

TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES
Public Works Committee
October 11, 2022
Town Council Chambers

Present: Kenneth DiFazio, Chair
Greg Shanahan, Vice Chair
Lisa Belmarsh, Councilor
Christopher Heffernan, Councilor
Arthur Mathew, Councilor

Also Present: Richard McLeod, Town Solicitor
Robert Luongo, Director of Planning
Kenan Connell, DPW Director
David Tower, Business Manager
MaryEllen Schloss, Conservation Administrator
Mayor Hedlund

Recording Secretary: Mary Barker

Chair DiFazio called the meeting to order at 6:32 PM. He instructed the audience that the committee would not take questions from the public at this time. The agenda consists of two items, both interrelated.

Discussion on Status of Water/Sewer in Town -Questions submitted to administration

Discussion: -Tide Mill Creek Study -Review of water/sewer process

The issue was referred to the Public Works Committee on September 7, 2021. The issues of water capacity and leakage within the system were brought to light and were dormant as the Union Point development scope was changed; however, Mayor Hedlund suggested the MWRA may be tapped for water for both the UP project as well as the rest of Weymouth. This made many people curious and so the chair fielded questions from the public and the council which were submitted to the administration. A handout was provided to the committee as an exhibit- Q & A.

QUESTIONS FOR THE PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE MEETING

1. First and foremost, MWRA was originally a plan solely for Union Point. Is now the plan to bring MWRA for the whole town?

Mayor Hedlund noted some of the questions are redundant, and some may require follow up.

Mayor Hedlund responded that they are exploring options and deciding whether to bring in MWRA. The town is exploring all options. No decision has been made. It is incumbent on the master developer of UP to come up with a water source. It is possible it will take the direction of MWRA, and the town is looking to see if it makes sense for the rest of the town. Rep. Mariano paid for a study the region. The feasibility study paid for through this legislative earmark is identifying the most cost-effective route to bring water. MWRA will waive the fee for hookup if that is the direction taken. There are a lot of favorable factors, but what does it mean to ratepayers if the town moves in that direction. MWRA is rated best quality in the country. The study is ongoing.

Vice Chair Shanahan asked who is paying for the study? Mayor Hedlund responded it is through a legislative earmark through the state.

Councilor Belmarsh asked which parties are involved in the study. Mayor Hedlund responded that the group present, The Chief of Staff and Environmental Partners. MWRA is using its own consultant. Brookfield is exploring with their consultant. The capital costs will be borne by the developer. There is a level of coordination.

2. What is the estimated loss of water on a daily basis due to infrastructure issues and problems with our delivery system?

Unaccounted loss is at 22% and the town continues to make improvements to the system. The chair asked if they are required to get that to 10%?. Mr. Tower responded that the meters are being replaced. They are looking at zero-use homes. They do leak detection on an annual basis and will be tracking irrigation systems. They work with contractors to use hydrometers. There are numerous users, and they are trying to account for it all. They are also proactive with water main breaks and repairs.

Councilor Heffernan asked where Weymouth stands in relation to other communities? Mr. Tower responded that some are worse and some better. Councilor Heffernan asked what the average age of equipment. Mr. Tower responded well over 60-70.

Vice Chair Shanahan asked if one specific area is worse than others? Mr. Tower responded no.

Chair DiFazio noted it appears from the state's point of view that Weymouth will be required to get the number down in order to get more water.

3. What is our current water usage of the town in total and how much under or over capacity are we based on MA regulation?
4. If there's infrastructure repair or upgrades that are needed, can you estimate the cost of those repairs to ensure that our loss of water is mitigated?
5. If the infrastructure was repaired, could the town sustain growth on Great Pond alone without the revenue plans the administration has proposed in the 2023 (and beyond) budget?

Mr. Tower responded that the town is permitted for 5 mgd, and is currently using 4.5 mgd. The distribution system is being addressed through main improvements, and a new water treatment plant. Mitigation from contractors is being used to deal with some of the repairs. The town can't go over the limits, but also use well water that is treated.

Councilor Mathews noted the 4.6 is an average for the yearly use- it fluctuates day to day and season to season. He asked if there was any day this summer that it went over 5 mgd this summer. Mr. Tower responded that he was unsure, but it's possible.

6. What is the plan to pay for these infrastructure costs? Is there a plan to try and get developers to foot the bill or will the state help in some way?

Mayor Hedlund responded that it is all of the above. They are looking at ARPA, state funding, mitigation and developers.

The chair asked if the town missed an opportunity to get the developers perform more mitigation? Mayor Hedlund responded that it's possible, but there must be a balance in fees. They were significant while under a Consent Order from the state..

7. What is the plan to supplement our supply in the future without MWRA if our needs cannot meet the development and revenue plans of the town?
8. If there's significant water loss above 7-10% (2 out of three years), how will we qualify for MWRA or do we have to repair our existing system before enabling MWRA?

Mayor Hedlund responded that efforts toward MWRA has been in the works for some time. The town is in the same situation as other non-MWRA towns. The chair noted it appears they are leaning that way. The Mayor responded that an analysis of rates, and it will be vetted before the taxpayers, and requires council approval.

Councilor Heffernan noted the town won't be able to go from 22 to 10% overnight. The town previously was required to do a housing production study- is it possible of doing the same to reduce unaccounted water in order to submit a provisional application?

The mayor responded that there is discussion; they don't know if that would be a deal-breaker or not. There are some existing MWRA communities that are above the 10%.

9. If MWRA is approved, can you estimate the additional cost per resident that could be incurred in their water bill?

Mayor Hedlund responded that there are too many variables, but it would likely result in a minor increase. The handout included a spreadsheet of current rates as they fit into the MWRA's communities.

Councilor Belmarsh asked about the 2021 annual water quality report- there was one day that the combined mgp was over 7. The mayor responded that it likely occurred during COVID.

Councilor Mathews noted there are 200 municipalities- the others are using a tiered system. Mr. Tower responded that Weymouth is a 2-tier, but every community is different. The heavier users have higher rates.

The chair asked if the town could simultaneously provide water from its own sources and the MWRA?

The Mayor responded, probably not. The chair asked if he foresees using different sources for different sections of town? The Mayor responded that it was one of the options that came out in the LStar discussions; North Weymouth connection could have been tapped to provide North Weymouth with water from MWRA and free up water from the existing Weymouth system for Union Point. It is not under consideration. If they were to go with MWRA, it would be the entire town.

10. If MWRA is approved, will Great Pond be used as a backup to MWRA supply and will the water treatment facility be used? What will Great Pond be used for?

The Mayor responded that there is a lot of misinformation on this. Early evaluations are that it would become a backup supply for the town. DEP would still have a regulatory role. MWRA would not own Weymouth's water or pond. Ms. Schloss responded Whitmans Pond is an ecological resource, and there is interest in restoring it. Great Pond could also become an ecological resource, with passive recreational uses and possibly continue the herring run. They are hopeful they can get legislative assistance. Mayor Hedlund added that when the flood control gates were dedicated, a new department in Environmental Affairs- Division of Ecological Resources, and they learned there are grants, etc. for this purpose.

Mayor Hedlund added that Great Pond would be considered by MWRA the same as Whitmans Pond is for Weymouth today. Councilor Belmarsh asked if DEP sets the mgp. Mr. Tower responded yes. The mayor added that in discussion with MWRA and consultants the town would be limited to what they can use. upgrades to infrastructure above Weymouth would be required in order to provide additional water to areas south.

The Mayor added that a presentation will be made to the residents shortly by the UP developers. There has been a process in cleaning up title issues with LStar, which still owns land on UP.

Councilor Heffernan asked who is the winning bidder for the land GSA offered up to bid? The Mayor responded that it is the SRA.

11. If MWRA is approved, would there be a subsidy for elderly if there's an increase in water costs since this will largely be for "new growth"?

The Mayor added that they can't predict the rates. Since the creation of the MWRA the rates have been pretty consistent. On the town side, a senior discount is offered and can be tweaked each year.

12. If MWRA is approved, will the town commit to improving both quality and water levels of Mill River, Pond Meadow, and Whitman's Pond including options for water releases to minimize streamflow impacts and implementing conservation measure that go beyond the standard WMA permit requirements?

The Mayor responded that the goal is to continue to improve the ecological health of Weymouth. He outlined many of the examples done in his administration.

13. With the large acreage surrounding Great Pond, if MWRA is the main water source, what is the plan for the land and will the town commit to keeping it open space?

The mayor responded that it's in a watershed protection zone. Having a walking trail would be a deterrent to miscreants.

14. Why did the town build a water treatment plant with a capacity of processing 12 million gallons a day when our permitted amount is only 5 million gallons a day?

The Mayor responded that it was great foresight on the part of the Madden Administration.

15. Is the town selling water to Rockland or any other town, and how does this impact our mandated water ban?

The Mayor responded that the town does not sell water to Rockland. It is provided to 20 houses in Hingham and a few in Braintree that split property. They are charged a premium under an agreement signed by Mayor Kay.

Councilor Belmarsh asked if UP residents pay more? Mr. Tower responded that they pay the same rates, as Weymouth has taken over the billing. There is a small markup for individual metering there.

Councilor Mathews added that there is some development on Pine Street incorporated? Mayor Hedlund noted the collaborative school has an agreement previous to his administration and some on 53- but these are on the sewer side and not water.

16. Will the town participate in a cost analysis for moving to MWRA for both the cost of enabling the town and the cost per customer (resident)?
17. What is the planned hookup location for MWRA?

The mayor responded that is being done now in the overall discussions.

18. Is the town planning on selling water back to MWRA or to other towns?

The Mayor responded it would be a windfall for the town and ratepayers and it appears they may be able to, but it would depend on the capacity north of Weymouth and it may not exist to do so.

19. Please provide a detailed rate analysis for rate payers current average bills in comparison to the average when/if we sign up with MWRA? Akin to the analysis provided by the Assessors when submitting the tax rate ie: average bill for a 3-bedroom, 1 bath residence currently and if we join MWRA.

(covered previously)

20. Please provide a detailed spreadsheet citing the remaining bond payments due on the GPWTP—broken out by year. Also include any bond payments remaining on the Arthur Bilodeau plant.

(provided in the handout) Mr. Tower noted \$2.5 million is paid each year. Half will be paid in 2028 and the final in 2032. There is no bond on Bilodeau.

Councilor Mathews asked if payments will be an issue if they go to MWRA and they are not selling water? Mr. Tower responded that it's a fixed cost in the budget. Councilor Mathews responded that he hates paying a bond on a plant that would go dormant. Mr. Tower responded that it wouldn't; it would be used as a pump station.

21. Should the town join MWRA, how will we have funds available for water infrastructure improvements and water main improvements and breaks? Will there be any additional charges incurred by rate payers for these needed monies?
22. What is the plan to address over 20% of the unacceptable water in the water system which is leaking?

The Mayor responded it would continue to go to maintenance, repairs and upgrades. Councilor Mathews noted that each year they see increases on the sewer side from MWRA; some as high as 10%. He down not want to see the same on the water side.

Councilor Heffernan asked if ARPA funds could be used with the federal government focus on climate change and resource management, have any grants been identified to address this? The Mayor responded he has not heard of any, but ARPA funding can certainly be used.

Vice Chair Shanahan asked how much of the infrastructure repairs would the town be compelled to fix? The Mayor responded he is unsure. The town provides the date and MWRA will respond to the application.

23. Given the current situation we are in as it relates to water/sewer infrastructure, why hasn't administration put into place the conservation measures which were in effect years ago?

Developers should be required to go on a 3:1 ratio (for every gallon of water used in the system, they are required to save 3 gallons). This would aid in the payments incurred in replacement of infrastructure.

On the sewer side we should increase the wastewater requirement to 10:1. This would aid in the payment incurred to replace or realign leaking water mains or increase the capacity of current mains.

Mr. Tower responded that Weymouth is 6:1 mitigation; MWRA is 4:1. The town collects the mitigation fees which are used for capital projects. The program is still in effect.

24. Why hasn't administration held any community outreach meetings on such a monumental issue, much like those community meetings held for other town projects?

The Mayor responded there will be when they have all the information to allow for an educated presentation. The presentation at Town Meeting was simply to inform of the interest. The chair added that it is important to get the information out.

25. What are the issues with our current water system (including Union Point) and the current sewer system. Our understanding is the sewer system has capacity issues in some areas such as serving Union Point. With the recent failure on Bridge Street, how is the health of our overall sewer system?

The Mayor responded that it is showing its age; it will require continued maintenance. It is an ongoing effort to address issues that have existed a long time as well as those that crop up.

Councilor Belmarsh asked if SRA authorized an evaluation? Is there a report. Director Connell responded that it will be discussed with the public in the upcoming meeting. The mayor added that the current zoning is irrelevant on UP and Environmental Partners. Mr. Tower noted the report is in draft form and not released yet.

26. DPW needs to report on our water and sewer capacity. They have not flagged these two capacity and status areas to town officials. Requests from the public have been made and gone unanswered. How do we get these figures?

The Mayor responded that none of the department heads is aware of any unanswered questions.

27. The state DEP is planning to issue an evaluation on the Town water safe yield. as part of a regional review within the coming year. Has the Town prepared for this analysis?

The Mayor responded that it is ongoing. Mr. Tower added that the town is in a hold pattern. The final permit has not been issued, and it could come with restrictions. The town is in compliance and has asked for additional.

28. As there is rumor that the Administration is considering hooking up to the MWRA, a cost benefit analysis is needed. Has this been done?

The Mayor responded that it not a rumor; it is currently in process.

29. A less obvious analysis is over the possible land use and development impacts that will result by eliminating the need to protect our public water supply. Will future development happen surrounding our ponds? Will this be allowed?

The Mayor responded that it will enhance the water supply as an ecological. For anything to encroach would require a zoning change.

30. Hooking up to the MWRA can take 4 to 5 years. What is the plan in the short term to cover our water needs considering all of the new developments?

The Mayor responded that needs and usage are in compliance with the DEP permit.

The chair asked if petitioners before BZA must know what the daily increase is- shouldn't the town be able to follow the estimated usage of a project before them. The Mayor added that his administration has changed the way departments interact on projects. There is increased dialog. There is frequent give and take. When the water department looks at a project, they have a good sense of the estimated water usage.

31. How much will it cost the ratepayers in Weymouth to hook up to the MWRA?

(previously answered- unsure yet.)

32. Where will the hook up be? In North Weymouth near the compressor station? Or through Braintree?

The mayor responded that the route would be the most beneficial, economical and environmentally friendly, and they do now know yet where it will be.

Vice Chair Shanahan asked how many potential routes could there be? The Mayor responded a lot- North Weymouth, Braintree, Route 3, Holbrook, etc.. He has not seen the alternatives analysis yet. Vice Chair Shanahan asked if Weymouth would have a say in which route? The Mayor responded yes. Weymouth is the lead, with Environmental

Partner's consultation. Director Luongo responded that it will involve a MEPA process. Mr. Tower added that

Councilor Mathews added that whichever way it goes, the biggest cost will be getting the water from the Blue Hills. He would want all the costs broken down before voting any consideration of joining the MWRA. In 2005, Southfield moved forward without it.

33. What is the plan for distribution of the MWRA water? For instance, twelve years ago there was a "soft" plan to deliver MWRA water to only Union Point but this never transpired. Will the water be distributed through the Winter Street Station or only to North Weymouth or Union Point?

The Mayor responded that all options are part of the consideration.

Councilor Heffernan asked if there are pressurization standards with the hookup? Mr. Tower responded yes; it will all be dealt with.

34. In the Administration's Annual Town Report, the numbers presented of water use are not the same as what has been presented to the State, can you explain the

The Mayor responded no. they do not understand the question. Director Connell responded it could be the difference between calendar and fiscal year calculation.

Councilor Belmarsh noted that there are discrepancies. At Town Meeting the presentation indicated the town could exceed its goals within 5 years. Mr. Tower responded that the goal is always not to exceed 5 mgd. Through the application, they will request an increase.

35. The Town Report stated you have created a water supply working group, "with our engineers, Union Point Developers, and the MWRA to identify options and cost." How come there is no representation from Town Council, citizens, or Conservation on this committee?

The Mayor responded that the working group is defined as the technical people on the administration's side. There have been several meetings.

36. In the Annual Report it states that we will go over our allowable yield within the next 5 years. What is the forecast for development that is permitted or soon to be permitted and when we reach our maximum water draw of 5.0 mgd of water? In 2020 we exceeded our maximum draw so is 5 years a realistic predication?

Director Connell responded that it is. This was a drought year. They allow moderate growth and continue to manage it.

37. In the annual report you advertise that the town has a Safe Yield allowable of 6.27 mgd. Is this a figure you will seek to use in the future? Should there be an environmental impact study done on the impact of such an increase?

The Mayor responded that they can only pump what they are permitted. UP coming on line or hooking up to MWRA could change that; the sources are what they are.

38. Whitman's Pond is listed as an emergency source by the state. Is it permitted as an emergency only source?

The Mayor responded that it is not permitted as an emergency source. It is a secondary water supply (Whitmans Pond) under the DEP regulations.

Councilor Mathews noted it was always his understanding that only the South Cove is the secondary source and the main basin is the emergency source. Director Connell responded that this was questioned to their technical advisors and this was the answer they provided. Councilor Mathews would like to see the documentation of that.

39. Are there restrictions on water draw from Whitman's Pond?

The Mayor responded, no.

Councilor Mathews responded that there are times during the year when that is not true; when the herring spawn there are restrictions on opening the gate. Procedurally, there are restrictions.

40. March 2012 Water Supply Resource Summary states each source must be metered. How many gallons of water are redirected from Whitman's Pond to South Cove monthly over the past 10 years?

The Mayor responded that it is available in the DEP's annual statistical report, and it is updated monthly. Mr. Tower responded that there are two pumps. They pump 1.2 mgd and 3 million from South Cove a day.

41. Has the town communicated with the Herring Run Wardens addressing their concerns about the water levels of Whitman's Pond?

The Mayor responded that the wardens have. One warden has been reappointed. Numerous meetings were held with him. A lot of the Conservation Administrator's information to the administration also comes from the wardens.

42. According to protocol the Herring Run wardens are to be notified 24 to 48 hours in advance if they plan to operate the Washington Street pump station. Is that protocol being followed?

The Mayor responded that there is no formal protocol, but there is communication.

43. Will the town be considering banning boats on Whitman's Pond because it is a water source?

The Mayor responded that was a carryover from the previous administration and there was a proposal to either ban motor boats or limit the horsepower of the motors. It was a worthy effort to examine the issue. There are negative impacts of their use on Whitmans Pond.

44. Has the draft protocol ever been finalized for operation of the sluice gate and the Washington Street pump station? If so, are the recommendations of Brad Chase included in this protocol?

No protocol has been established.

45. The Winter Street well operation is regulated by the outflow of Whitman's Pond. Should these restrictions also be implemented on the WSPS and the Libbey Well to protect the health of the pond?

The Mayor responded that drinking water quality is the priority. Wells account for 25 % and would be abandoned if hooking up to MWRA. Some produce good quality drinking water; others less.

Councilor Heffernan asked about the invasive species in Whitmans Pond in the summer of 2021. The Mayor responded that it has been a challenge for all administrations. There is a management plan. Ms. Schloss added that the town has signed a contract to implement a 5-year strategy identified in a report. A public meeting will be held to provide information to the public. The invasive species, a vegetation on the surface was identified. Ms. Schloss noted there is a milfoil, fanwort problems and recent algae bloom.

Councilor Mathews noted that invasive species documented for over 40 years. He noted the level was too low to run the harvester. It's probably too late to start it up again this year. There is a sign up at the boat ramp advising boaters to check their boats and trailers. The sign could be improved. There's also the problem of Canadian geese and other waterfowl affecting the water quality.

Councilor Belmarsh asked what a sluice gate is. Councilor Mathews explained it and its purpose, which is to stop water from backfilling the South Cove.

46. Are there protocols in place to address the closing of the sluice gate during summer months to control low oxygen levels and fish kills?

The Mayor responded that they do their best to balance the concerns of the environmental needs against the availability of drinking water.

47. Has the mesh on the intake screen of the WSPS ben properly sized?

The Mayor responded that it was engineered at the time of installation. These issues go away if the town joins MWRA.

48. Can the town provide the required daily data from the staff gage located behind the Winter Street Well at the location of the Mill River and Middle Street?

Mr. Tower responded that it is available through the superintendent.

49. In the 2007 permitting process the town was required to adopt the Mass DEP Model Conservation Program and/or show significant progress towards UAW improvements. What has the town done?

Mr. Tower responded that it's the same as the questions on unaccounted water; there is nothing to add at this time.

50. Did the town submit a Seasonal Demand Plan which was due 8/1/2008 that includes restrictions based on storage, operational concerns, and environmental considerations? This would allow the town to implement restrictions consistent with their plan rather than restrictions triggered by a drought declaration.

The Mayor noted attachment 3 answers this question. He invited subsequent questions after the committee has had a chance to review it.

51. What actions has the town done to protect the water sources while balancing human and environmental needs?

Mayor Hedlund noted this has already been explained. Protection in the traditional sense? There are security devices at the pond. He is unsure what was meant by this question.

52. In 2014 the DEP noted that Weymouth did not impose water restrictions during a very dry summer while neighboring communities did. Then again, this year the town did not declare an emergency drought emergency until September 1. Why?

The Mayor responded that Weymouth has a different water supply, and are in a better situation than surrounding towns. Protocols are consistent and are required under the DEP permit. The procedures in place determine the implementation.

53. It is our understanding that only the water levels of Great Pond are considered when declaring a drought emergency. The town pumps water from the two other stored water sources to keep the level of the Great Pond at certain levels. Should the town consider the environmental impact of the drought on all water sources in making the determination for drought management?

The Mayor responded that they consider all aspects of the supply and system when making a determination.

54. Pictures and videos show the sluice gate open with water entering the Cove from Whitman's Pond before a water emergency was declared by the town. This is not the natural direction of the water. It is reversal of order because of the amount of water being pumped at the WSPS to supplement Great Pond. The Whitman's Pond water source has been polluted with power boats and has a boat ramp. Why is the town introducing water that could contain invasive weeds and zebra mussels directly into Great Pond water?

The Mayor responded that the drought played a part. The fish were gathering at the gate. Pumping ceased until rain resumed. If the council would like to discuss reduction of horsepower or banning motorboats if that is what they want.

Director Connell provided more information for Councilor Belmarsh on how the sluice gate works in conjunction with the herring run. The DPW assesses it.

55. How often is the water of Whitman's Pond tested?

Mayor Hedlund responded that testing isn't required. The Board of Health has tested to determine suitability for swimmers. It was tested more frequently when swimming lessons were taught there.

Councilor Belmarsh asked what DEP action permit renewal is actually being worked on currently? Director Connell noted it referred to the application submitted 9 years ago. The application has currently been submitted; it's a request for additional water, but it would be affected if the town applies for MWRA. The DEP has the application and the town is waiting on a response.

56. The draw from the Mill River and the Old Swamp River wells is impacting the amount of cold fresh water to reach Whitman's Pond which is directly impacting the outflow of Whitman's Pond. The pond water is stagnant raising the concerns for algae blooms that can be toxic to fish and humans. The temperature of all ponds is rising because of climate change. What can the town do to protect the quality of water in our ponds to protect the fish and humans?

The Mayor responded that he had a PL article from 1964 showing the level exceedingly low. It's a cyclical problem and the solution is to seek alternate sources, to take the strain of existing ecological resources.

57. The EPA has just put out an advisory warning about PFAS chemicals in drinking water. Because of the lack of flow of fresh water into Whitman's Pond much of the pond recharge comes from storm runoff which contains road tire runoff polluting the pond. What plan does the town have to address PFAS chemicals and the polluted runoff into our ponds?

The Mayor responded that the treatment plant filters and tests for those chemicals. Cambridge recently did a temporary hookup to address a pfas issue in their private source of water.

Councilor Heffernan asked if Swamp River, which feeds into the water source is directly next to Union Point. If there any evidence that chemicals have leached into the water from runoff of the chemicals long-buried there.

Ms. Schloss does not have any information on the water quality in the Old Swamp River.

58. If joining the MWRA is the choice, what do you foresee as the earliest possible date that water could be delivered to homes? What happens if we exceed our allowable yield before that date?

The Mayor responded that it is unknown and undetermined. It is not a quick process. They'll have a better idea after the information is received. The application process is 2 years; it will likely not happen until 5-6 years down the line.

59. Can you provide some information as to the impact of joining MWRA to our current water rates?

Is it true that before you can join the MWRA you have to reach the 10% UAW goal. How does the town plan to finance this.

The Mayor responded that it's addressed in the application.

60. Would the Mayor be willing to allow a committee that included interested residents and Conservation to join the discussion on solution to the water sources for the town?

The Mayor responded that Conservation is already involved. At this time, there is not a practical structure than what is currently in place.

The chair noted that there is also a need to keep the citizens informed. The council should be in a position to be informed and to inform the citizens. The Mayor responded that he has changed the way his administration publicizes information and provides for coverage of town government through WETC, and the town's social media presence has expanded and is transparent. When they can make an educated presentation, they will. The chair asked that they do for this particular issue. Councilor Mathews noted that the Planning Director holds many meetings to inform.

The Mayor added that if this wasn't potentially good for the town, he would not be considering it. If it makes sense for the town, he wants to get it out there. He will need to counter MWRA's reputation and bad information that has gone out: it was reported by some that there is a \$40 million entrance fee or that Weymouth's water would be part of MWRA, and that rates would triple and sewer rates will skyrocket. There are two 2

existing hookups which is not true. Also, that Braintree would have to join for our water to traverse, or that all water infrastructure would have to be replaced. None of these are true. If any were true, he would have taken the discussion off the table.

Councilor Mathews noted that Mayor Kay had had an analysis by Environmental Partners with regard to changing the water source could be a big issue because of the age of Weymouth's infrastructure. The Mayor responded that Environmental Partners is working with them, and it is all under review. The current technical capabilities of Weymouth water are all being considered.

Councilor Belmarsh noted that many meetings is helping to dispel the rumors and keeping the conversation moving in a positive direction. She would have preferred the meeting were publicized, and she asked to have the Q & A handout posted for the public.

The Mayor responded that if this were recorded for posterity, it would help to get the information out. With the incinerator, the information was disseminated through social media. He would like to know if WETC has the capability to see how many actually view it. the Patriot Ledger puts a link out to the article, but people can't get past the paywall. There is a disconnect with the public and it's frustrating.

Councilor Mathews added that WETC had responded that they have limited personnel to cover meetings outside of what they already provide for the town.

The chair responded to Councilor Belmarsh that the council office will make the information available. Councilor Mathews added that there will be a discussion with council office staff tomorrow.

Discussion: -Tide Mill Creek Study -Review of water/sewer process

Mr. Tower reported that the design contracts with Environmental Partners are in circulation. Design and permitting will take about a year, so the project will begin next October. They are looking at Next fall for bidding. The biggest obstacle will be the MBTA. Mr. Ryder cannot get permits without the MBTA. Mr. Luongo reported he is permitted but he does not have a timeline yet. It is the town's position to fund and do this? The Mayor responded that it is not funded yet, but it is on the Capital plan.

Councilor Belmarsh asked why it will not be bid for a year. In this budget, there was \$250,000. They are beyond the study. Originally the Southfield developer was going to take it on. The pipe runs through the entire town. The bid for construction will go out a year from now, and should be included in the capital plan for next year, depending on the funding source.

The chair thanked all for their input. The Mayor will inform the council of its next update.

ADJOURNMENT

At 8:57 PM, there being no further business, Councilor Mathews motioned to adjourn and was seconded by Councilor Heffernan.

Respectfully Submitted by Mary Barker as Recording Secretary.

Approved by Ken DiFazio as Public Works Committee Chair
approved