

Water Commission Minutes
5/04/2020

Called to Order: 5:31 PM

Present by Zoom: Fran Huntoon, David Sander, Bard Hill, Katie Mather
Absent: Don Morin

Others Present by Zoom: Josh Arneson, Town Manager; Kendall Chamberlin, Water & Sewer Superintendent; Kathy Daub-Stearns, Admin. Assist.; Connie Bona, Finance; and Angelica Contis recorded the meeting for MMCTV Channel 15; others present: Ed Fitzpatrick, Bob Reap, Dave Thomas, Rod West.

1. Welcome by Bard. No comments.

2. Additions or Deletions to the Agenda. none

3. Other Business

a. Consideration of approval of water and wastewater allocations for 39 Bridge St.
Moved to next week

b. Discussion of sewer extension to 91 Willis Farm Rd.

Josh explained:

- that the proposed system would go from school through the Richmond Land Trust land down to Reaps property
- that this proposal will be a private extension with the possibility of being turned over to the Town at a later date
- that the Town's lawyer had concerns that Kendall addressed in his Memo to the Board

Discussion included:

- that Bard noted if the proposed system were a private system it would still need it to be built to Town standards with one meter for billing purposes
- Kendall's memo assumed the system would be a private extension with one meter on the force main. The Town would have access to the meter vault and the Reap's would have to allow the initial, then ongoing inspection of the system.
- Bob Reap agreed and Ed Fitzpatrick asked what would happen if there was a leak on the private side of the system? Bard responded that if private system is leaking, water or septage, there is a policy in place that would allow the Town to compel the private system to make repairs or risk being shut off.
- the question was posed: How is the price structure set when there are multiple users? Kendall responded that the pricing would be the same as it is for other customers with multiple users. The number of users equals the number of fixed rate charges imposed whether commercial or residential plus billing for the actual usage that flows through the meter. Kendall added that the usage rate charged is the commercial rate when there is mixed usage. The Reap's would receive one bill and it would be their responsibility to pay the Town. They would have the right to bill their tenants.

- Bob Reap wanted to know if he would be able to tack on an administrative fee when passing costs onto his tenants? Kendall responded that he knows of situations where HOA type agreements are in place so that there is a way to have funds to do repairs and pay for expenses. Bard added that he felt it was a legal issue the Town did not have authority to determine.
- David asked if the Reap's had any idea how long it would be before wanting to turn the system over to the Town? Bob Reap responded that he would need to speak to his accountant that he hoped to recoup some of the expense through depreciating the system. Kendall added that the proposed system could stay private for as long as the Reap's wanted but it had to be built to town specs with blueprints so the Town would know what they were taking over if that request was ever made adding that documentation would have to include any future extensions.

It was decided that Kendall's memo would be sent over to the Town's attorney with comments from Ed Fitzpatrick for a draft agreement to be drawn up for review at the 5/18/2020 meeting.

c. Review of draft FY21 Budget and Rates

Josh reported that changes to the budget were made to reflect updated insurance allocation information and internal adjustments that did not change the overall numbers.

Discussion regarding rates included:

- Kendall suggesting that due to the increase in septage and the current economic situation due to COVID-19 it would be possible to keep rates flat if the Selectboard would consider level funding the budget by using the increase in septage revenue. Kendall hypothesized that residential usage is up and commercial is down. He did not have actual numbers but said that he felt he was correct due to the net flow from the system being the same.

Fran agreed with Kendall. The Commission would like to look at what last years numbers look like for comparison. Overall the Commission felt the budget looked good and with the additional information being supplied at the next meeting should be ready to set the rate.

d. Update on Bridge St. Infrastructure Project

Josh reported:

- that construction had started however the RR permit was causing a delay. He reported that all information had been submitted for the permit but the RR was taking more time than anticipated causing there to be a need to adjust the work schedule

e. Update on Bridge St. Infrastructure Replacement loan

Josh reported that the final paperwork on the Bridge St. Infrastructure loan shows a 50% subsidy and that the Selectboard will sign the paperwork at their meeting.

f. Update on mailing of Consumer Confidence Report

Josh reported that the annual Consumer Confidence Report is ready to mail to users and will go out in a few days.

Commission members requested an additional information sheet be sent that included information on the dangers of flushing wipes as well as information on how to sign up for email notifications related to the Bridge St project

g. Discussion on location of Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting will be a virtual meeting 5/19/2020 at 6PM

h. Superintendent's Report

Kendall's report included information:

- that septage is busy,
- that the department has broken another record of managing 1 million gallons of septage during the month of April
- that staff have been working on different projects using social distancing, lots of disinfecting and face masks.

4. Approval of Minutes, Warrants and Purchase Orders

A) Minutes:

David moved to approve the Minutes of 4/27/2020, Fran seconded. Roll Call Vote: Katie abstained. Bard, David, and Fran voted affirmatively.

B) Warrants:

David & Fran thought they looked ok

David moved to approve the Warrant, Fran seconded. Roll Call Vote: Katie, Fran, David, and Bard voted affirmatively.

Josh will send out the Warrant for signatures by DocuSign.

5. Discuss Items for Next Agenda and Adjourn

Items for the next agenda:

Annual meeting and presentation

Volume comparison from last year to this one

Adjourn:

David moved to adjourn, Fran seconded. Roll Call Vote: David, Bard, Fran, and Katie voted affirmatively.

The meeting adjourned at 6:63