that the Town would need to remove the I&I before the State would allow an increase in the discharge permit.

The problems of groundwater and stormwater were again discussed. Mr. McConnell said that almost any Town in New England has the same problem—it is very common—a 30-40% removal rate is "usual". Mr. Blanchette reminded everyone that there are two rivers flowing beneath the village; the sum pumps are in use continuously.

Mr. Hayes praised the report and concluded that the I&I accounts for two-thirds of the volume the plant must process. Mr. McConnell agreed. Mr. Hayes also noted that the present plant is doing a fairly good job of treating the nitrogen, but the State will focus on the number and expect improvement—the Town should keep this in mind, as a request to increase the discharge will result in a mandate to decrease the nitrogen level. Mr. Blanchette said that it is quite possible that, if the Town increases the I&I to the plant, it will increase the nitrogen level. Mr. Hayes said that that is the issue; Mr. McConnell agreed that this is a possible scenario. Mr. Jeffrey said that if the Town moves quickly on the connections, the consequences are not worth the action. Mr. Hayes pointed out that back-lot subdivisions could cause more problems in the sewer target areas.

Mr. Pierce suggested the Selectmen reappoint a Sewer Committee to investigate and plan; this may be the time to consider such an appointment.

Mr. Johnson reported that the Board of Health had met this afternoon and is concerned about areas which it feels are imperative be connected to the public sewer, rather than septic systems, which do not treat nitrogen. Mr. Blanchette asked Mr. Johnson for more information on this subject.

Mr. Henry moved May 10 Arbor Day in Marion; the motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

Mr. Jeffrey moved to appoint Mr. Henry to continue to represent the Town on SRPEDD and on the Joint Transportation Planning Group; the motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

The Board signed the Warrant for the Special Town Meeting, which was necessitated by the Planning Board's submitting Articles post the closing date for the Annual Town Meeting Warrant.

Mr. Jeffrey moved to adjourn at 8:15 p.m.; the motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,


Jonathan F. Henry, Clerk

Date approved: