

Water Commission Minutes
5/3/2021

Called to Order: 5:31 PM

Present by Zoom: Fran Huntoon, Don Morin, David Sander, Bard Hill, Cody Quattrocci
Absent: none

Others Present by Zoom: Josh Arneson, Town Manager; Kendall Chamberlin, Water & Sewer; Kathy Daub-Stearns, Admin. Assist.; the meeting was recorded for MMCTV Channel 15; Rod West, Tom f ipad2018, Heidi Bormann, and Bob Reap

1. Welcome by Bard. No comments.

2. Additions or Deletions to the Agenda.

Bard requested providing a cautionary tale from Essex current events and to discuss the Commission's meeting. These suggestions were approved by other members of the Commission.

Bard reported:

- that using Essex as an example Commission members and town staff should be reminded that everything we do is public record; emails, texting and written notes.
- that staying aware that we are subject to the Freedom of Information Act and discovery he recommended that everyone anticipate that anything written will be read by the person or organization you are writing about. He said that he has not seen or heard of anything that could be considered an issue in Richmond and that this recommendation was cautionary only.
- that regarding meetings, current discussions make a jam packed agenda and suggested agenda's be split into regular and expansion with additional meetings for expansion taking place on alternate Monday's; Fran thought that would be fine and once the budget meetings are over that things should quiet down, Don felt he was overwhelmed with the amount of discussion and is in favor of Bard's suggestion, Cody said there has been a lot to discuss and asked if wondered if having meetings every week would be keep the meetings to an hour. Bard said that meeting weekly as the Selectboard did during COVID would make it easier with more streamlined agendas, David thought it was a good idea to have time to spend on the expansion and give it the attention it needs, Kendall said, as long as they're zoom it would not be a problem. Josh asked if next week would start the new process, Bard replied yes at 6PM, Don said he would not be able to attend next week due to travel. This will be tried for a few meetings to see how it goes.

3. Approval of Minutes, Warrants and Purchase Orders

David moved to approve the Minutes of 4/19/2021; Fran seconded. Roll Call Vote: David, Fran, Cody, Don, and Bard voted affirmatively; Motion passed.

Purchase Orders

Fran moved to approve PO 4115 to Union Bank for the water tank gap loan in an amount not to exceed \$28,261.16.; David seconded. Roll Call Vote: Fran, Cody, David, Don, and Bard voted affirmatively; Motion passed.

Discussion included:

- that Josh said this is a loan related to the water tank installed about 7 years ago
- that Bard said this is an example of the users repaying a loan for a capital expense

Warrants:

David moved to approve the warrants and invoices as presented; Fran seconded. Roll Call Vote: Fran, Cody, David, Don, and Bard voted affirmatively; Motion passed.

4. Items for Presentation or Discussion with those present

a. Update on West Main St. waterline replacement project

Josh reported:

- that the project is moving along smoothly
- that connections are starting to be made today
- that the project should be done by the end of the week.

Kendall reported:

- that a valve on Jericho Rd will need to be replaced
- that the project on Main Street has gone exceedingly smooth
- that there is a buried manhole that is under a foot of asphalt on Route 2 that is being replaced and will be paid for separately with other funds

Discussion:

- that cleanup on the Main Street project will begin soon
- that Don asked why the manhole was buried a foot deep, Kendall replied that when Route 2 was paved it happened and there has not been a reason to find it until now

b. Review of Draft FY22 Water and Wastewater Budget and Rates

Josh reported:

- that the only change on the budget was to use septage funds to keep the rates down
- that Kendall updated the numbers on the expense side to reflect the amount of septage that has been taken in
- that Kendall took into consideration that this takes advantage of the extra septage income and if it goes down so would the expenses
- that water and wastewater rates were discussed with less usage at the school and business and more residential in the past year
- that with things opening up FY22 usage may look more like FY20
- that in most cases rates were less except for the government and school fixed rates which would be higher but overall the plan holds the rates down to less than FY21

Discussion included:

- that there are few users of water only with most being both water and sewer customers
- that combined across all three (3) user groups rates would go down

- that Bard asked to look at fund balances and reserves, Kendall said that in the next five (5) years the big unknown is the 2024 review that will trigger upgrades and having fund balances are important to those required upgrades
- that the recommended fund balances have not been met but there have been constant upgrades to the system
- that the rates presented are about where they were hoping they would be
- that Fran liked using some of the septage income to reduce costs as Kendall suggested, Cody felt this was a good move, Bard observed that our rates are among the highest, but we have a high functioning system with high water quality with little problems that would cause costly repairs.
- that Don asked what the net proposed increase to customers is for combined water and sewer, Bard responded that the net decreases are about \$76/year residential \$182 commercial \$640 for the school. Don said he liked the decrease and hoped it would not be a temporary thing.
- that it was decided to move forward with the budget titled "FY20 w/ updated septage" for the annual water/ sewer meeting
- that Josh said if it is the will of the Commission to move forward with these numbers it would be presented as a package at the budget meeting and be voted on; Fran said she would like to use the numbers proposed tonight, Cody, David, Don and Bard agreed thanking Josh and Kendall for all the work on the budget

c. Review of Annual Meeting agenda

Bard reported:

- that that draft agenda was displayed
- that an hour has been plenty of time historically for the Annual Meeting
- that everyone agreed with agenda as proposed

d. Superintendent's Report

Kendall reported:

- that we are participating in the free phosphorus study
- that the heat has been repaired at the facility
- that there was a plug in the system that was repaired
- that there may be big money for stormwater coming by way of grants
- that for drinking and clean water, access to funds will need shovel ready projects
- that Kendall congratulated his staff and the construction company staff for the great work they have been doing, Bard agreed

Discussion included:

- that there is a lot of money being discussed for grants with no actual information yet
- that there will be a short timeline for funding requests once guidance is available so having shovel ready projects will be important
- that related to Route 2 stormwater infrastructure, discussions with the State were not encouraging and decoupling stormwater from wastewater needs further discussion with agencies like the Dept of Transportation
- that Don asked what amount has been spent on the condo association work, Kendall said we are in negotiations with them, Josh said the amount was about \$3700 that was forwarded to the condo association and the request was that they pay it since the stormwater was coming off their property, Bard said that the stormwater line is a

private line, Josh confirmed that, Kendall said the building was constructed in the late 70's or early 80's

e. Discussion of expansion of sewer system into the Gateway District

1) Update on NBRC grant application

Josh reported:

that the application is basically ready to be submitted

- that the only updated numbers are for sewer only to the Willis Farm on Route 2
- that the application is due May 14, 2021
- that the application requires the Selectboard to approve the application

2) Consideration of recommending that the Selectboard sign a resolution for the NBRC grant

Fran moved to recommend to the Selectboard that they sign the Resolution to apply for the NBRC grant; David seconded. Roll call vote: Cody, Don, David, Fran, and Bard voted affirmatively. Motion passed

3) Discussion of current Water and Sewer District boundary

Bard reported:

- on a map showing the district boundary that he described
- that Bard asked that this map be acknowledged as the Water and Sewer District boundaries; Fran said it makes sense to have the boundaries established
- that the map showed the existing infrastructure and could be expanded later
- that it could be possible that there are residences and places not served by water and sewer within the boundaries
- that anything outside the boundary lines would be considered part of the expansion, those inside would not have to vote for the expansion
- that when water and sewer goes past your property you are compelled to join the system
- that Don asked who generated the map, Bard said Aaron and Kendall at the Water Sewer Dept, Ravi, the Town Planner and Linda, the Town Clerk worked together to create the map
- that Don asked about the Resourceful Renovator and whether he will be forced to join, Kendall said he would not be because the line does not go that far so he until it becomes available, he is not compelled to hook up or pay fees
- that Don asked about Mann & Machine, Kendall said they are hooked to both water and sewer
- that Fran asked about how the voting would work; Bard said, it is not users or customers of the district that vote, it is residents that vote even those who may not be a user but are in the district

David moved to adopt the map with turquoise lines and dashes to represent the district boundary; Cody seconded. Roll call vote: David, Cody, Fran, Don, and Bard voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

Discussion included:

- Heidi Bormann asked why the line is way off to the west, Bard said it is the historical boundary of the town village

- that the dotted lines represent the school, fire dept and Thompson Roads to the south and were decisions made by the Village Trustees who were also the Water Sewer Commission to serve these areas about 50 years ago

Bard thanked town staff for their contributions to creating the map

Bard asked the Commission about prioritizing things in the last 15 minutes resulting in items 4 and 7 moved to next week's meeting

4) Review of project planning timeline

This was moved to next week's meeting

5) Follow up on definition of failing septic systems

Bard reported:

- that ultimately you can tell if a septic system is failing because you can see it and smell it
- that there are minor failures that can be remedied and then there is long term failures
- that if a water supply is endangered that is another level of failure

Discussion:

- that Don asked about Riverview's permit that will need to be renewed next year, he had information that the septic field was about at the end of its useful life; Bard said that the town does not regulate it, the state does. How motivated the state is to help with funding for privately owned systems is unknown.
- that the mobile home park owner and the Mobil station owner's decision to join an extension will be determined by cost

6) Continued discussion on funding options

Bard reported:

- that the packet contained the funding options

Josh reported:

- that we are still waiting on numbers from Green Mountain Engineering for expanding out to the Mobil Station
- that the Vermont Bond Bank provided numbers that were presented that amounted to about \$16,000 a year for Phase 1
- that to Phase 2 would be an additional \$8,700
- that Phase 3 would be \$33,000
- that the further out you go the more the cost would be based on someone's location
- that there may be grants and other funding options becoming available

Discussion included:

- that there may be lower interest rates and partial funding available

7) Other topics related to the expansion of the sewer system

This will be added to the next meeting.

5. Discuss Items for Next Agenda and Adjourn

Items 4 & 7

email other topics to Josh

Adjourn

David moved to adjourn; Fran seconded. Roll call vote: Fran, Don, David, Cody, and Bard voted affirmatively. The meeting adjourned at 7:00PM.