



Town of Ayer

Rate Review Committee Meeting Minutes from January 23, 2024

Attendance: Jannice Livingston (Chair); Dan Van Schalkwyk (DPW Director); Robert Pontbriand (Town Manager); Barbara Tierney (Finance Manager); Kimberly Abraham (Water and Sewer Superintendent); Kurt Fraczkowski (Representing Fin Com)

Absent: Andy Loven

Also in attendance: Sara Withee, Resident (on Zoom); Pauline Conley, Resident (on Zoom)

Call to Order:

The January 23, 2024 Rate Review meeting was called to order at 4pm by J. Livingston in the First Floor Meeting Room of the Ayer Town Hall with a Zoom remote participation option for the public.

J. Livingston read the following statement into the record:

This meeting of the Ayer Rate Review Committee will be held in-person at the location provided on this notice. Members of the public are welcome to attend this in-person meeting. Please note that while an option for remote attendance and/or participation via Zoom is being provided as a courtesy to the public, the meeting/hearing will not be suspended or terminated if technological problems interrupt the virtual broadcast, unless otherwise required by law. Members of the public with particular interest in a specific item on this agenda should make plans for in-person vs. virtual attendance accordingly. This meeting will be live on Zoom. The public may access the proceedings by joining Zoom (**Meeting ID# 828 8571 8742**) or by calling (**929-205-6099**). For additional information about remote participation, please contact Carly Antonellis, Assistant Town Manager at atm@ayer.ma.us or 978-772-8220 ext. 100 prior to the meeting.

Review and Approval of the January 9, 2024 Meeting Minutes:

K. Abraham stated that the agenda time on page 3 is inconsistent with the adjournment time.

R. Pontbriand stated that he would correct.

K. Abraham also stated that there was a typo on page 2 where it says "through" instead of "throw" as in pay as you throw.

R. Pontbriand stated that he would correct.

Motion: A motion was made by K. Abraham and seconded by K. Fraczkowski to approve the meeting minutes as amended. **Motion passed 6-0.**

Initial/Preliminary Review and Discussion of the Proposed FY 2025 Water and Sewer Rates:

K. Abraham provided a shared screen showing DRAFT #1 of the current Rate Model using a two (2) percent increase for water rates for FY 2025 and a five (5) percent increase for sewer rates for FY 2025. D. Van Schalkwyk stated that the national trends for water rate increase are 5% annually.

[DRAFT 1 of the Water and Sewer Rate Model is available on the Rate Review Committee webpage on the Town's website at www.qver.ma.us]

The Committee reviewed and discussed the rate model scenarios at 2% for water and 5% for sewer.

B. Tierney stated that these rate scenarios include the recent FY 2025 Capital projects for water and sewer as recommended by the Capital Planning Committee. She further advised that currently there is \$4.69 million in water retained earnings and \$2.69 million in sewer retained earnings.

R. Pontbriand stated that the Committee should perhaps look at a few scenarios for the water rates to include no increase; a 1% increase; and a 2% increase. In terms of the sewer rates, it would seem based on the model and the analysis from last year the Town would be prudent to stay at 5%.

R. Pontbriand asked if in addition to the 2% for Water and 5% for Sewer, if the Committee wanted to look at any other rate model recommendations.

The Committee discussed and decided to look at the following rate recommendation scenarios at the next meeting for FY 2025 as follows:

<u>Water (FY 2025 Rate Increase)</u>	<u>Sewer (FY 2025 Rate Increase)</u>
0%	5%
1%	5%
2%	5%

B. Tierney stated that she and K. Abraham would prepare the scenarios for the next meeting.

Update on the Transfer Station Operational and Financial Study:

D. Van Schalkwyk stated that there is not much to report at this time. The Consultants are working on the study and analysis of the information. The Police Department has installed their traffic counter so we can get some traffic counts into the Transfer Station. The Consultants per the project schedule should have an update by the end of March. I will continue to keep the Committee updated.

Scheduling of Next Meeting:

The Committee scheduled the next meeting for February 6, 2024 at 4pm in the First Floor Meeting Room of Town Hall with a hybrid option for remote participation by the public.

Pauline Conley (Resident) stated that she wanted to thank R. Pontbriand and the Committee for making these meetings hybrid for the public. She also asked where she could find the materials presented today.

J. Livingston stated that they will be posted to the Committee's webpage on the Town's website

Adjournment:

Motion: A motion was made by D. Van Schalkwyk and seconded by K. Abraham to adjourn the meeting at 4:30pm. Motion passed 6-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30pm.

Minutes recorded and submitted by Robert Pontbriand, Town Manager.

Minutes reviewed and approved by the Rate Review Committee on February 6, 2024

Signed: 
Robert A. Pontbriand, Town Manager