

Water and Sewer Commission Meeting Minutes January 3, 2022

Members Present: Jay Furr, Bard Hill, David Sander, Fran Huntoon, Greg Tucker

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Josh Arneson, Town Manager; Kendall Chamberlin, Water and Wastewater Superintendent;

Others Present: The meeting was recorded for MMCTV, Rod West, Kristen, Steve Palmer, Virginia Clarke, Aaron Krymkowski, Bob Reap, Joy Reap, Chris Granda

Call to Order : 6:00pm

Welcome by: Sander. Thanked Water and Sewer Staff for their work through the Holiday weeks.

Public comment: None

Additions and Deletions: None

Discussion of ways to show gratitude and appreciation for water and wastewater employees

Arneson: On December 23 Water and Sewer Commissioners David Sander, Bard Hill and I met with Water and Sewer Superintendent Kendall Chamberlin. Mr. Chamberlin expressed to us that morale was low in the Water and Sewer Department and that staff does not feel valued and appreciated. We had a productive conversation about the concerns and agreed to try to continue to find ways to express gratitude and appreciation for Water and Sewer staff. Some ideas that came up in the meeting were to do a better job of recognizing the Department in a Water and Sewer Commission meeting when they receive an award, this can also be extended to a more public recognition on Front Porch Forum. Recognition of staff attaining certifications was also discussed including letters from the Commission and/or Town Manager congratulating the staff member on their achievement. This agenda item is a chance to share other ideas on how to better show gratitude and appreciation. I also want to note that Brad Snow has given his notice and will be leaving the Water and Sewer Department. I have enjoyed working with Brad and wish him the best in his future endeavors.

Sander: I used to stop by occasionally to talk with Water and Sewer staff but have not done that lately due to COVID.

Furr: Since I came on the Board COVID has been an issue, so while I would like to stop by to meet everyone I have not felt that it is appropriate given the pandemic. One idea I have is to post profiles of each department each month on the Town website to highlight staff and departments.

Hill: I like the idea of something on the website. Also, remember that the water that is used to fight fires comes from this system and that benefits the whole town.

Tucker: I was able to get a tour of the treatment facility recently. Staff are clearly proud of the facility.

Huntoon: I would love to continue to do tours of the facilities, and if we can open it to more of the public I think that would be good.

Sander: Perhaps we could create a kudos page on the website where we can recognize accomplishments of all Town Staff.

Krymkowski: We were happy to host Greg for a tour, and we can schedule more Commission members for tours. One of the major concerns of the Superintendent leaving last meeting was that there was no mention of the Superintendents letter to the Town Manager and the Commission. Brad Snow left the Town because of the approach the Commission took at the last meeting in the discussion of wage increases. It is great to talk about how to recognize the employees, but it is the words and tone of the Commission that drove Brad Snow away. I hope that making an employee leave is a wake-up call going forward. We are not holding the Town hostage; we are providing value to the Town and we want to be valued as employees.

Furr: I made the hostage comment at the last meeting, and I want to apologize. I immediately regretted that choice of words right after I said it. I quickly clarified that the employees are not holding the Town hostage in this instance. I look forward to doing more with wages once we get the compensation study. I do hope the changes we have made so far have helped.

Krymkowski: Thank you and we could have you to the facility for a tour.

Hill: David and I spend an hour and a half talking with Kendall about the letter. We went into a lot of detail and made several suggestions on how to address concerns. It is challenging to evaluate the wages as we are trying to make decisions based on best available facts and try to balance staff needs and those of the public. I do take staffing seriously and understand that staff stability and compensation is a very serious topic.

Sander: I apologize for where we are now. It was made clear to me that there is a communication problem. The actions we took at the last meeting were not a permanent solution, it was a step and we'll look at the compensation study when we have it. I feel badly that we are being reactive now and we should have been more proactive.

Discussion of capacity for proposed Gateway sewer expansion

Arneson: We have updated engineer Steve Palmer on the process to bond for the sewer expansion into the Gateway to the end of Phase 2. His main question at this point is what capacity should we design the system for. He would like to know if we are adding additional capacity for the Reap property. Are we sizing the system such that it could handle flows from the Mobile Home Park if that were to be included in the future?

Hill: We have had conversations about having capacity to support further buildout. We have recently had conversation that although now the Mobile Home Park is not interested at this point, they may be in the future. It is clear we need to plan capacity to handle more

development. Zoning is also being worked on and changes to Zoning could affect capacity.

West: From a fiduciary angle isn't it incumbent to get as much capacity of the sewage plant used as soon as possible? We just got a "no" from the Mobile Home Park so why would we hold capacity for them? I think you need to try to get as much capacity used in the current zone as possible.

Hill: We don't tell people what to build, we need to build capacity to handle what is built.

Sander: We need to be thoughtful on how the excess capacity is allocated.

Hill: But we cannot be in the position of telling the Town what needs to be built in order to use sewage capacity.

West: The best thing for the current users is to increase the current use. The question is how big to build the pipe to try to maximize the use.

Palmer: This has been a bit of a moving goalpost. We have a Preliminary Engineering Report from this past summer. The question is what do you want this to be designed for. We need to look 20-30 years down the road to build for the future. It is helpful to understand how far you want to go and what you want to include in that.

Hill: We are going as far as the Mobile Station. But, maybe we should have pipe capable of carrying the unused capacity that currently exists. This may be over building, but it may be advantageous to avoid a re-build in 30 years. Perhaps we should build it with the assumption that in the future there may be more of a demand than we can anticipate right now. Is it plausible to build it to a size that would support the unused capacity in the system?

Palmer: It is possible but we need to determine if it is cost effective. Everything gets larger, not just the pipe size, when capacity is increased. I need some feedback from the Board on what that capacity should be.

Hill: I don't think this Commission has the ability to predict what demand will be 100 years from now. I think a lot of this is predicated on what new Zoning may be in place and what individual properties may develop. However, I do in general want to build to allow for an increase in capacity over the lifetime. Perhaps we could look at the cost of incremental increases in capacity.

Kendall: There is a limited capacity at the treatment facility, and you should look at what you have for a possible buildout in the expansion area now, and then see where that gets us to capacity for the plant and design from there up to the capacity of the plant. However, users beyond the Mobil station have said no and it may not be advantageous to build for users beyond the Mobil station.

Sander: Should we build the pipe to a larger size and use smaller pumps until we need larger pumps?

Palmer: That is a good point as everything gets larger. If you told me to design this for double the capacity we have today we may over size the pump stations but keep the pumps smaller right now.

West: One thing we missed when we amended the expansion vote was that we did not go beyond the Mobil Station. We may be able to add a few businesses beyond the Mobil Station. I would like to encourage that we also add water into this project.

Palmer: I think I have heard you want to design for Phases 1 and 2. We will update the numbers for Phases 1 and 2. Then we'll need to see how much of a percentage increase you want to add to the base capacity.

Clarke: We are just embarking on updating Zoning for the Gateway due to the expansion of the water and sewer district. It is important to many residents that this does not become strip development. We are also trying to study housing. This area would be a good place to put housing and increase the density of housing. We are also looking at mixed use with a considerable housing component. We also need to have water for housing units, and we would like to encourage the possibility of water.

Hill: As years go by and the scope of the project shifts it is hard to bring a project to fruition as the scope shifts.

Palmer: It would be easy to do water as a separate project.

Hill: The value of the bond vote is dependent on the size of the system. The cost of extending the two lines is fairly expensive. We have said we are not going to raise costs for current users to benefit new users.

Reap, Joy: For you to say you are only "thinking" of doing water does not help us with our plans. I suggest you decide to do both or not. We have a well capacity that is amazing, but other people in the Gateway do not have that capacity. I suggest you deal with this sooner rather than later.

Review of draft documents for bond vote for proposed Gateway sewer expansion project and consideration of making a recommendation to the Selectboard to proceed with a bond vote

Granda: I would like to see how the bond would be paid for.

Sander: It would be paid for by the future users.

Granda: That was my understanding. But without that in writing I think that legally the bond repayment obligation falls on the Town.

Arneson: That information is not usually in the Bond documents.

Granda: But this is different because it is proposed to be paid back by future users at different rates.

West: A bond vote at this time may be premature. I would encourage you to put it off until we get more engineering.

Hill: We are between do we want it done now or do we want more detail?

Arneson: We could do a special meeting next week to follow up on the bond vote.

There was consensus to call a special meeting for Monday, January 10.

Minutes Warrants and Purchase Orders

Furr moved to approve minutes of the Dec. 20, 2021 meeting. Hill seconded. Roll Call Vote: Hill, Huntoon, Furr, Tucker and Sander in favor. Motion passed.

Furr moved to approve Purchase Order number 4024 to LCS Controls for an amount of \$12,690.00. Seconded by Hill. Roll Call Vote: Hill, Huntoon, Furr, Tucker and Sander in favor. Motion passed.

Furr moved to approve the warrants. Hill seconded. Roll Call Vote: Hill, Huntoon, Furr, Tucker and Sander in favor. Motion passed.

Furr moved to adjourn. Hill seconded. Roll Call Vote: Hill, Huntoon, Furr, Tucker and Sander in favor. Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 7:01pm

Chat File from Zoom

00:14:24 Aaron: Some comment regarding the letter to the commission from the superintendent would be in order for tonight. I would be willing to recite highlights from that letter for the sake of the meeting recording

00:15:37 Aaron: Hi Greg, Aaron (Me) was your tour giver

00:29:43 Kristen: Why no water?

00:56:53 Kendall: The only thing I have to have approved is the P.O for the level sensors.

01:04:49 Kendall: Thank you!