

## **Water and Sewer Commission Meeting Minutes of January 18, 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; Linda Parent, Town Clerk; Aaron Krymkowski, Lead Mechanical Operator;

**Others Present:** The meeting was recorded for MMCTV. Meg and Shawn Freebern, Virginia Clarke, Bob Reap, Bressor.

**Call to Order:** 6:00pm

**Welcome by:** Sander.

**Public Comment:** None

### **Recognition of Water and Sewer Lead Mechanical Operator Aaron Krymkowski on achieving Wastewater Level IV certification**

Chamberlin: Aaron is the first Level 4 we have had since 2003. Good job Aaron.

Sander: That is good news to hear.

Hill: Congratulations Aaron.

Huntoon: What did you have to do to get the certification?

Krymkowski: For the Level 4 it usually requires four years of experience in a plant. I also passed some courses and my Bachelor of Science contributed to my time served in a plant. There were also some exams.

### **Consideration of approval of final water and sewer allocation for JR0280**

Sander: Preliminary allocation was granted for water and sewer for 280 Jericho Rd. in September. A copy of the preliminary allocation approvals are included in the packet along with a letter to applicant Adam Wood outlining the fees associated with the final allocation. Josh has received a check for the final allocation.

*I move to approve final allocation for 720 gallons per day of water and 420 gallons per day of wastewater for 280 Jericho Rd. Roll Call Vote: Furr, Hill, Huntoon, Tucker and Sander in favor. Motion passed.*

### **Discussion of next steps in Gateway Sewer Expansion project**

Arneson: I will review the questions I asked of the attorney and his responses regarding the special assessment district.

- How would this be different than a power company charging a new customer for the power poles necessary to reach their house?
  - The reason GMP and other electric utilities can charge new customers for line extensions and new poles is likely because there is a rate tariff that has been approved by the Public Utilities Commission for such line extensions and for new poles. With regard to the Town's sewer line extension, if the Commission's desire is only for the new users as a class to pay for the sewer line extension, then a special assessment district is necessary.
- Have you had a chance to review the proposed bond payback structure based on permitted flows? Could this work for the special assessment? If so, could we change/update this each year based on property development?
  - The answer to this was no. But it seemed there was an option to use the Grand List to adjust the bond payback each year based on changed to property values in the expanded area.

Hill: There is a line in the memo from the attorney about not being able to charge based on permitted flows. What if we change to charge based on actual flows in the future? I don't see that he answered the question of having new users pay on actual volume of flow, using permitted flows in year one and then actual flow thereafter.

Arneson: I can follow up on that.

Hill: I could be part of a conversation on that topic if necessary.

Huntoon: It seem that it is possible to change based on assessment.

Hill: I see reference to grand list value and we have never made our rates based on grand list value. The reference to grand list value is a different view that what we have seen.

Sander: Perhaps we could reach out to VLCT for guidance on how to proceed. It may offer more direction.

Arneson: I can pose this question to VLCT.

Hill: If we did this on grand list value at a point in time and then properties develop they would not be charged based on current development. If development would change the rate then it would create an odd disincentive to do any improvements in the building because it would increase rates for development. I am fairly unconvinced it is the best approach unless it is the only approach. Development does not always correlate to water usage.

Chamberlin: The whole point of the allocation ordinance is to tie it back to permitted use.

Hill: Just to be clear the allocation starts as a figure from the state system and then the actual fees thereafter are based on usage.

Chamberlin: Correct but fixed fees stay based on allocation.

Arneson: Water and Wastewater Superintendent Kendall Chamberlin and I met with Alan Huizenga and Steve Palmer from Green Mountain Engineering to discuss next steps from an engineering perspective. We asked them to provide a cost estimate for construction of

a sewer line to the Mobil station that would be sized to handle a flow that would max out the capacity of the treatment facility. This will provide the Commission with a cost for the largest the system could be, and this can be compared to the cost that was included in the Preliminary Engineering Report which assumed some build out of the area, but not so much that it would use all remaining capacity of the treatment facility. We also asked the engineers to provide us with a cost estimate for updating the PER to include a cost estimate for the construction of a waterline. They will be in touch with this cost and we can then decide if we want to move forward with the work to get an estimated cost of construction for a waterline.

Hill: Do we have a sense of the timing?

Chamberlin: We would need to follow up with Steve on the timing.

Huntoon: Are you talking about getting it up to 80% capacity.

Chamberlin: Yes.

Arneson: Kendall and I had a discussion with Tammy Schey, owner of the Crate Escape. The septic at the Crate Escape failed and we were hoping to talk with Tammy about the possibility of pumping her tank until the public sewer extended to her property. Unfortunately work had already begun on the new septic system. Tammy also stated that she had been pumping the system every two weeks since October and using a portable toilet. She found this situation to be quite burdensome for her business and employees. We did discuss that if/when the system reaches her property she would be required to hook on and be required to start paying fixed costs and the bond cost as soon as the system was complete, even if she did not connect to the system for several years after completion.

### **Discussion of planning costs to date for the Gateway Sewer Expansion project**

Arneson: It was requested at the last meeting to assemble the planning costs that have been spent so far on the Gateway project. This is going to be a work in progress. I know that since I have been with the Town we spent \$13,600 on the PER, half of which cost will be forgiven by the Clean Water State Revolving Fund. We have also spent some money on attorney fees and I will have to go back through invoices to determine how much was spent. I will also need to research how much was spent on the PER that was completed in 2017. Also, if anyone else can remember any other expenses related to this project please let me know and I will add them to the list for further research. My goal is to assemble a folder with all the costs.

### **Review of septage program**

Chamberlin: There were questions about the septage program over the years where the Commission has asked publicly about the cost of the septage program. I asked the question of the town engineer and he went through the operating budget and associated costs. He feels it is so lucrative that looking at it in that much detail is not necessary. The septage program itself is not the golden goose, as it is the hard work of the staff that makes it work. I think it is time to acknowledge that the septage program is a huge benefit.

Hill: There has never been a question that the program generates a lot of revenue. These types of reports can be high lever or very detailed. There has been a clearer recognition of

septage revenue in the budgeting process, and we all agree revenue exceeds expenses but we just don't know by how much. An accountant doing an analysis could take into account many more costs. But, to Kendall's point, I don't want to spend a lot of money on a detailed look at the program because we know that it is lucrative. But we still don't know the net revenue. We also are always cautious about how much of the revenue to build into the budget because if septage goes down we would have a shortfall.

Chamberlin: I don't think you could have the rates where they are now if we did not have the septage revenue. It is important that people know why we take septage and that it is a revenue generator and does not cause disproportionately increased cost.

Furr: I want to let Kendall know that he is heard and the staff is the real driver behind this program.

Sander: Your employees are the strongest asset.

Hill: Kendall if people heard negative things about the septage program, and are asking you to defend the program, you could ask them to come to a Commission meeting.

### **Discussion of S.222 a bill regarding temporary Open Meeting Law procedures.**

Arneson: This bill has been passed by the House and Senate and is awaiting signature by the Governor. If signed, this bill will allow for public bodies to hold meetings virtually without designating a physical meeting location. The Commission should discuss if the next Commission meeting would be held without a physical meeting location if this bill is passed.

Sander: I am comfortable with virtual.

Furr: I support virtual for the time being.

Consensus is to go virtual with no in person meeting location.

### **Superintendent's report**

Chamberlin: Wastewater furnace has been repaired. It heats all the buildings except for the dewatering building. The furnace for the dewatering building is now having issues we are addressing. I have been talking with Brad and he has agreed to remain as an auxiliary operator. I have ordered another copy for the water tank report. We are working on a water application for the DWSRF to get on the priority list for construction for water line replacement south of the Winooski River. We discovered that the original PER should still apply.

Furr: I really liked Kendall's post to Front Porch Forum recruiting staff.

### **Warrants, minutes, and purchase orders.**

Arneson: I would like to note that Jay caught an error on the warrant. The last item on the warrant for about \$10,000 should have been to pay the water bill for the wastewater plant. The warrant showed it as an expense to Richmond Home Supply. This has been corrected and you all received an updated warrant via email this afternoon.

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

*Furr moved to approve the minutes of the January 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting. Seconded by Huntoon. Roll Call Vote: Furr, Hill, Huntoon, Tucker and Sander in favor. Motion passed.*

*Huntoon moved to approve the minutes of the January 10<sup>th</sup> meeting. Seconded by Furr. Roll Call Vote: Furr, Hill, Huntoon, Tucker and Sander in favor. Motion passed.*

**Items for next agenda:**

- Opinion from VLCT
- Update on the updated cost for a max buildout of the Gateway sewer system
- Update on cost to estimate cost to add water to the Gateway

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

**Meeting adjourned at 6:42pm.**

**Chat file from Zoom:**

00:25:17 Aaron: Thanks Kendall!

00:54:11 Aaron: Allen

00:54:46 Jay Furr: thanks

00:54:57 Jay Furr: I hate it when I know someone's name and just blank on it