

Draft

**Town of Lincoln
Water Commission Special Meeting
January 17, 2023**

Members Present:

**Kenneth Booth, Chairwoman
Julie Labreche, Secretary
Abigail Altabef
Edward Fox**

Water Commission Staff:

**Lewis A. Prescott III, Assistant Superintendent
Anna Nascimento, Administrative Assistant
Steven Antonucci, Representing Town Solicitor
Phil Gould, Town Administrator**

Call To Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:10 pm by Chairman Ken Booth.

New Business

*Capital Improvements Planning
Discussion and Action*

The purpose of the meeting called was to discuss Capital Improvement Planning, to develop a fluid plan of infrastructure maintenance and updates.

Tim Thies from Pare Engineering was in attendance to assist in presenting a diagram of the current water system infrastructure and the proposed plan for the future of the infrastructure.

The Assistant Superintendent gave a short presentation of how the system currently works.

There is one main pumping station on Woodward Rd., and all water into the Town from the Providence source comes in through it.

That connection to the Providence water supply is the main heart and critical to the system.

There are holding tanks and low and high service areas within town.

The oldest existing piping is in the Fairlawn/Lonsdale area as well as in Manville.

The main area of concern is Smithfield Ave., with Fairlawn and Saylesville as also being at high risk for breaks and system failure.

There are also similar concerns in Manville, particularly on Spring St, which has a lot of cast iron piping remaining.

Up to \$200,000 has already been approved for the engineering of the Smith St. project.

School St. in Albion has had a number of breaks already, and is 8-inch pipe.

It was noted that when breaks happen, it often leads to costly road and sidewalk repairs, which is why it is helpful to complete any projects that involves a state road when the Department of Transportation already had plans to do road work.

It was discussed that there are certain buildings (an example was given of one being on Crow Point Rd.) that do have the water mains running directly beneath them. They are notated on GIS Mapping.

GIS Mapping does have a layer that shows the condition, material, and location of all of the piping, which can be used to rank projects when coming up with a capital plan.

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It was discussed that an option for some existing piping is to line them with cement in order to protect them as a preventative measure.

An ideal plan would allow for every line in town to eventually be replaced within about a 100-year span of time.

The Water Department will also need to look at expanding, as they are currently at 95% capacity for water usage in high use times, and the tanks are also undersized for a system of Lincoln's size.

Demand has increased as growth and development have happened, as well as a shift to more residential use than industrial.

The drafted infrastructure rehabilitation plan is no aggressive, but they will also need to look at what the current debt ratio allows for in future spending.

Pare Engineering has been working closely with the Assistant Superintendent, because he has vast knowledge and history in his position that will be helpful.

It was discussed that the quality of existing pipe will determine how to proceed, because some can be lined rather than replaced.

For example, the oldest section of piping in Town is on Front St. and dates back to 1881, but is in good shape. The water there is low and there has never been a break.

Every 5 years, the Water Department has to send a plan to the State, and they are currently in the process of taking inventory of every pipe in the system.

There are over 700,000 feet of 2-inch pipe.

The proposed plan/diagram set forth is based on Pare Engineering's experience and general knowledge, and can be edited to better meet Lincoln's needs if necessary.

It was noted that a rate study is being completed to determine possible rate increases to offset these capital improvements. The results should be back from the consultant within about 90 days.

Lincoln has not raised their water rates in over 7 years.

There will be a work session with the Town Council next week that the Water Commission will attend to discuss.

They do look at the list of streets scheduled and anticipated to be paved as a factor when determining priorities of water line work, as well.

The Town Administrator noted that the Town will be looking at condensing some services with the Water Department for efficiency and cost savings, such as IT and fleet maintenance.

The Water Department is also discussing the possibility of taking on the responsibility of chlorinating their own water, but it was noted that the Department of Health does have strict regulations on that.

There are minimum and maximum requirements, but the Water Department should at least have the capability to do so as a back-up so that it could be chlorinated quickly in the event that testing required it.

It was noted that water is the most regulated utility.

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It was noted that there is not much grant funding available for water system maintenance and repair, but there might be some federal funding becoming available and some loan forgiveness might be evolving.

The Water Department does still have 18 years left on a bond taken in 2014.

The bond also requires that the Water Department retain a certain amount of funding in surplus reserve.

The Water Department can confer with the Town's Finance Director for guidance regarding funding.

Maintenance crew availability will also factor into when projects are completed.

The Town can also initiate discussion for alternate water sources, such as Pawtucket, so as to not be so reliant on one source.

The treatment needs might be different, but their system has recently been fully updated.

There may even be options to mix the two supplies at some point.

Different supplies may also have a different pressure rate.

The first step forward in any such initiative would be the water rate study.

During a Town Capital Planning Meeting attended by many various groups and departments, the water system was a high priority.

There were new developments, particularly in Manville, that were denied access to water and had to use well systems because capacity would not accommodate them.

It is not really an option to monitor or limit use by existing customers because it is a revenue stream.

It would not cost anything to connect to the Pawtucket water system outright, the expenses would be paying for the actual water and some costs for equipment needs and connections and updates.

Adjourn

Ed Fox made a motion, seconded by Abigail Altabef, to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 5:54 pm.