

Town of Hillsborough Water & Sewer Commission
March 13, 2025 Meeting Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. Present were Commissioners Peter Mellen, Dave Lewis and Dana Clow; and Penny Griffin, Water and Sewer Administrator.

Also in attendance were Selectmen Jim Bailey, Rich Pelletier, and Iris Campbell, and Highway Foreman Ernie Butler.

1. The group reviewed the 100% Park and Whittemore Street project plan set. Ernie Butler asked if all of the project area will be reclaimed. The Commissioner Mellen stated that Whittemore Street will be rebuilt, with all the existing material taken out and replaced with new gravels, and Park Street and Park Avenue will be reclaimed. Selectman Pelletier asked what reclaimed means. Commissioner Lewis stated that the contractor will grind up all the existing material to be reused for the material under the new pavement. Ernie Butler asked if they will be putting gravel all the way down to the sewer main level which the Commissioners have stated will be 6 to 8 feet deep. Commissioner Dave Lewis said no and then explained typically how construction of a project such as this one with sewer, water, drainage and paving items is done. Commissioner Lewis explained that the contractor will typically go over the area 4 times; the first time they will install the sewer as it is the deepest; next, the contractor will install the water main then the drainage and the last pipes installed will be the water and sewer laterals to connect the existing services to the new mains. Commissioner Lewis stated that this project will also include the installation of cellar drain stubs to each property right-of-way edge for the property owner to tie into at their cost if they have an existing sump pump or need one in the future.

The Commissioners confirmed that there will be a resident engineer onsite to monitor construction.

A discussion was held regarding putting the project out to bid. The Commissioners stated that the bid process requires a 4-week process and if they get the bid ads out by the last week of March, they could open bids at the end of April. Commissioner Lewis expressed his concern that it may be late in the season to get bids for construction this year but suggested moving forward with the process as there may be some contractors still looking for projects. Commissioner Peter Mellen stated that the cost to bid the project is about \$8,000 to be split between the Town and Water & Sewer Commission. Commissioner Mellen stated that if no viable bids are received, the project would need to be rebid in September 2025 for construction in 2026 and noted that the \$8,000 bid cost would need to be paid again. All Selectmen and Commissioners agreed that it would be best to bid the project now as the further it is pushed out it is likely the cost of the project will continue to increase.

Commissioner Lewis stated that Underwood Engineers will need to coordinate the bidding of the project with NHDES as the Commission has applied for State Aid Grant funding (SAG) for the sewer aspect of the project and there are criteria that must be met for NHDES in order to be eligible for future funds for this project, if available.

Commissioner Lewis advised the Selectmen that there is/was a NHDES grant for the stormwater aspect which he suggested the Selectmen look into applying for in April or, if the Selectmen decide, they could ask Underwood Engineers to submit the application for them.

The group discussed how long the construction is expected to take. The Commissioners stated that the project will take a season; if the project gets awarded in April, it will have a seasonal end date of Columbus Day to ensure that it is at least binder paved before cold weather.

Ernie Butler asked if there is a sidewalk component included in the project. The Commissioners confirmed that in a previous meeting, the Selectmen and the Commissioners had agreed to include a sidewalk on Whittemore Street as installing a sidewalk during road reconstruction is cost effective and it aligns with the Selectmen's desire to make Hillsborough a walk able community.

Selectman Rich Pelletier asked when the property owners on Whittemore Street will be advised that the cellar drain stubs are being installed for them to use. Commissioner Dave Lewis stated that there will be a meeting with the affected property owners after the contract is awarded, that way the Contractor will be able to have a representative at the meeting to answer any questions as well.

The group reviewed and discussed the construction current cost estimate for the Park and Whittemore Street project provided by Underwood Engineers:

- \$724,000 sewer work
- \$459,000 water work
TOTAL DUE HWSC = \$1,183,000
- \$472,000 drainage work
- \$615,000 road work
TOTAL DUE BOS = \$1,087,000

Selectwoman Iris Campbell stated that the BOS have \$687,000 budgeted for the project currently and \$30,000 was given to the Commission towards the design of the project. Penny Griffin advised the group that the total cost of the project design was \$176,500; water and sewer funds provided the remaining \$146,500. The Selectmen stated they had budgeted \$717,000 per the original estimated cost discussed. Commissioner Peter Mellen stated that as the design has progressed the updated cost estimates had been

emailed to Laura Buono to keep the Selectmen informed. Selectman Pelletier asked the Commissioners if they have the funds for their portion of the project, to which the Commissioners answered yes. Selectwoman Campbell stated that they only have the \$687,000 available for this year. Commissioner Lewis stated that if that is the case the project should wait to be bid until the fall for construction in 2026 but cautioned that the costs would likely increase. Commissioner Jim Bailey suggested that the Selectmen may be able to allocate some of the funds acquired from the workforce housing project for infrastructure as they have not allocated any of those funds for anything specific yet. The Selectmen stated that they will need to discuss the remainder of the funding needed for their portion at their next meeting.

Commissioner Dana Clow stated that putting the project out to bid now will provide information on whether there is current contractor interest and what the current bid prices are.

A discussion was held regarding the project contract ownership and administration. All agreed that the Town of Hillsborough will be the contract Owner as the Town owns the infrastructure. As with the Bridge Street sewer replacement project, the Selectmen would like to authorize Commissioner Peter Mellen to sign the contracts, pay requests and change orders. They would also like to have the Commission facilitate the contract payments and the Selectmen would pay the Commission for their portions of the invoice. The Selectmen will formalize these decisions at a future Selectmen's meeting after the contract is awarded.

Commissioner Peter Mellen asked the Selectmen to designate one of the 3 of them to be the project liaison to be a primary contact if there is an important issue during the bidding and construction phases. Commissioner Clow echoed the request and stated there are invariably issues that come up and decisions need to be made that can't wait 2 weeks for a regular meeting.

Selectman Pelletier suggested that later in the year the group should put out a public notice identifying the issues they face, what they are doing and how much this project costs in an effort to educate the community.

2. Selectman Pelletier asked if the Town should consider doing a much larger scale project to address the old sewer mains and bond some of it; possibly a shared cost project with state funds, the Town paying a portion and the Commission paying a portion. Commissioner Dave Lewis stated that there is some merit to that idea because the State tends to take notice of larger projects. Commissioner Lewis did note that the Commission has been applying for these funds for several years and has not been awarded any funds. Commissioner Lewis also stated that NHDES SRF and SAG

applications must be submitted per project and that a design plan, the cost of which is not a small amount, needs to be submitted with an application.

Selectman Pelletier surmised that if such a large project like this was done it would accomplish a couple things: 1 – it would relieve the Commission of having to fund these projects entirely and 2 – it would help the available sewer capacity issue by removing a significant amount of inflow and infiltration. Selectman Pelletier stated that it is his belief that the sooner these projects are done, the better off the Town would be for future growth. The Commissioners confirmed that they are not opposed to such a holistic approach. Commissioner Mellen explained that the current plan is to complete a project like Park and Whittemore Street every 3 years. He went on to explain that these projects are being paid from the capital reserve accounts; the Park and Whittemore Street project will use the existing funds, and the Commission will need to regenerate the funds for the next project. Selectman Pelletier asked if the Commission is currently putting away the \$500,000 a year that was recommended in the sewer asset management plan. The Commissioners explained that a step approach to get to that level was proposed in the asset management plan and with the next 25% rate increase in 2026 they will be closer to that amount; they are currently putting away \$241,000. Commissioner Peter Mellen stated that compared to the rest of the state our sewer rates are not astronomical but posed the question, how far do you raise the rates before they're unaffordable. Commissioner Mellen went on to say that the Commission also implemented the System Development charge to help raise the funds needed.

Commissioner Lewis noted that the current WWTP design is dated and that Jaffrey and Peterborough have replaced their plants.

Commissioner Dana Clow stated the difficulty may be convincing non-users to buy into this bond approach. All agreed it could be beneficial to investigate.

3. The Commissioners told the Selectman that along with these main replacement projects, there are aging components at the wastewater facility that are reaching the end of their life and need to be replaced. For instance, the Commissioners are looking into replacing the existing blowers and the estimated cost per blower, uninstalled, is about \$70,000 each; there are 3 blowers.
4. Penny Griffin advised the group that she will be working on completing the DWSRF loan application for the Potholing project to identify the unknown water service lines that was approved at Town Meeting, and it will require Selectman Jim Baileys signature. Selectman Bailey advised Penny Griffin to email him directly if it is ready for signature next week as Laura Buono is on vacation.

5. Commissioner Dana Clow noted that an agreement outlining who is responsible to pay what will need to be created and signed by both boards.
6. Penny Griffin will email Laura Buono with the bid dates.

7:35 pm Ernie Butler and Selectmen Jim Bailey, Rich Pelletier, and Iris Campbell left the meeting.

7. The Commissioners reviewed and signed a formal violation notification and issued a \$500 fine to 5 Henniker St Realty for their non-compliant grease trap violation. The notice advises the owner of the ordinances regarding the issuing of penalties and the process to request a hearing before the Commissioners if they don't agree. If the non-compliant device is not replaced with an automatic grease trap or a request for a hearing is not filed by March 28, 2025, the Commissioners will assume that 5 Henniker St Realty LLC does not contest the alleged violation and the Commissioners will proceed with all enforcement action(s) that are authorized by the Code, its Rules and Regulations and New Hampshire law.
8. The Commission discussed possible water ordinance wording change for meters and billing rates. Other communities' ordinances were reviewed for reference. The group will continue to work on the draft ordinance wording change at a future meeting.
9. The Commissioners reviewed and authorized the following:
 - a) 2025 AP Voucher #4 W= \$18,250.45 S= \$23,414.13
 - b) February 25, 2025 meeting minutes
 - c) Timecards
10. A discussion was held regarding the Town changing the accounting system software. Penny Griffin advised the Commissioners that she has requested more information from Laura Buono such as the cost and how it will affect water and sewer. Penny will forward information to the Commissioners as she receives it for them to review and discuss at a future meeting.
11. Commissioner Dave Lewis asked for a status update on the easement clearing. Penny Griffin advised the Commissioners that Operators Cody Boisvert and Alex Mellen have been walking the easements and marking them for the contractor.
12. Commissioner Dana Clow motioned to nominate Commissioner Peter Mellen for the Chairman position of the board. Commissioner Dave Lewis seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Commissioner Dave Lewis motioned to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Dana Clow seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Penny Griffin, Administrator

Water and Sewer Commissioners Meeting Minutes
Approved by:

Date:

Peter Mellen, Chairman

Dana Clow

Dave Lewis
Water and Sewer Commissioners