



3:02 PM – Call Meeting to Order

Chairman David Langlais called the meeting to order at 3:02 PM.

Present

Chairman David Langlais, Commissioner Emile Demers, Superintendent Joseph Cloutier, Assistant Town Manager/ Finance Director Katharine Foster, and Recording Secretary Samantha Maher.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes from the meeting held May 20th, 2025 were approved unanimously.

Community Input

There was no community input regarding the new sewer rates.

New Business

Sewer Fee Proposal Public Hearing

Assistant Town Manager and Finance Director Katharine Foster announced that the new sewer rates were unanimously approved at the May 20, 2025, Sewer Commission Meeting. She explained that the rate increase was necessary due to anticipated large capital expenses, the need to draw from retained earnings to balance the enterprise budget, and the desire to avoid amending the current year's office budget. She clarified that retained earnings serve as the enterprise fund's equivalent of free cash and noted that user fees are the only reliable source of revenue for the sewer enterprise fund. Mrs. Foster pointed out that residential sewer rates had not increased since 2016 and commercial rates had remained unchanged since 2011. The current residential rate is \$150 per quarter, totaling \$600 annually. Commercial and industrial accounts are metered at \$300 for up to 4,000 cubic feet, with additional usage billed at \$6.00 per 100 cubic feet on a semi-annual basis.

The approved rate change includes a 6% annual increase over a three-year period. For residential customers billed quarterly, the rate will increase to \$159.00 per quarter in FY26, \$168.50 in FY27, and \$178.65 in FY28. For commercial customers billed semi-annually, the base rate in FY26 will increase to \$350.00 for up to 4,000 cubic feet of usage, with additional usage billed at \$7.50 per 100 cubic feet. A discounted residential rate of \$130.00 per quarter will be available for qualifying residents. Mrs. Foster opened the floor to questions or comments, but there were none. Mr. Langlais then closed the public hearing.

Parkvale Terrace Fence Installation over Easement

A discussion took place with Dracut resident Mark Fraser regarding his request to install a chain-link fence on his property. The Superintendent informed Mr. Fraser that the proposed location for the

fence would be over a sewer easement located on paper street that abuts Parkvale Terrace and Park Terrace. Mr. Fraser stated that he plans to include a gate wide enough to allow access for a work truck, ensuring that the Sewer Department can reach the manhole if necessary. He also offered to provide the Sewer Department with any keys used to lock the gate. Mr. Fraser acknowledged that he would be responsible for removing the fence upon request by the Sewer Department. Mr. Demers inquired whether, in the event the home is sold, the agreements related to the easement would remain in effect with the new property owners. Mr. Fraser confirmed that the agreement would remain with the home. The Superintendent will prepare a document for Mr. Fraser to sign, formally stating that he agrees to remove the fence if any work is needed on the easement. Mr. Demers made a motion to approve the request as discussed and outlined. Mr. Langlais seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Old Business with Updates

Inspection Fee Town Warrant Language

The Town Warrant presented at the June 2025 Town Meeting to increase the inspection fee from \$22.00 to \$50.00 with a two-hour minimum passed.

Permit Fee for Additions Town Warrant Language

The Town Warrant presented at the June 2025 Town Meeting to implement a one-time \$500 fee per bedroom for any addition that includes one or more bedrooms failed.

Old Business, No Updates

Bylaw Language Change

The commission has continued ongoing discussions and edits to the current Sewer Use Bylaw. The Superintendent will put together a working document so the Commissioners can make changes and/or suggestions. The goal of this review is to update antiquated language and provide clarity throughout the bylaw. These changes will be brought to the November 2025 Town Meeting. No new updates at this time.

Drain Layer Bonding Process

The Superintendent proposed a change to the current bonding process for Drain Layers, changing from a cash bond to a surety bond at the time a license is obtained. The Superintendent brought the new updated language to the meeting for approval before it is brought to the November 2025 Town Meeting. This language was originally intended for the June 2025 Town Meeting, but the commission has since decided to postpone it to the November 2025 Town Meeting in order to allow additional time to review and clarify the updated information.

Vinal Street Sewer Sag

The Superintendent spoke with the owner of 37 Vinal Street, who confirmed plans to move a shed out of the easement. The Superintendent connected the owner with someone to move the shed, and it is expected to be relocated soon.

Next Meeting Date

The next meeting date was set for August 5, 2025 at 4:30 PM.

3:29 PM – Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:29 PM