

Water Commission Minutes
8/2/2021

Members Present in person: June Heston, David Sander

Members by Zoom: Bard Hill

Absent: Fran Huntoon

Staff Present in person: Josh Arneson, Town Manager

Staff Present by Zoom: Kathy Daub-Stearns, Admin. Assist.; Kendall Chamberlain, Water & Sewer Superintendent

Others Present in person: Jeff Forward, Ian Bender, and George Ward, the meeting was recorded for MMCTV Channel 15

Others Present by Zoom: Rod West, Cara LaBounty

Called to Order: 6:03 PM

1. Welcome by David

Public Comment- none

2. Additions or Deletions to the Agenda-

Discussion included:

- that Bard suggested continuing hybrid meetings due to the resurgence of COVID and the Delta variant
- that COVID cases in Chittenden & Essex Counties now meet the CDC requirement of mask wearing indoors as reported in VT Digger
- that Bard thought with people with compromised immune systems or those who may have unvaccinated family members going back to wearing masks was important. David agreed.

Bard moved the renewed use of masks when indoors at in-person Water and Sewer meetings and the continued use of use of hybrid meetings; June seconded. Roll call vote: Bard, June, and David voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

3. Items for Presentation or Discussion with those present

a. Consideration of amending Purchase Order #4119 to account for a cost overrun for resident engineering services for West Main St. Waterline replacement project

Josh reported:

- that Green Mountain Engineering (GME) addendum had been submitted outlining the cost overruns
- that the project started in 2017, there were factors that caused an overrun including a valve replacement that was added on
- that GME has already been paid

June moved to amend PO# 4119 to Green Mountain Engineering for Bid and Construction Engineering Services for the West Main St. Waterline Replacement Project from \$11,230.00 to \$17,734.50 to account for an increase in resident engineering services; Bard seconded. Roll call vote: June, Bard, and David voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

b. Review of sample rates, timeline, and discussion of next steps for a bond vote and vote on district expansion for Gateway Sewer Expansion Project

Josh reported:

- that the final draft had been received
- that the phases were reviewed using documents provided online for the meeting
- that the expansion would result in the fixed, meter and water costs going down going down
- that the new users would have the additional expansion costs monthly as well as the initial hook up costs to pay

Discussion included:

- that June asked about surveying the users, Josh said the vote would be used as a formal survey. Bard said there was a discussion about having a meeting to see if the potential users were interested, a vote of the residents, then a vote of the users, then the bond vote.
- that Bard asked if the rate structure included usage and cost of the expansion. Josh said it did not. Bard thought showing the potential users all the information would be needed. He asked if there should be a formal meeting or go directly to a vote since the information would be needed either way and a community meeting would not need a lot of notice. June thought moving toward a vote made sense. Bard thought getting information together on each parcel would be necessary. He thought providing information to the potential users and having them vote first would be best since they are in the minority.
- that Rod West said there is an interesting conundrum, Phase 2 seems like a certainty, he asked if the mobile home park was a certainty since the double-digit decreases are only if the mobile home park is included saying the numbers would be much different if Phase 3 did not come about. Current rate users would be crazy not to vote in favor he thought.
- that Bard said the Mobil station doesn't get to vote, only the residents. Rod West thought the Mobil station wanted to join for their own expansion, Kendall thought the mobile home park could only charge a certain amount to the mobile home users and that the park owner would have to absorb anything over the 4% increase that was allowable, Josh did not know if that was correct but would be checking it out.
- that Josh would put together numbers for the next meeting assuming a 30-year payback, but not individual site costs for hooking up. Bard thought we may want to return to off week meetings for this topic to give the subject the time it requires.
- that Josh asked about how to notice people with the possibility of sending a letter to users expressed. June thought having a per foot cost for hooking up would be helpful if it was possible to determine. David said there are variables that are not known that would make providing that information difficult to impossible.
- that Cara LaBounty asked that the mobile home park confirm whether water and sewer is deemed a utility for their users, if it is she said, then the rate could not be locked in since the renters sign an agreement each year. Cara LaBounty was concerned that the low-income potential users not be burdened with reducing the rates of the village users. She wondered if each mobile home would have its own meter. Bard responded that the town would have meter at the mobile home park, not each user, but that the mobile home park owner may have meters to the renters. Cara LaBounty added that it is important not to confuse state statute with how a

mobile home park owner can raise rates, she thought the cost could make the housing unaffordable and that was her fear.

- that there will be a meeting next week with feedback on where we are with information going out to both potential and current users

c. Review of fourth quarter FY21 financials

Josh reported:

- that the information being discussed was in the packet of information provided online
- that the final audit may look a little different
- that there are only one or two delinquent water and sewer accounts

Discussion included:

- that Cara LaBounty returned to the previous topic and asked if there were any documents for users available yet. She asked if there would be some idea of the what the property owners' intent was, so when people voted it would be known. David said, this was the information the Commission was looking for. Bard said he thought Cara was asking if there would be an agreement in place with potential users showing their level of commitment, Cara LaBounty said she would like the vote to be based on facts. June said the meetings are to provide that information. Cara asked if we would be posting the financial information beforehand, she wanted to know the true cost per property. Bard said, no, we do not have engineering on every property. Her concern is that a range from Kendall is not the same as having an engineering number. Cara thought the town should be obligated to provide that information if people were legally required to hook on. Bard said he thought the homeowner should know what the cost should be. David thought there was some confusion saying, the expansion costs being discussed are what the line will cost, that the hookup of individual property was a different matter. Cara LaBounty asked where the information would be posted. Josh said the information would be in the information packet provided.
- that Mary Houle asked, once the line goes out are all homeowners required to hook up or is there an option to opt out. Kendall said that once the district is expanded then everyone in the district would be required to hook up.

d. Consideration of approval of Water and Sewer Department Warrant Policy

Due to time constraints this was moved to another meeting

e. Update on status of Bridge St. Waterline Replacement Project: Church St. to Volunteers' Green

Due to time constraints this was moved to another meeting

f. Superintendent's Report

Due to time constraints this was moved to another meeting

4. Approval of Minutes, Warrants and Purchase Orders

June moved to approve the Minutes of 7/19/2021; Bard seconded. Roll Call Vote: June, Bard, and David voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

Warrants

June moved to approve the warrant as presented; Bard seconded. Roll Call Vote: Bard, June, and David voted affirmatively; Motion passed.

5. Discuss Items for Next Agenda and Adjourn

Not discussed, suggestions are to be sent to Josh Arneson, Town Manager.

Adjourn

Bard moved to adjourn; June seconded. Roll call vote: David, June, and Bard voted affirmatively. The meeting adjourned at 6:58 PM.