



5:01 PM – Call Meeting to Order

Chairman David Langlais called the meeting to order at 5:01 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 April 1st, 2025 were approved unanimously.

New Business

Sewer Fee Proposal Presentation

Assistant Town Manager and Finance Director Katharine Foster presented a detailed overview of the future of Dracut's Sewer Enterprise Fund. She explained that enterprise funds are self-sustaining and are funded through revenue generated by sewer rates and fees, rather than from the town's general fund. Mrs. Foster shared documentation outlining the current FY25 sewer budget and projections for the FY26 budget. She reported a projected revenue shortfall for FY25. To address this gap, the Sewer Department will request Town Meeting approval to use retained earnings to supplement the budget due to unexpected circumstances. She emphasized that Dracut's current sewer rates remain lower than those in neighboring communities, and both residential and commercial rates have not been adjusted since 2016. Mrs. Foster explained that the proposed rate increases are driven by several factors, including anticipated large capital expenses, the continued reliance on retained earnings to balance the enterprise budget, and a desire to avoid future mid-year budget amendments. To address these financial needs, Mrs. Foster proposed a 6% increase over three years. For residential customers who are billed quarterly, the rate will be \$159.00 per quarter in FY26, increasing to \$168.50 in FY27 and \$178.65 in FY28. A discounted residential rate for qualifying residents would be set at \$130.00 per quarter. For commercial customers billed semi-annually, the proposed FY26 base rate would be \$350.00 for up to 4,000 cubic feet of usage, with an additional charge of \$7.50 per 100 cubic feet over that threshold. Mrs. Foster concluded by stating that the proposed rates will be reevaluated after FY28 based on the financial health of the enterprise fund and the Sewer Department's capital needs. Commissioner Demers made a motion to approve the increased sewer rates as proposed. Chairman Langlais seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Old Business with Updates

Vinal Street Sewer Sag

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

Royal Ave Sewer Private Pump Station

The Superintendent spoke with a representative from the homeowners association regarding the private pump station located at 15 Royal Ave. He explained that any future sewer backups occurring in the street must be reported to the state, and any sewer backups into a residence must be reported to the Department of Public Health. While the association didn't clearly state whether they were previously aware of these requirements, they did confirm that they will follow these reporting procedures moving forward. The Superintendent also informed them that the resident who has previously experienced sewer backups will notify the Sewer Department if any future incidents occur. Chairman Langlais suggested that a representative from the homeowners association attend a Commission meeting on a quarterly basis to stay informed and provide updates.

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.

Inspection Fee Town Warrant Language

There has been discussion to increase the inspection fee to \$50.00 with a two-hour minimum, replacing the old fee of \$22.00. This will be brought forward at the June 2025 Town Meeting.

Permit Fee for Additions Town Warrant Language

The Superintendent is proposing a fee that would be charged at the time of construction of any addition that adds one or more bedrooms. This would be a one-time fee of \$500.00 per bedroom. The Superintendent will bring this to Town Council for language review and it will be brought forward at the June 2025 Town Meeting.

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.

Next Meeting Date

The next meeting date was set for June 23, 2025 at 3:00 PM which will be a public hearing.

5:46 PM – Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:46 PM