

TOWN OF GILL
M A S S A C H U S E T T S



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SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES
February 28, 2017

Called to Order: The Riverside Water District meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM. The Selectboard meeting was called to order at 7:15 PM when a quorum was present. The meeting was held at the Riverside Building, 54 French King Highway.

Members Present: Greg Snedeker, Randy Crochier Members Absent: John Ward

Others Present: Ray Purington, Administrative Assistant; Jeff Suprenant, Priscilla Fowler, Bruce Yukl, Mike Brown

At the invitation of the Riverside Water District (RWD), the Selectboard met with the RWD's Commissioners to discuss water and sewer rates, and strategies to control costs. There was general discussion of the recent increase to sewer rates. The potential need to increase water rates was a topic for later in the RWD's meeting.

Illicit sump pump connections to the sewer system are a major concern, as they increase the volume of sewage being pumped to Montague for treatment. Since sewer bills are based on water meter readings, and sump pump flow is not measured by the water meters, the treatment cost for sump pump flow is unfairly shared by all sewer customers, rather than just those households with sump pumps.

Several ideas were considered to identify houses with sump pump, as well as ways to assess surcharges or fines if the pump discharge is not removed from the sewer system.

It was noted that while the RWD can gain access to homes in order to maintain and inspect water meters, the Town does not have a right of entry for sewer purposes. Owners may allow sewer officials to conduct inspections, but it is a voluntary act.

Town Counsel will be asked for a legal opinion on two other ideas:

1. If sewer officials have reasonable suspicion that a property has a sump pump, roof drain, or similar device connected to the sewer system, and the property owner denies entry for a sewer inspection, can there be a presumption that an illicit connection exists? If yes, what enforcement options are available?
2. Could sewer officials establish an annual fee, possibly a "sewer inspection fee," that is charged to all sewer customers? If a property owner allows sewer officials to conduct an interior inspection for illicit connections, and no such connections are found, then the owner would be eligible to have the fee abated.

The RWD Commissioners also noted that in addition to discussing water rates, they will also discussing the possible need to start charging for hydrant water used by the Fire Department for training and non-District fires, and hydrant water used by the Highway Department for street sweeping and catch basin cleaning.

The Selectboard meeting adjourned at 7:40 PM.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Ray Purington, Administrative Assistant.

Signed copy on file. Approved 03/20/2017

Randy Crochier, Selectboard Clerk