

# **BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING**

MINUTES OF

January 21, 2020

Buzzards Bay Water District 15 Wallace Ave. Buzzards Bay, MA 02532

## **MINUTES**

### **Present:**

Wendy Chapman, Chairperson  
Joe Carrara, Commissioner  
Judith Flynn, Commissioner  
Barry Woods, Admin. Support  
Louise Warren – Billing Clerk  
Steven Souza – Superintendent  
Peter Meier – Resident

The meeting was called to order by Wendy Chapman, Chairperson, at 4:00 pm.

### **Approval of meeting minutes dated 12/10/2019**

Judith Flynn made a MOTION to approve the minutes dated 12/10/19.  
Joseph Carrara seconded that motion, and all in favor.

### **Approval of the December 2019 billing commitment**

Judith Flynn made a MOTION to approve the December 2019 billing commitment.  
Joseph Carrara seconded that motion, and all in favor.

Wendy stated that since the anticipated guest from Mass Maritime Academy was not in attendance, the meeting would be taken out of order in case they arrived late.

### **Superintendents Report** presented by Steven Souza, Superintendent

Joe Carrara asked if we could use the Sheriff's dept for any other work around the office. Steve replied that we do not have any other projects around the office at this time.

**Treasurers Report** Jennifer Kelson, Treasurer, was away on vacation and unable to attend meeting, but provided a report for review. Judy Flynn read the report aloud. Judy Flynn also suggested that it may be a good idea if we provide Quickbooks financial statements at the annual meeting.

### **Anticipated Guest: Representative, Mass Maritime Academy**

### **New Business: Presentation by the Board to MMA**

After pushing them to the end of the agenda, Mass Maritime Academy had still not shown up. Therefore, Wendy Chapman proceeded with the agenda by reviewing the information she gathered for the intended presentation.

Barry spoke and shared the information he had put together for the meeting. His fact sheet showed the # of accounts in upper tier. There are 467 accounts (43 commercial and 424 residential) in upper tier (representing approx. 20% of all accounts). Wendy stated that the impression she gets is that MMA does not feel they should pay tax because they fall into the higher water rate. Barry emphasized that tax is separate from water usage. 38% of the country has inclining block rate. Block rates helps support conservation. Those who use the most, pay the most. The extra water rate revenue from high tier accounts is off set by the extra expenses a high user such as the Academy incurs. Extra expenses include such things as cost of chemicals, cost of energy, more operating expenses, increased workload and necessary man-power. A large portion of the revenue earned is offset by expenses we have to pay in order to provide that water.

Property is being removed from the tax rolls. MMA properties on Taylors Point were removed from tax roll when they established the Academy. Every time they buy property in Buzzards Bay, our revenue stream goes down as a result of removing property from tax roll. In addition, when MMA purchases property then turns that parcel into a parking lot, the District also loses out on potential water rate revenue because parking lots do not use water.

In regards to future water rates, Barry suggested keeping the base charge the same (\$81), adding one more tier (a 4<sup>th</sup> high tier rate), and also changing the billing cycle to quarterly billing beginning fiscal 2022 (starts in July of 2021). BBWD should also consider adding a surcharge for capital improvements. Public should be told 6 months in advance of any billing changes.

Barry expressed how we may want to consider adding a 4<sup>th</sup> tier to try to recoup funds. 36% of the country's water depts have 3 tiers. 24% of country has 4 tiers. Wendy stated that adding another tier does make sense.

Peter asked if the board has the authority to add a tier or if the board will have to go before the town for a vote. Wendy answered that according to the law the board has full authority to vote on the rates and rate changes.

Wendy brought up Pilot programs and explained to Judy that Paul O'Keefe of MMA came to a prior meeting and asked which other state universities had a pilot program with Towns. Wendy explained that both Bridgewater State and Worcester have pilots with the Town. Peter Meier commended Wendy's research and efforts.

Wendy explained that BBWD does not get money from the Cherry sheet. She explained that the Town's would not be receptive to losing \$ if Districts were added to the Cherry Sheet. Two bills are up with the Senate and the House that would impact money given to the District. These bills are set up to help municipal and district rate payers. Vinnie Demacedo sponsored one of the bills. Wendy stated that it would benefit the district if we could get the support of the new senator, two state reps and legislature. House and Senate bill numbers are House 861 and Senate 506.

Barry Woods presented information and a couple of worksheets he created showing how our expenses are covered. He also provided a worksheet he created explaining rate setting conditions and the challenges that the district faces. Wendy asked if the Board had any questions or

comments. Joe Carrara stated that Mass Maritime did not show up to meeting and their absence speaks for itself. He suggested we can try to get support thru legislature.

**Any business not reasonably anticipated within 48 hours** None

**Commissioners comments/select next meeting date**

Next Meeting set for Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020 @ 4:00 pm to review the Budget for FY2021

**ADJOURNMENT**

Wendy Chapman made a MOTION to adjourn the meeting at 4:57 pm. Joe Carrara seconded that motion, and all in favor.

Prepared by: Jennifer Kelson, Treasurer  
Buzzards Bay Water District