

Water Commission Minutes  
4/6/2020

Called to Order: 6 PM

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

Present by phone: Don Morin

Absent:

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

**1. Welcome** by Bard. No comments.

**2. Additions or Deletions to the Agenda.** -none

**3. Other Business** -none

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

Josh reported that at the last meeting a letter from the lawyer had made recommendations that the proposed system for 91 Willis Farm Rd. be taken over by the Town. The board made the letter public so the Reaps could read the letter dated 3/12/2020. The letter was also posted online.

Kendall highlighted the information from a Memo he'd provided to Josh that included his opinion that the location of the water meter should be at the vault and that only one invoice should be sent. The entire extension would then be the Reaps responsibility. Bard wanted to make the memo public and post it online. Don Morin also wrote a memo regarding the lawyer's letter. It was decided all memos should be made public and be posted on the website.

It was decided to continue the discussion until the next meeting.

B. Discussion of Water and Sewer operations during the COVID-19 health crisis

Josh reported:

- that Kendall has done a great job getting ahead of COVID-19.
- that Kendall has a continuity plan and has instituted a revolving staff schedule
- that the department continues taking septage in as the Governor directed

Discussion followed that included:

- how to keep employees safe with people putting objects into the system that don't belong there
- Kendall reporting that residents aren't following the recommendations to not put anything but toilet paper down the drain and especially not to flush wipes
- that it's necessary to continually inform the public about what not to flush
- that has put together a post card to send out that contains the reminder

### **C. Warrant approval under restrictions due to COVID-19**

Josh reported on an alternative path to approve warrants has been established by the Selectboard. That the process is to have a roll call vote to approve invoices previously sent to each member for review. The Board Members empower the acting chair to signify approval of the warrant by electronic signature each time the warrant is approved. An electronic signature page will be sent to the acting chair who will sign and return it. The minutes from the meeting and the signature page will be attached to the warrant. Josh added that "DocuSign" allows the signer to use a computer mouse or finger on a touch screen to create a signature. He has downloaded a free trial to try it out, after 30 days it will be \$40 a month.

Fran will review and provide questions to Connie by Monday morning for answers for meeting.

### **D. Update on bids to refinance Water Tank Gap Loan**

Josh reported that the Selectboard voted to go out to bid on several loans. This was one of them. We got 3 bids back Union Bank lowest rate by refinancing the Town will save \$2461. over the life of the loan.

### **E. Update on Bridge St. Infrastructure Project**

Josh reported that the Bridge St. project has been impacted by COVID 19 stay home, stay safe order. The construction start date has been moved forward to 4/22/2020. If the stay home stay safe order gets extended the start date will have to be revisited.

### **F. Review of feedback from VLCT on language to amend the current water rule**

Josh reported that VLCT has advised that the Rule can be changed while we are waiting to redo the Ordinance. The Water & Sewer Commission can amend the Rule and the Selectboard would approve a new ordinance later. Wording for the Rule amendment will be available for Commission review at the next meeting.

### **G. Superintendent's Report**

Kendall reported:

- That septage is very busy with everyone being home and that wipes are showing up in septage from Richmond's pipe system.

Discussion included placing a surcharge on any hauler that brought a load in that contained wipes with the Commission deferring to Kendall on what the surcharge amount should be.

- that he had received a memo from the Town Manager about the possibility of having some employees on unemployment, he did not feel it should apply to essential staff. That employees that are home are on call and should be paid their regular pay during that time.

Bard commented that there are multiple ways to handle "on call" situations and usually people are not paid their full pay. We are trying to do what is fair to employees and what is fair to the tax payers. We are gathering information and don't need to make any immediate decisions, but we do have to plan. Working from home is different than being on-call and we will approach this gradually and thoughtfully. The Water & Sewer department is one of the most essential services we have.

David added that there is no perfect solution and the situation will need constant reassessment. Fran agreed saying the employees at Water & Sewer have a special skillset that we need for the operation to continue so all things need to be addressed in balance to each other.

#### **4. Approval of Minutes, Warrants and Purchase Orders**

a. David moved to approve the minutes of 3/16/2020, Fran seconded. Roll Call Vote: Don, Bard, David, Fran voted affirmatively, Katie abstained.

Fran moved to allow the acting chair to sign the warrants and approve invoices on behalf of the Commission, Katie seconded. Roll Call Vote: David, Katie, Fran, Don, Bard voted affirmatively.

Fran moved to approve warrants, Dave seconded. Roll Call Vote: Fran, David, Don, Bard voted affirmatively, Katie abstained.

#### **5. Discuss Items for Next Agenda and Adjourn**

Commission members will email Josh items for the next meeting.

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:01