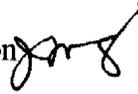


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April 5, 1997

TO: Ed Grusheski, Director  
Water Works Interpretive Center

FROM: Jane Mork Gibson 

RE: Establishment of Philadelphia Water Department

The attached transcript of excerpts from the Minutes of the Select Council of the City of Philadelphia indicate that **January 3, 1799** is the date of the establishment of the Joint Committee of the Select and Common Councils on the subject of Watering the city, the forerunner of the Philadelphia Water Department. This was the date when action began to take the place of investigation and speculation.

On that date the Councils voted to establish a single Joint Committee to take over the charges of earlier committees and established that it would consist of four members appointed from each Council, which remained the standard number. Before that date there had been several committees appointed that were charged with specific aspects of supplying the city with water, but these committees were not considered permanent, and were made up of three members of each Council.

The new Joint Committee went into immediate action. Their first report was read at the Select Council Meeting on January 23, 1799. Convinced of the urgent need to provide water for the city, the new Joint Committee reported on two proposals and requested immediate action by the Councils for a bill that would provide capital for construction. On February 2, 1799, the Joint Committee on behalf of the Mayor, Aldermen & Citizens of Philadelphia entered into a contract for steam engines for a water works. On February 7, 1799, an Ordinance was passed to raise money for a water works through loans from citizens.

There are no extant Minutes for the Common Council meetings for this period in the City Archives or elsewhere. The actions of the Common Council can be determined only by reference to Messages sent to the Select Council. The regular meetings of Councils were held at the same time in adjoining rooms, and immediate referral and concurrence was possible. However, when one of the Councils held a special meeting at a different time, a Message was sent to the other Council for the required action or concurrence at a later date.

**PHILADELPHIA WATER DEPARTMENT**

**NOTE RE TRANSCRIPT OF EXCERPTS FROM  
MINUTES OF SELECT COUNCIL  
OCTOBER 14, 1796 - APRIL 17, 1799**

The attached transcription was made from the original holographic Minutes of the Select Council in the City Archives. There are no existing Minutes of the Common Council for this period. The actions of the Common Council can generally be determined by reference to Messages received by Select Council. Regular monthly meetings of both Councils were held at the same time in adjoining rooms, and immediate concurrence was possible. However, this was not the case when a council held special or extra meetings, for this caused a time delay. Concurrence on resolutions had to wait until the other council met, and if changes were made, additional time was needed to refer the resolution back to the original council. When the yellow fever epidemic raged in Philadelphia in the summer of 1798, no council meetings were held, and action was further delayed in the fall due to city elections and reorganization of councils. The Minutes do not always record the full content of committee reports, which were sometimes published for general distribution.

SUMMARY  
MINUTES OF SELECT COUNCIL  
OCTOBER 14TH, 1796 TO APRIL 17TH, 1799

Re: Date of Establishment of Philadelphia Water Department

The following charges were made by the Select and Common Councils with respect to the water supply for the city:

1796

Nov. 10, 1796

City Commissioners are responsible for wells and pumps.

1797

Nov. 2, 1797 - SELECT COUNCIL

Committee to consider & report a plan for supplying the City with a sufficient quantity of Water from the River Delaware or Schuylkill or the Wissahicon Creek & that they annex to their report the most probable Estimates they can procure of the Expence which will attend the same.

The same Committee ...to make an application to the managers of the Delaware & Schuylkill Canal Company for information s to the time when they expect to be able to supply the City ...& as to the annual sum ...for perpetual use...

Nov. 23, 1797

Common Council message agreeing with appointing such committee.

1798

Jan. 9, 1798

More complete report required of City Commissioners re wells and pumps.

Jan. 31, 1798

"Committee on the subject of bring water to the City ...made report ..."  
[only action taken was to prepare a Memorial to the legislature re funding & print same]

Aug. 9, 1798 - COMMON COUNCIL - Proposal

Appoint Joint Committee of the Select and Common Councils to propose and carry out - employ person to investigate water from Spring Mill; employ person to survey & take levels ...; ascertain best rout for conducting to this City water of said Springs or other Stream ...etc.

If reports are favorable, unite with Mayor to invite proposals, et c.

Aug. 16, 1798 SELECT COUNCIL

Resolution of Aug. 9th , "respecting the Watering of the City" was read, but further consideration postponed.

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Hiatus due to yellow fever epidemic in the summer. In addition, elections took place in fall, with new members to be sworn in, etc. No meetings until October 16.

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Nov. 28, 1798

Report of Action by Common Council re-stating proposal - refer preliminary measures for watering the City to a Joint Committee. [more detailed description, including funding]

Select Council postponed discussion. Proposed: "Joint Committee to take under consideration & report the best & most practicable means of introducing an abundant supply of wholesome Water into the City...."

Dec. 5, 1798

Message received that Common Council had nonconcurrred on subject of Watering the City...

Dec. 18, 1798

Joint Committee to receive information from a certain Mr. Huntly ...and with any other person ...on the Subject of watering the City ...

Common Council concurred.

Also concurred in Memorial.

Dec. 27, 1798

Joint Committee of the Select & Common Councils examine ...force & quantity of Water ...from any source... within twenty miles of City ...and employ person/s to investigate; expence provided for; Committee be authorized to receive proposals.

Common Council concurred .. on the subject of watering the City

Jan. 3, 1799 SELECT COUNCIL MEETING

Two committees at present:

- 1 - conversing with persons and receiving information relating to the watering of the City
- 2 - ascertaining the supply of Water from one or more sources, with the practicability, difficulties & facilities of introducing the same

Discharge these two committees.

Resolutions be referred to and carried out by one Joint Committee of the Select and Common Councils

Common Council concurred on same date.

**SUPPLYING THE CITY WITH WATER:  
EXCERPTS FROM  
MINUTES OF THE SELECT COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA  
1796-1799**

(Philadelphia City Archives - 120.3)

**MINUTES - BOOK ONE  
OCTOBER 14TH, 1796 TO APRIL 17TH, 1799**

**1796**

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**Thursday, Nov. 10th, 1796**

The Select Council met pursuant to adjournment, present

Francis Gurney, Esq., President

John Bleakley, Samuel Coates, John Connolly, Thomas Cumpston, Godfrey Haga, John Hallowell, John Miller, Junr., Caleb North, James Read

**p.19**

On motion made & seconded - The Report of the Committee, appointed to take into consideration, the finances of the City & to report such alterations & amendments in the mode of transacting the business of the City Commissioners & Treasury departments as may be necessary, was read a second time & adopted (vide. File; in Bundle of Reports No. 1).

Whereupon the Council resolved, That the City Commissioners be required forthwith to prepare & lay before the Select Council separate & particular estimates of the money necessary for the ensuing Year, for pitching & paving, for lighting & watching, for cleansing the Streets of the City, for repairs of public pumps & sinking new wells, & fixing pumps therein, for repairs to public wharves & landings, & cleansing the public docks & sewers, for making the

**p.20**

necessary repairs and improvements on the public property, for repairs to the market houses, & cleansing the same, for the incidental expences [sic] of their office & such other expenditures as have heretofore come under their cognizance. And also to form such Estimates as far as may be proper, upon the actual expences [sic] of the last & present Years.

**1797**

**p.127**

**Thursday, Nov. 2nd, 1797**

The Select Council met by Special call of the President, present

Francis Gurney, Esq., President

John Bleakley, John Connelly, Thomas Cumpston, Samuel M. Fox, Godfrey Haga, John Hallowell, James Read

**p.129**

On motion made and seconded - The Council then Resolved, That a Committee be appointed (to join a Committee of the Common Council in case they see fit to appoint One) to consider of & report a plan for supplying the City with a sufficient quantity of Water from the Rivers Delaware or Schuylkill or the Wissahicon [sic] Creek & that they annex to their report the most probable Estimates they can procure of the Expencc [sic] which will attend the same.

Resolved that the same Committee be instructed to make an application to the managers of the Delaware & Schuylkill Canal Company for information as to the time when they expect to be able to supply the City with a sufficient quantity of water by means of their Canal, & as to the annual Sum for which they will be willing to contract for the perpetual use of the same & the Committee of this Council are Messrs Fox, Bleakley & Reed [sic], of which the Common Council were directed to be informed & their concurrence thereto requested.

**p.130**

**Thursday, Nov. 23rd, 1797**

The Select Council met by special call from the President, present

Francis Gurney, Esq., President

John Bleakley, Thomas Cumpston, Godfrey Haga, John Hallowell, Caleb North, James Read, Samuel M. Fox

**p.131**

A message was received from the Common Council, informing, that they had concurred in the several Resolutions sent from this Council on the second Instant, ...

**p.133**

The message also informed . . . Also that they had appointed Messrs. Magoffin, Cox & Parker a Committee of that Council to join the Committee of this Council on the Resolution passed on the 2nd Instant for supplying the City with Water from the Delaware or Schuylkill Rivers or the Wissahicon [sic] Creek. Which message being read was ordered to lay on the Table.

**p.134**

The Council then took up the several Resolution mentioned in the aforesaid Message & respectfully concurred therein.

1798

**p.167**

**Tuesday, January 9th, 1798**

The Select Council met pursuant to notice given, present

Francis Gurney, Esq., President

John Bleakley, Samuel Coates, Thomas Cumpston, Caleb North, Godfrey Haga, James Read

**p.170**

A message was received from the Common Council, handing in certain Petitions

praying the Councils to devise some mode for supplying the City with water & informing, that the Common Council had referred the same to Messrs. Magoffin, Coxé and Parker, which Petitions being read were ordered to lay on the Table. On motion made and seconded the same were read a second time & referred to Messrs. Fox, Bleakley and Reed [sic], of which the Common Council was informed.

**p.171**

A Message received from the Common Council informing, That they had Resolved, That the account of disbursements for the Year & to the first of December 1797 as rendered by the City Commissioners at that date, is unsatisfactory, inasmuch as it doth not give that full & perfect Information to the Councils, which is required from & enjoined on the City Commissioners by the 16th Section of the Ordinance, entitled An Ordinance providing for the appointment of City Commissioners & prescribing their duties, which declares, they shall make out & deliver in the month of December in every Year, A Just & true account of all & singular their transactions & disbursements, including & designating the quantity of work & repair done, with a specification in detail of the Expences [sic] incurred for each Object, under their Superintendance [sic] so far as the same may be practicable, Resolved, That the City Commissioners forthwith make out and deliver in two fair copies, one to be presented to the Select & one to the Common Councils, An account

**p.172**

for the year & ending on the first day of December 1797 conformable to the provisions made in the 16 Section of the Ordinance aforesaid, specifying in detail the expences [sic] under the following heads, viz . . .

**p.173**

Cleansing the City, detail

How many Flush Carts have been repaired, the kind of repair & amount of expence [sic]

How many Iron Scrapers purchased, price and amount, Ditto, ditto, repaired - Ditto Brooms purchased, price & amount, Ditto Labourers employed, Time & price per day, week, or month, Ditto Carts, if any other than belonging to the City. ...

**p.174**

Watering the City, designate

The number of New Wells dug, & in what part of the City, The price per yard for digging, dimensions, & amount.

The quantity, price & amount of Bricks for walling. The Price of New Pumps.

The Pump Makers for setting & fixing

The Weight price & amount of Iron Work

The number of Old Pumps, repaired, Old Wells cleansed clayed etc. & amount.

**p.175**

To which Resolutions, they requested the concurrence of this Council & being read were ordered to lay on the Table. On motion made and seconded the same were read a second time and concurred in, of which the Common Council were informed.

**p.179**

**Thursday, January 18th, 1798**

The Select Council met pursuant to adjournment, present

Francis Gurney, Esq., President

John Bleakley, John Connolly, Thomas Cumpston, Godfrey Haga, Caleb North, James Read

**p.180**

A message was received from the Common Council, handing in certain other Petitions from the Citizens, praying that a sufficient supply of wholesome water may be brought to the City by Canals or otherways [sic], which being read were ordered to lay on the Table. On motion made & seconded, the same were read a second time & referred to Messrs. Fox, Bleakley & Reed [sic] . . .

On motion made & seconded the Council Resolved That the City Commissioners be directed to have a pitt [sic]

**p.181**

or pitts dug in the South West & North West public squares for the reception of the dirt that may be conveyed from the privies of the City & that previous to their being filled up, a sufficient quantity of lime be spread over them and Resolved That the Commissioners be requested to give public notice of the same in two of the daily papers of the City untill [sic] the 20th of March next - of which the Common Council were informed & their concurrence thereto requested.

**p.186**

**Wednesday, January 31st, 1798**

The Select Council met by special call from the president, present

Francis Gurney, Esq., President

John Bleakly, Samuel M. Fox, Godfrey Haga, John Hallowell, Henry Pratt, John Miller, Junr., John Connelly

**p.187**

The Committee on the subject of bringing water to the City appointed on the 2nd of November last made report, recommending the following resolutions to be passed by the Councils, which with an address from the President, Managers & Company of the Delaware & Schuylkill Canal Company to the Select & Common Councils were read & ordered to lay on the Table.

First resolution - Resolved That a Joint Committee be appointed to draft a Memorial to the Senate & House of Representatives of the State praying them to grant to the Mayor, Aldermen & Citizens, the duties upon Sales at auction, in order to enable the Corporation to accomplish the great & important object of supplying the City with a sufficient quantity of wholesome water.

Second - Resolved, That in case the Grant is obtained this Corporation will endeavour to purchase on such Terms as may be agreed upon, the whole of the Stock of the Delaware & Schuylkill Canal Navigation & undertake the Completion of the same. . . .

**p.188**

On motion made & seconded, The Councils then resolved That one hundred copies of the report on bringing water to the City & the address of the President, Managers & Company of the Canal company, be printed for the use of the Councils....

The Council then resolved to take up the report of the Committee on the subject of bringing Water to the City for a second reading & passed the first resolution recommended by the Committee & appointed Messrs. Fox, Bleakley & Read their Committee pursuant to the Resolution. And on motion made & seconded The Council Resolved to postpone the further consideration of the second Resolution recommended by the said Committee for the present- of all which the Common Council were directed to be informed.

**p.189**

**Thursday, February 15th, 1798**

The Select Council met by order of the president, present

Francis Gurney, Esq., President

Thomas Cumpston, Godfrey Haga, Caleb North, Henry Pratt, Samuel Coates, John Connelly, John Bleakley, John Hallowell, James Read

Two Letters from a Committee of the managers & Stockholders of the Canal Company, one dated February 6th & the other February 9th Ult, requesting a speedy answer to their proposals made to the Joint Committee of the Councils, appointed on the subject of bringing Water to the City - were read & ordered to lay on the Table; On motion made & seconded the same were read

**p.190**

a second time & ordered to be sent into the Common Council.

**p.195**

**Thursday, March 1st, 1798**

The Select Council met pursuant to adjournment, present

Francis Gurney, Esq., President

John Bleakley, Samuel Coates, Samuel M. Fox, Godfrey Haga, John Hallowell, Caleb North, Henry Pratt

**p.196**

A Message was received from the Common Council informing, that they had concurred in the first Resolution recommended by the Committee appointed to report a plan for watering City, and had appointed Messrs. Magoffin, Cope & Herbert their Committee, and had also Resolved, That the Joint Committee appointed to draft a Memorial to the Legislature praying for a Grant of the duties on Sales at Auction be instructed to include in the

**p.197**

Memorial, a request that in case the legislature should not be disposed to make such a grant, a Specific Sum of Money may be given to the Corporation to aid them in carrying into effect a plan for supplying the City with water - to which they requested the concurrence of this Council & being read was ordered to lay on the Table. On motion

made & seconded, the same was read a second time & noncurred [sic], of which the Common Council were informed.

**p.208**

**Friday, March 23rd, 1798**

The Select Council met pursuant to adjournment, present  
John Bleakly, Samuel Coates, John Connelly, Godfrey Haga, Caleb North, Henry Pratt,  
John Miller, Junr., James Read, Samuel M. Fox

The President being absent, Mr. John Miller, Junr., was called to the chair.

The Committee to whom were referred the resolutions of the Common Council & the report of the City Commissioners respecting the burial grounds for strangers at the last meeting made report as follows - That the subject matter involves a principle of very serious import viz Whether the Interment of bodies in a city is not prejudicial to its Inhabitants by creating a noxious atmosphere & rendering the water impure - In many capitals where Reasons so powerful as at Philadelphia do not exist the point seems conceded [sic] by no burying Grounds being suffered within their limits. Altho the powers of the Corporation

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are so restricted, that the prohibition cannot be made general, yet as they are clearly competent to the present case perhaps the opportunity should not be permitted to escape of introducing such an amelioration in the police - by the late purchase from the Health office a suitable situation is obtained, or if that should be destined for some other purpose, the Corporation may avail themselves of a public burying ground adjoining - As to the expedient suggested by the Commissioners it is liable to several objections, which your Committee think it unnecessary to detail as they must be obvious to the board. Upon the whole your Committee is of opinion that the first Resolution should be rejected untill the Title be determined, that the second be adopted & recommend the following Resolution - Resolved, That the City Commissioners be & they hereby are directed to notify the public, that the place of Interment for Strangers will be on the West side of the Schuylkill after the \_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_. That they procure a proper person to superintend the same who shall be allowed for every grave dug & that they furnish him with an horse & hearse for the purpose of conveying the bodies.

Which report was read & ordered to lay on the Table.

**p.244**

**Thursday, August 16th, 1798**

The Select Council met by Order of the President, present  
Francis Gurney, Esq., President  
Caleb North, Godfrey Haga, John Hallowell, John Connelly, Samuel Coates, Henry Pratt,  
Samuel M. Fox

A message was received from the Common Council communicating several resolutions passed on the second & ninth Instant & requesting the concurrence of this Council to the same. Upon motion made & seconded the several Resolutions were taken into consideration.

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In Common Council August 2nd, 1798.

Resolved . . .

August 9th, 1798

First, Whereas the present aspect of affairs in the City renders it probable that extraordinary resources must be resorted to, for defraying the necessary expences [sic] of lighting, watching, watering & cleansing the City and it is necessary that the Mayor be invested with due power to meet any emergencies which may arise --

Resolved by the Select & Common Councils, That the Mayor be & he is hereby authorized to obtain when it shall appear necessary a Loan not exceeding twelve thousand dollars in anticipation of the existing taxes for the purpose of carrying into complete effect the important objects of lighting & watching, watering & cleansing the City - And that the mayor be requested

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(whenever occasions may call for it) to require of the Commissioners, their procuring a sufficient number of Able & trusty persons for the necessary increase and doubling of the watch. . . .

Third, Resolved - That a Joint Committee of the Select and Common Councils be appointed for the following purposes & that they be invested with the full authority & power to carry the same into effect. To employ a skilful & judicious person to ascertain with accuracy the quantity & force of water issuing & flowing from the united springs of Spring Mill near the river Schuylkill about four miles below Norris town, To employ one or more skilful & judicious persons to survey & take the levels of the Country lying between Spring Mill or any other Streams or heads of water that may seem eligible for the purpose of Watering the City & the highest Ground between the Rivers Delaware & Schuylkill, within the City of Philadelphia or in the Northern liberties adjacent & nearly contiguous to the City & to ascertain the best rout [sic] or course for conducting to this City the Waters of the said Springs or other Streams, having regard to the following points to wit, distance, respective ascents & descents, the quality of the Soil for digging & what lands of private persons may be intersected in pursuing the most favourable rout [sic] & should it be unavoidable

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in some part of the Course to conduct the water within the Eastern Margin of the river Schuylkill, to describe the depth at low water mark of the Schuylkill at such places, & the facility or difficulty of digging for a suitable bed to receive pipes so as to be secure from the Rise of the River in Summer & Ice freshes in the Winter & Spring; and to report the courses & distances of the most eligible rout [sic] as well as the levels with a true & fair Copy of their field notes -- And if the reports of the persons employed in the above objects are favourable to the further prosecution of introducing the above Spring Water, then the said Committee are to unite with the Mayor in inviting by public advertisement & otherways [sic] the offers of proposals to contract for the digging of the Ground, the materials & Construction of pipes & aqueducts exhibiting a clear description of the modes which may be proposed, the security which can be given for the due & faithful performance of Contracts & Stipulations, with the Sums required for such

performance & the payments they will call for, in the different Stages of the Execution of the Work.

Fourth - Resolved by the Select & Common Councils That the expences [sic] which may be incurred in consequence of any services performed under the direction of the said Committee & by agreement made with them, shall be defrayed out of the Contingent fund of the present year and in case of need out of the appropriations to be made for the Year 1799,

Messrs Henry Drinker, Junr., Joseph Hopkinson & James Todd are the Committee of the Common Council appointed in

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pursuance of the foregoing resolutions. . . .

It was moved and seconded That this Council concur in the first resolution of the Common Council of the 9th of August, & upon the question being taken, it was carried in the negative. Mr. Pratt upon leave given read in his place, An Ordinance authorizing the Mayor to borrow \_\_\_\_\_ dollars, in anticipation of the Taxes of the present Year & for other purposes, which upon motion, made & seconded was ordered to lay on the Table. . . .

Upon motion made and seconded, The Ordinance authorizing the Mayor to borrow \_\_\_\_\_ dollars, was read a second time & the blank filled up with the Sum of Ten thousand.

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The rule which prevents the passing of an Ordinance the same day upon which it originates, was by unanimous Consent dispensed with.

The Ordinance authorizing the Mayor to borrow Ten thousand dollars, in anticipation of the Taxes of the present Year & for other purposes, was read a third time & upon the question being taken thereon, it was passed & the President requested to sign the same. The Clerk was directed to transmit to the Common Council a fair Copy of the said Ordinance & to request their concurrence to the same.

The Resolutions of the 9th day of August, respecting the Watering of the City were read

**p.250**

a second time, and upon motion made & seconded The further consideration thereof was postponed.

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**p.250**

The prevailing Contagious Sickness, which afflicted the City of Philadelphia, prevented the meeting of the Select Council, after the 16th of August 1798, until the 16th day of October following, previous to which day, the general Election took place & four new Members were chosen according to Law, as of return of the Judges of the election recited in the minutes of October 16th 1798.

/s/ William H. Todd, Clerk

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**Thursday, November 28th, 1798**

The Select Council met by order of the President, present

Francis Gurney, Esq., President

Thomas Cumpston, Godfrey Haga, John Miller, Junr., James Read, Joseph Sims, Samuel M. Fox.

**p.260**

A message was received from the Common Council informing that they had Resolved

3. Resolved, That the Resolutions containing preliminary measures for watering the City which were adopted in Common Council on the ninth day of August last & sent to the Select Council for concurrence but not acted upon by that branch previous to the second Tuesday in October last & by that means become inchoate, be referred to a Joint Committee of the Select & Common Councils.

4. Resolved That the said Joint Committee be instructed to ascertain the quantity of Water issuing in any given time from the Spring Sources which put in motion the wheels & machinery of a mill called Spring Mill about thirteen miles distant from this City and also from any other Sources of good Water which may be found between the said Mill & this City and also from any other Sources of good water which may be found between the said Mill & this City & so situate as to answer the purpose of auxiliary supplies in the event of Spring Mill Water

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being in any degree insufficient for a supply to the City. And that the said Committee be further instructed to ascertain the practicability & if practicable the most eligible rout [sic] or course by which the said Water or Waters can with the greatest facility & least expence [sic] be conducted & introduced into this City, and in order that the said Joint Committee may be better enabled to ascertain the important information contemplated in these resolutions - Be it further

5. Resolved, That they be & are hereby authorized and empowered to contract with, engage & employ for such reasonable compensation as they can agree for, any skilfull [sic] & competent person or persons that they may find it necessary to employ for carrying into full & complete effect the objects of their appointment.

6. Resolved, That in the event of its being clearly ascertained by the Committee that a quantity of good & wholesome Spring Water sufficient for the necessary supply of the City can be obtained from the contemplated sources & that the Rout [sic] or course of conveyance to this City is practicable, That the said Committee be authorized & they are hereby empowered to treat & provisionally contract for the purchase of said Water or Waters & property appurtenant in such a manner as shall secure the same to the Citizens of Philadelphia if on a view of its means and resources the Select & Common Councils may think it for the Interest of their Constituents to finally ratify & confirm any such provisional contract.

7. Resolved That due & adequate provision shall be made to meet & defray the expences [sic] which may be necessarily incurred by the said Committee in prosecuting the intentions

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of their appointment.

8. Resolved, That a Joint Committee be appointed to draft a Memorial to be early presented to the Legislature at their first meeting in Session, requesting a Grant to this Corporation of the duties on Sales at Auction within this City, or some other effectual & sufficient Grant as an aid & means of procuring a supply of good wholesome water for the use & health of its Inhabitants.

9. Resolved, That a Joint Committee be appointed to examine what means & resources are in the possession of & attainable by the City for obtaining & introducing a supply of good Water, independant [sic] of Legislative aid & to digest & prepare a plan for acquiring the necessary means to supply any deficiency of Corporate Income & make report to Councils.

Messrs Drinker, Smith & Cope, Cuthbert & Morris are the Committee of the Common Council appointed in pursuance of the foregoing resolutions - to which the concurrence of the Select Council was requested & being read were ordered to lay on the table.

On motion made & seconded the Council took up the said resolutions for a second reading And Resolved to concur in the first & second thereof and to postpone the consideration of the remainder of said Resolutions in order to introduce the following

Resolved, That a Joint Committee be appointed to take under consideration & report the best & most practicable means of introducing an abundant supply of wholesome

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Water into the City & that they be requested to annex to their report an Estimate of the expense which will attend the same. And that they also Report the means & resources which are in the possession of or attainable by the City for carrying into effect this important object.

Messrs Fox, Miller & Reed were appointed the Committee of this Council of all which the Common Council were informed & their concurrence to the last resolution of the Select Council requested.

**p.263**

**Thursday, December 5th, 1798**

The Select Council met pursuant to adjournment, present

Francis Gurney, President

Thomas Cumpston, Godfrey Haga, John Hallowell, Caleb North, John Miller, Junr.,

Joseph Sims, Samuel M. Fox

**p.265**

A letter from the City Commissioners dated the \_\_\_ Inst covering their reports for Lighting, Watching & Watering the City for the present Year was read & ordered to lay on the Table. . . .

A Message was received from the Common Council . . . The Message also informed that the Common Council had agreed to a Memorial to be presented to the

Legislature of the State soliciting an enlargement of power & pecuniary aid for the purpose of bringing a sufficient supply of wholesome water to the City - to which the concurrence of this Council was requested, and being read was ordered to lay on the Table. On Motion made

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& seconded the same was taken up for a second reading & concurred in, of which the Common Council was informed.

The Memorial is as follows

To the Senate & House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in general Assembly met

The Select and Common Councils of the City of Philadelphia respectfully represent -

That the loss of many valuable Citizens, the various distresses & the almost ruinous suspension of trade, repeatedly & recently sustained by the City of Philadelphia from the frequent prevalence of what is called the Yellow fever during part of the Summer & Autumnal Months calls for every effort which human Wisdom can devise to avert its dreadful effects. Whether this destructive Enemy is introduced among us, from foreign places with which we have Commercial Intercourse or whether it originates from local causes at home, divides the Opinions of our Physicians, and the same diversity of Sentiment prevails in some degree with other Classes of Citizens. In this state of uncertainty prudence dictates the propriety of guarding in the best possible manner against both sources & it seems generally agreed, be the Origin foreign or domestic, that the Introduction of good wholesome Water for drinking & Culinary purposes & for the occasional flooding of the Streets of this City will be the best means of promoting the Health of its Inhabitants & of correcting the State of our Atmosphere so as to render it less recipient of Contagion. - Impressed with this belief the Select & Common Councils have nothing more ardently at heart than the Accomplishment

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of an Object so much desired by their fellow Citizens, but beg leave to represent, that under the limited powers of the Existing acts for incorporating the City of Philadelphia they possess neither the power nor the means; they therefore respectfully request the legislature will be pleased to vest such powers in the city Corporation as may be fully efficient for promoting useful improvements for the benefit and health of the City & particularly for the Introduction of pure & wholesome Water. - They beg leave further to represent that the introducing of good Water will be an Object of considerable expence [sic] & tho no Expence [sic] may be thought too great to avert a return of the calamities & ruin of the last Summer, yet tottering as our Citizens are, under the weight & effects of the late melancholy Scene, the burthen of the Work may prove too heavy for them if unaided by the fostering hand of Government. - The Select and Common Councils then further solicit that as a means to enable them to effect so salutary & desirable an end that in addition to a proper enlargement of Powers to the City Corporation the Legislature will be pleased to grant as an aid, the duties raised by Sales at Auction within the City & some other equally efficient aid, not doubting that the wisdom of the Legislature will perceive that in preserving so great a Commercial City

as Philadelphia from ruin & in regaining its reputation for salubrity, the Interest of the whole State at large will be materially and beneficially affected & promoted.

Whereupon the Council Resolved, That a Joint Committee of both Councils be appointed to attend to

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the business & progress of the said Memorial before the legislature & Messrs. Sims, Miller & Cumpston were appointed the Committee of this Council, of which the Common Council were informed & their concurrence thereto requested. . . .

A message was received from the Common Council informing, That they have nonconcurred in the resolution of this Council on the subject of Watering the City. . .

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**Tuesday, December 18th, 1798**

The Select Council met by order of the President, present

Francis Gurney, Esq., President

John Connelly, Thomas Cumpston, Godfrey Haga, Caleb North, John Miller, Junr., Joseph Sims

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On motion made & seconded The Council Resolved That a Joint Committee of three members from each Council be appointed to confer with & to receive information from a certain Mr. Huntly from Connecticut who is said to be possessed of some valuable improvement on the mode of raising Water from Rivers to a Heighth [sic] above its level and to hold conference with any other person from whom any information on the Subject of watering the City can be obtained & to report to the Councils the result of such enquiries - Messrs. Miller, Fox & Sims were appointed the Committee of this Council - of which the Common Council were informed & their concurrence thereto requested.

A message was received from the 'common Council informing That they have concurred in the resolution sent in from this Council appointing committee to attend to the business of the Memorial before the Legislature & have appointed Messrs. Drinker, Smith & Parker their Committee. . . .

The Message also informed that they have concurred in the Resolution for appointing a Committee on the subject of Mr. Huntly's mode of raising water, with amendments to which they request the concurrence of this Council & being read were ordered to lay on the table - On motion made & seconded the amendments to the last mentioned resolution were read a second time and concurred in of which the Common Council were informed.

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**Thursday , December 27th, 1798**

The Select Council met pursuant to adjournment, present

Francis Gurney, President

John Connelly, Thomas Cumpston, Caleb North, Henry Pratt, Godfrey Haga, Joseph Sims, Samuel Coates

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On motion made & seconded - the Council Resolved

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That a Joint Committee of the Select & Common Councils be appointed to examine or cause to be examined & ascertained the force & quantity of Water which issues from any Source or Sources or Stream within twenty miles of the City of Philadelphia which the said Committee may in their opinion conceive probable to answer the purposes of Watering the City of Philadelphia, to ascertain the practicability, the difficulties & facilities of the tract or Courses by which any one or more of said Sources or Streams separately or jointly may be conducted to this City, the said Committee are hereby authorized to employ such competent person or persons as they think necessary for ascertaining the quantity of Water exploring the rout [sic], takeing [sic] the levels, etc.

Resolved That adequate provision shall be made to defray the expences [sic] that may accrue in prosecuting the above object. Resolved That the said Committee be hereby authorized to receive proposals containing the prices or terms from any persons, owners of said Stream or Streams tract or tracts peice [sic] or peices [sic] of land which it is probable may be necessary or wanting and Report the same with their proceedings from time to time to the Select & Common Councils - Messrs. Hallowell, Fox & Sims are the Committee of the Select Council to carry the above Resolutions into effect, of which the Common Council was informed & their concurrence thereto requested. . . .

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A Message was received from the Common Council informing, that they had concurred in the Resolutions of this Council on the subject of Watering the City, sent to them this Evening & have appointed Messrs. Drinker, Smith & Rujan their Committee.

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**Thursday, January 3rd, 1799**

The Select Council met at their Stated Meeting pursuant to adjournment, present Francis Gurney, President

Samuel Coates, Samuel M. Fox, John Miller, Junr., Caleb North, John Connelly, Joseph Sims, Thomas Cumpston

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On motion made & seconded, The Council Resolved That whereas the conversing with persons and receiving information relating to the Watering of the City & the ascertaining the supply of Water from one or more sources, with the practicability, difficulties & facilities of introducing the same etc. are referred to different Joint Committees of Councils & whereas it may be more useful & of more beneficial effect that all objects on this important subject be brought into a combined view before one Committee instead of being separately viewed in divided parts by different Committees, that such Utility & more beneficial effect may therein be better promoted, It is Resolved That the Committee heretofore appointed to converse with persons and receive

Information relative to the Watering the City, etc. and the Committee heretofore appointed to examine & ascertain the quantity of water which can be supplied in any given time from any one or more Sources & for other purposes be both discharged & that the Resolutions under which the said Committees were appointed be referred to & carried into effect by one Joint Committee of the Select & Common Councils - Messrs Miller, Sims, Hallowell & Fox are the Committee of the Select Council of which the Common Council were informed & their concurrence thereto requested.

A Message was received from the Common Council

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informing that they had concurred in the above mentioned Resolution & had appointed Messrs Drinker, Smith, Rugan & Morris their Committee....

A Message was received from the Common Council informing that they had Resolved to adopt the Report of the Committee appointed to confer with persons & receive information on the Subject of Watering the City, which report is as follows -

That they have received a Communication thereon from B. Henry Latrobe a Gentleman of Scientific eminence. This Communication hasten to report to Councils as it contains information & observations that appear highly useful, important & Interesting & they recommend to Councils the adoption of the following Resolutions -

Resolved That the Communication of B. Henry Latrobe on the Subject of supplying the City with Water reported by the Committee appointed to confer with persons & to receive information on that subject be printed forthwith & the usual number of Copies distributed to the Members of the Councils for their more full information.

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Resolved that a number of Copies of said Communication be furnished to the Committee appointed to present the late Memorial of the Councils to the Legislature to be used by them as in their discretion & Judgment may appear most eligible (according to Circumstances) for promoting the Intentions & Views contemplated in the said Memorial - to which Report & Resolutions the Concurrence of this Council was requested & being read together with the Communication of B. Henry Latrobe, were ordered to lay on the Table.

On motion made & seconded the said report & resolutions were read a second time & concurred in, of which the Common Council were informed.

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**Wednesday, January 23rd, 1799**

The Select Council met by Special Order, present

Samuel Coates, Thomas Cumpston, Godfrey Haga, John Hallowell, Caleb North, John Miller, Junr., John Connelly, Joseph Sims

The President being absent, Mr. John Miller, Junr., was chosen President for the evening.

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The Joint Committee on the subject of Watering the City made report, which with the papers accompanying the same & alluded to therein were read & ordered to lay on

the Table. The report is as follows

That they have held divers conversations & have received several communications & propositions & that the plans which appeared to merit most consideration so far as relates to an early supply of Water are two, suggested the One on the part of Joseph Huntly by his Subaquatic Machine & the other by Henry B. [sic] Latrobe, Engineer. With respect to the first of these doubts are entertained as to the power of his machine to produce the effect contemplated - doubts are entertained as to the possibility of its uninterrupted & continuous operation for more than Sixteen in every twenty-four hours in the Summer Season and further doubts may reasonably be entertained as to the practicability of its operation at all in the Winter Season. - And that if all these doubts could be removed the Expence [sic] of the machine on the terms required on Huntley's behalf by Austin Nichols in his letter of 19th January instant will exceed the expence [sic] of Latrobe's two Engines in the first Cost & probably in the annual Sum for repairs. This Letter we present for the consideration of the Councils.

In Latrobe's view of the practicability of watering the City formerly reported to you & printed by your Order the only doubt therein suggested is the practicability of procuring efficient Engines in the Country - With the view of ascertaining this Important point your Committee employed B. H. Latrobe to go to New York and make the necessary examination & enquiry - and the result of the information derived from this measure seems sufficiently conclusive for obviating this doubt - His Letter on the subject and a conditional contract made by him with Nicholas J. Roosevelt for two Steam Engines, we now lay before the Councils. Without remarking on the terms of this contract & confining themselves to the prospect of the practicability of efficiency of plan No. 2 offered by B. H. Latrobe, your Committee view it as a subject of the greatest importance that a plan be devised for raising a Capital necessary for carrying the Work into operation with as little delay as possible -

What aid may be granted by the Legislature remains uncertain - but even if no aid shall be ultimately obtained

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from that Quarter your Committee are of Opinion the Work is of such interesting concern as to be worthy the immediate exertions of the Citizens of Philadelphia. Impressed with this belief your Committee therefore offer a bill for raising the necessary Capital & also an address to our Fellow Citizens to stand prefatory to said bill, as on their disposition & public Spirit must depend the raising of the Capital required - Should this bill and address meet with the approbation of Councils, your Committee will further recommend that the consideration thereof be entered on & continued without Intermission so that no more time may be lost in coming to a determinate conclusion than can possibly be avoided.

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**Thursday, January 24th, 1799**

The Select Council met pursuant to adjournment, present  
John Connelly, Samuel Coates, Thomas Cumpston, Godfrey Haga, Caleb North, John Hallowell, John Miller, Junr.

The President being absent, Mr. Miller

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was chosen President for the Evening.

The Council took up for a first reading a Bill entitled An Ordinance providing for the raising a Sum of Money on loan for supplying the City of Philadelphia with Water - which Bill was reported by the Committee on the subject of watering the City at the last meeting - progress was made therein & the further consideration thereof was postponed for the present. . . .

A Message was received from the Common Council informing - That they had passed a Bill entitled An Ordinance providing for the raising a Sum of Money on loan for supplying the City of Philadelphia with Water - to which they requested the concurrence of this Council & being read was ordered to lay on the Table. On motion made & seconded the same was taken up for a second reading - progress was made thereon & the further consideration thereof was postponed for the present.

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**Saturday, February 2nd, 1799**

The Select Council met by order of the President, present

Francis Gurney, Esq., President

Samuel Coates, John Miller, Junr., Thomas Cumpston, Samuel M. Fox, Caleb North, Godfrey Haga, Joseph Sims, John Connelly

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On motion made & seconded the Council Resolved to take up for a second reading the bill sent in from the Common Council entitled An Ordinance providing for the raising of a Sum of Money on loan for supplying the City of Philadelphia with wholesome water, which with amendments was gone thru, & passed - of which the Common Council were informed & their concurrence thereto requested.

A Message was received from the Common Council informing That they had Resolved, That the Joint Committee appointed to acquire information of the subject of watering the City & to employ agents for that purpose be authorized & they are hereby authorized & empowered in conjunction with the Mayor of this City to complete on the part of the Mayor Aldermen & Citizens of Philadelphia such part of the Contract entered into & executed on the part of Nicholas J Roosevelt as relates to the procuring of the two Steam engines in time to be in operation by the approaching Summer months, on the Condition that the said Nicholas J. Roosevelt do find such sufficient & satisfactory security for the performance of that part of his contract as to the said Committee & Mayor shall appear reasonable & compatible with the Interest and security of the City. - And on the Condition that the said Nicholas J. Roosevelt does agree that the remainder of the Contract as entered into & executed on his part shall continue binding on him for the term of Sixty days from the date hereof, leaving to the City of Philadelphia

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that space of time for further consideration as to the propriety of ratifying the said remainder of said Contract as the same now stands, or with such modifications &

alterations touching the Case, use of Extra power & other matters specified in said Contract as may or shall be agreed to, within the time aforesaid by further negotiation. And Resolved that the said Committee in conjunction with the Mayor endeavour to obtain on the Credit of this Corporation a Loan of such Sum or Sums of Money as it may be necessary to obtain for the purposing of making good the Conditions of Contract for procuring two Steam Engines for watering the City & that due & adequate provision shall be made by the Select & Common Councils for the seasonable repayment of any monies which may be loaned in pursuance of this resolution -

To which resolutions the concurrence of this Council was requested & being read were ordered to lay on the Table. On motion made & seconded the same were read a second time, concurred in - of which the Common Council were informed.

The Message from the Common Council also informed That they had Resolved That the Committee appointed on the subject of introducing Water into the City be instructed & enjoined to use their best endeavors to obtain as speedily as possible an ultimate decision of the legislature on the subject of a grant to this Corporation for the purpose of introducing a copious supply of Water

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into the City & that the Committee heretofore appointed for this purpose be discharged - to which the concurrence of this Council was requested & being read was ordered to lay on the table.

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**Thursday, February 7th, 1799**

The Select Council met pursuant to adjournment, present

Francis Gurney, President

John Connelly, Samuel Coates, Godfrey Haga, John Hallowell, Caleb North, Joseph Sims

...

On motion made & seconded the Council took up for a second reading, the Resolution read at the last meting from the Common Council enjoining the Committee on the subject of watering the City, to urge a speedy decision on the Memorial before the legislature & concurred therein, of which the Common council were informed.

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A communication from the Delaware & Schuylkill Canal Company was received informing That they had Resolved, That the whole of the Shares of the Delaware an Schuylkill Canal Company be transferred at first cost to the Corporation of the City of Philadelphia, for the purposes of compleating [sic] the same and Watering the City. Also that they had further Resolved, That provided the Corporation acced [sic] to the above resolution we shall unite to solicit the Legislature to invest the Select and Common councils with the funds arising from Sales at Auction, The House intended for the President of the United States & for their aid in that undertaking And further that they had Resolved That James C. Fisher, Ebenezer Large & William Montgomery be a Committee to negotiate on the principles aforesaid - all of which were read & ordered to lay on the Table, On motion made & seconded the same were read a second time & referred to the Committee on the subject of Watering the City. . . .

A Message was received from the Common Council informing, That they had agreed to the amendments of the  
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Select Council to the bill for raising a Sum of Money on Loan for supplying the city of Philadelphia with wholesome water. Also That they have nonconcurrred the address to the Citizens of Philadelphia sent them from this Council & have agreed to a substitute, to which they request the concurrence of this Council, which address is as follows -

Fellow Citizens - Persuaded that the Introduction of a Copious supply of wholesome Water into the city of Philadelphia is an Object of primary importance to the Convenience, welfare & health of its Inhabitants - and that it will prove one of the most effectual means of cleansing the Streets & Sewers, from all putrid & noxious matter & thereby improve the State of our atmosphere - Your representatives in Select & Common Councils have had this subject under their serious consideration and anxious for its accomplishment by means the least oppressive to their constituents whilst labouring under the severe effects of the late pestilential fever, seconded your petition to the Legislature to obtain this desirable Object. -

Contemplating a grant of this aid your Councils have been occupied in deriving information from a variety of Sources & have satisfactory reason to beleive [sic] in the practicability of a plan, which, if early pursued, promises an abundant supply of water in the Course of the present Year, if not before the termination of the next Summer months, and in a manner not to be materially, if at all affected by the variation of the Seasons.

Repeated have been the Calls on your Councils to adopt measures for obtaining a supply of Water. To these applications they have given the requisite attention - They  
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have long deliberated: you are now apprized of the results. In the present situation of their means, no plan has occurred within their power to accomplish, more likely to succeed or more compatible with your Interests, than the one they design to pursue - no mean of acquiring the indispensable fund, so feasible as the plan submitted to your view & approbation -

Untill [sic] the Legislature shall in its Wisdom & humanity extend some effectual relief to its Capital, our Councils believe the most eligible, if not the only practicable mode of procuring the necessary Sum, will be by loan - One hundred & fifty thousand dollars are wanted and if fifteen hundred Citizens can be found willing to subscribe One hundred dollars each, towards the Promotion of an object so deeply interesting [sic] to us all, the Corporation will issue transferable certificates & provide adequate means to pay the Interest & an annual sinking fund to redeem the principal.

To induce you to advance this Capital, no lucrative speculation or extraordinary profit, can with propriety be held up to view. You are invited to no risks. - Public Spirit and an Interest in the future prosperity or decline of your City must be your incitements. Full security for the principal & Common Interest are the terms: - a temporary advance of a small part of your property may preserve the value of the whole.

Your Councils having no Interests separated from those of their constituents, can in what they thus recommend

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have no views, but such as in their opinions tend to public good - It rests with you to say, whether this work shall or shall not be undertaken. - If encouragement be given, by a prompt & liberal subscription it will be commenced. Should the present call fail of the desired success, we may as Individual Citizens deplore the unhappy event, but as men to whom a public trust has been delegated, we shall derive consolation from a Conviction of having discharged our duty.

The message also informed That they have concurred in the Resolution of this council for printing the address to the Citizens with an amendment, which is to add the following words to the said Resolution - "together with the Ordinance providing for the raising of a Sum of Money on Loan for supplying the City of Philadelphia with wholesome water" - to which address & amendment they requested the concurrence of this Council & being read were Ordered to lay on the table. . . .

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On motion made & seconded, The Council took up for a second reading, the address sent in from the Common Council & concurred therein. On motion made & seconded, the Council then took the amendment of the Common Council to the resolution of this Council for printing said address, for a second reading & concurred therein of all which the Common Council were informed. . . .

The Committee to whom were referred the Communication from the Delaware & Schuylkill Canal Company made report - That the said Propositions & Terms, ought not in the Opinion of the Committee, be acceded [sic] to & therefore they recommend the adoption of the following Resolution, viz Resolved That the Select & Common Councils do not agree

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to the offers proposed by the Managers of the Delaware & Schuylkill Canal company. Which report was read and ordered to lay on the Table. On motion made & seconded the same was read a second time & concurred in & the above resolution adopted, of which the Common Council were informed and their concurrence therein requested.

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**Saturday, March 2nd, 1799**

The Select Council met by order of the President, present

Francis Gurney, Esq., President

Samuel Coates, Thomas Cumpston, Godfrey Haga, Caleb North, John Miller, Junr., Joseph Sims

Samuel M. Fox

. . .

A Message was received from the Common Council . . .

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The Message also informed That the Common Council had passed the following Resolutions - Whereas there is reason to believe that many judicious & well disposed Inhabitants of this City are impressed with a belief that the malignant fever with which we have been visited for two successive Seasons is of domestic Origin & have seriously

expressed their apprehensions, that unless proper measures are adopted & with vigilance pursued for more effectually cleansing the Docks Common Sewers Gutters & such other part or parts of the City of Philadelphia from which danger may be apprehended that we shall be again visited with this desolating scourge. In order therefore to quiet the fears and apprehensions of those Citizens, to correct as much as possible the state of our Atmosphere & render it less favorable to contagion & contribute as far as the Constitutional powers vested in us will permit to the preservation of the health of the City generally, Be it

1. Resolved by the Select & Common Councils, That the City Commissioners be authorized & they are hereby authorized & strictly enjoined & required as soon as the State of the Weather will permit to employ a sufficient number of hands & immediately proceed to effectually cleanse all the public docks & Common Sewers of this City & deposit the filth removed therefrom in some suitable place or places that it may not become offensive to the Inhabitants -

2. Resolved That the City Commissioners be authorized & they are hereby strictly enjoined & required during the months of June, July, August, September & October, to

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have all filth & dirt of every kind removed from the Streets lanes & alleys within the built parts of the City at least twice in each week, to have the pumps well worked & the gutters effectually washed & scrubbed with brooms at least three times in each week, they are hereby authorized to employ a sufficient number of hands for this purpose & each Commissioner shall be responsible for the deficiencies in his district.

3. Resolved That a Joint Committee of the Select and Common Councils be appointed to see that the above Resolutions are carried into full effect & the said Committee are enjoined if any deficiency shall appear to report the same to Councils.

4. Resolved That the High Constable be enjoined and required diligently to examine & report to the said Committee each & every neglect to carry into full execution the aforesaid resolutions & also to report all private nuisances - and nuisances on private property which may come to his knowledge, to the board of health & request their Cooperation to have them speedily removed.

Pursuant to which Resolutions the Common Council appointed Messrs Allibone, Fox, McDonald, Cuthbert, & Parker their Committee - to which Resolutions they requested the concurrence of this Council & being read were ordered to lay on the Table.

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A Message was received from the Common Council informing that they had Resolved, That the Committee on the subject of watering the City be authorized to agree with Edward Tilghman & William Rawle Esquires for their services as Counsel for the City in favor of a bill granting aid to the City for the introduction of Water & for other purposes & that on the application of said Committee accompanied with a copy of this Resolution, the Mayor is requested to draw an order on the Treasurer of the City for the amount of such Sum as shall be applied for by the said Committee to stand charged to the residuary fund appropriated for the contingent objects for 1799. In which

the concurrence of this Council was requested & being read was ordered to lay on the table.

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On motion made & seconded the same was read a second time & concurred in, of which the Common Council were informed.

The Committee appointed to receive information, make contracts, etc. on the subject of watering the City & to employ agents when necessary for promoting that object, made report as follows,

That since the passing of the resolutions of the Select & Common Councils, which empowered them in conjunction with the Mayor of the City to agree to so much of the Contract entered into by N. J. Roosevelt, as was necessary for the timely securing of two Steam engines, they have caused a copy of the same to be forwarded to him, accompanied with propositions for the following modification of the original proposed terms of Contract, that is to say

First, That it being apprehended the quantity of One Million of Gallons, in every twenty four hours, might be inadequate for the supply of the City; that in lieu of that quantity for the Sum of three thousand dollars per engine he should agree to deliver one million and five hundred thousand gallons within the time aforesaid for the annual Sum of three thousand five hundred dollars per engine & for five thousand dollars each for three millions of Gallons within the same space of time, should this last quantity be found necessary, and for a proportionate price for any quantity more than one & an half & less than three millions of Gallons as aforesaid. -

Second, That instead of having a lease for a lot of

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Ground on Schuylkill and the use of the extra power of the Schuylkill engine, to be determined only on the event of nonperformance of contract on his part, that he should agree to receive a lease for the same, to be of a duration not exceeding a term of twenty one years, to be determinable at any time, within that term, at the option of the City on his nonperformance of any part of the Contract, that this lease should be renewable for a second term of Seven Years on the mutual agreement of both parties; and should either party determine to decline a renewal of the lease for the said term of seven years or to propose a renewal thereof of any alterations or different modification, due notice shall be given by one party to the other of any such intention, at least three Years previous to the termination of the existing lease, and in case no agreement shall be effected for a renewal of the lease as aforesaid, any permanent improvements, which may be made & erected on the said Lot of Ground by the said Nicholas J. Roosevelt, at his own proper expence [sic] & Cost, to be valued by referees to be mutually appointed by both parties & to be paid for by the City at such valuation.

Third, That in lieu of his proposition to pay back again to the City thirteen thousand seven hundred and fifty dollars, the Cost of the Schuylkill engine in fourteen years, by deduction from his annual compensation for attendance, repairs & fuel to said two engines, he should agree to pay a rent for the lot & extra power aforesaid at the rate of eight hundred & twenty five dollars per annum to be deducted from his annual compensation as aforesaid.

To these propositions your Committee have been answered

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that they will be all acceded [sic] to, excepting the supply of three millions of Gallons per twenty four hours for five thousand dollars each engine. Roosevelt being of the opinion he cannot afford to undertake so large a supply, for a less Sum than Six thousand dollars each engine.

Your Committee having in conjunction & in perfect agreement with the Mayor, thus far negotiated this business, may here add the Information that Roosevelt hath commenced the work of putting the Steam engines in forwardness, and will conformably to the terms of the proposed Contract (not objected to, on the part of the City) expect an installment payment, which will fall due on the Sixth of March next coming. It must be obvious that the takeing [sic] proper security, before any payment is made, is a measure that ought not to be neglected. The takeing [sic] of this security was an essential part of the business referred to the care of the Mayor and your Committee, but your Committee apprehending that difficulties & embarrassments would arise & perplex the business by takeing [sic] security only for a partial performance of an essential, tho not most material, part of the business, & leave the other part of the proposed contracts insecured, have on this view, declined requiring such partial security before the Councils had an opportunity of deciding on the propriety of going fully into the whole contract, under the modifications as now reported by your Committee.

If with these modifications, Councils shall agree to have the Contract fully executed, it will become necessary to vest the power of executing the same, either with the Mayor & the present Joint Committee, or with some other

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proper persons, to be duly authorized, as the agents of the Corporation, for such purpose.

To carry this into effect, your Committee takes the liberty of recommending the adoption of the following resolution Resolved, That the Mayor in conjunction with the joint Committee on the subject of Watering the City be authorized & they are hereby authorized & empowered to execute, on the part of the Mayor, Aldermen and Citizens of Philadelphia, in due form, the Contract offered on the part of Nicholas J. Roosevelt, with such alterations & modifications as have been proposed to him, the said Nicholas J. Roosevelt, with such alterations & modifications as have been proposed to him, [phrase repeated on original copy] the said Nicholas J. Roosevelt & by him acceded to, and with any other modification & alteration that can be obtained for the promoting of the City Interests, and the Recorder of the City shall when thereto required by the Said Committee affix in due form of Law the Seal of the City to the said Contract, and that the said Contract when fully completed & interchanged be deposited for safe keeping with the recorder of this City and that three Copies of the Original so to be deposited, be made out, one of which shall be delivered to the Mayor for his use, one to the Select and one to the Common Council to be placed on file for the use of the Members of each Council at any time when a recurrence thereto shall become expedient.

Your Committee will further mention for the information of Councils that, in the course of the frequent meetings of the Committee several propositions to enter into

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contracts for different parts of the works have been offered, some of them appear more advantageous, for the Interests of the City than has been calculated on in the estimate of expences [sic], but however advantageous such propositions have been & may be, your Committee are possessed of no authority to conclude any bargain or contract, and as the Season is now nearly at hand when vigourous [sic] & decisive measures should be adopted & promptly executed, to ensure a reasonable progress in the great object in contemplation it appears to your Committee highly important that the Councils constitute & duly authorize a proper agency, with full powers to form contracts & conclude bargains on any advantageous offers which may present, & which it may be adviseable [sic] to accept. To answer this Intention, your Committee propose & recommend for the consideration of Councils the adoption of the following Resolution Resolved That the Mayor in conjunction with the joint Committee on the subject of watering the City & they are hereby fully authorized & empowered to contract with, engage & employ any person or persons who may or shall offer to engage or contract for the whole or any part of the Work or works necessary to be executed for the purpose of introducing a supply of Water into the City, at such reasonable wages and compensation, as shall be most for the Interest of the City having always due regard to the mean & resources of the City, & to the securing of the performance of any engagements & contracts by such adequate provisions as circumstances in particular cases, may render proper, and reporting every proceeding of Contract & engagement made by virtue of this resolution, at the next meeting of the Councils ensuing after any such proceedings. Feb. 26, 1799

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Which report was read & ordered to lay on the Table. On motion made & seconded the same was read a second time & adopted of which the Common Council were informed.

A Message was received from the Common Council informing that they had adopted the said report & had agreed to add to the Committee on the subject of Watering the City Messrs Parker and Cope. . . .

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The Council then took up for a second reading the Resolutions sent in from the Common Council on the subject of cleansing the public docks & Common Sewers and Resolved, that they will concur in the first and second thereof and that they do not concur in the preamble or introduction to the same, nor to the third and fourth thereof, of which the Common Council were informed.

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**Saturday, March 30th, 1799**

The Select Council met by order of the President, present

Francis Gurney, Esq., President

Samuel Coates, John Miller, Junr., Caleb North, Henry Pratt, Joseph Sims, John Hallowell, Samuel M. Fox, John Connelly, Godfrey Haga

A Message was received from the Common Council . . .

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The Message also informed, That the Common Council have agreed to the Report of the Joint Committee on the subject of watering the City - which report is as follows -  
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That by several communications with the Commissioners for receiving subscriptions to the Water loan - they claim that in many instances considerable subscriptions might have been received had the Commissioners been empowered to receive the full & entire Sum of such Subscriptions in one payment on the Condition that such subscriptions & payments should be entitled to an Interest commencing thereon immediately from the date of payment, but that not being at liberty to take subscriptions on such condition, they could not accede to any such offers; Your Committee are of the opinion it will tend to advance the views of the Corporation to authorize the Commissioner to receive Loans on the condition aforesaid & likewise are impressed with the belief that it will be usefull [sic] if not essentially necessary to employ some discreet, intelligent & trusty person to collect the first Installment payments of Thirty dollars & Share from the several Subscribers & to allow him such compensation for the service as shall be reasonable & proper. And your Committee will add further that they consider it expedient & adviseable [sic] to encourage & facilitate subscriptions by allowing an Interest to commence on all Sums received from the time the first installment of Thirty dollars per share shall be paid.

They therefore recommend to the Councils the adoption of the following resolutions -

First, Resolved That the commissioners named & appointed in the Ordinance entitled ["] An Ordinance providing for the raising of a Sum of Money on Loan for supplying

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the City of Philadelphia with wholesome Water" be authorized & they are hereby authorized & empowered, anything in the said Ordinance to the contrary notwithstanding to receive Subscriptions to the said Loan to bear Interest from the date of Subscription, provided the Shares subscribed be fully paid by the subscribers in preference to the Installment payments enumerated in the Ordinance aforesaid.

Second, Resolved That the Mayor in conjunction with the Committee on the subject of watering the City be authorized & they are hereby authorized & empowered to engage & employ for a reasonable compensation one or more discreet intelligent & trusty persons to call on the respective subscribers to the loan for watering the City after their several first installment payment shall become due & to collect & pay the same to the City Treasurer.

Third Resolved That whenever any Subscriber shall have paid his first Installment of Thirty dollars per Share in addition to the deposit money of ten dollars per share He shall be entitled to a receipt for the same & also for the succeeding Installment payments, as they shall be severally made and the City Treasurer is hereby authorized & enjoined to grant receipts to the respective subscribers for every Installment payment made by them pursuant to the Ordinance entitled An Ordinance providing for the raising of a Sum of money on Loan for supplying the City of

Philadelphia with wholesome water

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which receipts shall specify that for the Sums therein designated, the subscriber shall be entitled to Interest thereon at the rate of 6 per cent per annum provided the succeeding Installment (if any such here shall be) shall be duly & seasonably paid.

Fourthly, Resolved That the City Treasurer provide sufficient & proper Certificates with suitable Blank spaces to be struck by a Copperplate on paper Watermarked with marginal Insignia & other devices thereon to prevent & guard against Frauds & Counterfeits & to have the said Certificates bound up in the form of a book from which they shall be separated by Incision through the marginal Insignia & shall deliver to the subscribers respectively, who shall have paid up the full amount of their subscriptions, one of the above said Certificates signed by him & Countersigned by the Mayor, agreeable [sic] to Ordinance, with the Blanks properly filled up & containing the number of shares to which the respective subscribers are severally entitled paying at the same time to the said Subscribers the amount of Interest which shall have accrued on the Installment payments to the date & issuing forth of the said Certificates.

Which being read was ordered to lay on the Table. On motion made & seconded the same was read a second time & adopted - of which the Common Council were ordered to be informed.

The Message also informed, That they had Resolved

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That the Mayor be & he is hereby authorized to offer a reward of Two dollars for prosecuting to Conviction any person who shall contrary to the existing regulations deposit any filth from necessaries or other nuisances in any prohibited place within this City & that this resolution have effect from the first day of February last - to which Resolution the concurrence of this Council was requested & being read was ordered to lay on the Table -

On Motion made & seconded, the Council Resolved That the Mayor be & he is hereby requested to draw his Orders upon the Treasurer of the City for the payment of such Sums of Money as now are or hereafter may be certified by the Committee appointed for watering the City to be due upon the contracts which are or may be entered into by them, and That the Treasurer pay the said Orders out of any monies which may come to his hands in consequence of the loan opened by the City agreeably to the Ordinance for that purpose & that a regular account of the said Orders be laid before the Councils quarterly.

Of which the Common Council was ordered to be informed & their concurrence thereto requested.

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**Wednesday, April 17th, 1799**

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**END OF FIRST VOLUME  
NEXT VOLUME IS MAY 2, 1799 TO MAY 25, 1803**