

# BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

## MEETING MINUTES

January 7, 2020

7:00 P.M.

### CHERRY VALLEY & ROCHDALE WATER DISTRICT

- I. CALL TO ORDER - The meeting was called to order by Chairman Bergin @ 7:00 P.M. The following were in attendance:

|                                      |               |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|
| Kevin Bergin, Chairman               | 8 Subscribers |
| Arthur E.J. Levesque, Commissioner   |               |
| Benjamin Morris, Superintendent      |               |
| Robert H. Lemieux, Sr., Commissioner |               |
| Jennifer Wood, Treasurer             |               |
| Cheryl Balkus, Clerk – Absent        |               |

- II. **District Member Forum** – Subscriber Margaret Darling 17 Brown St. asked if the name of this forum needs to be changed to something else after the petition is passed by the House of Representatives to allow non-district members to speak. Chairman Bergin stated he does not believe it needs to be changed. It was voted on back in July that non-district members can come to a meeting and speak. All that is needed is a majority vote by the board members. They can also come to an Annual or Special District Meeting and speak it just has to be voted on by the floor. Subscriber Margaret Darling 17 Brown St. asked if it would still have to be voted on at meetings once it is passed through the House of Representatives. Per Chairman Bergin responded no. Subscriber Margaret Darling 17 Brown St. asked if the position for the Grant Researcher has been approved. Per Chairman Bergin said no and it will be discussed later in the Superintendent Report.
- Subscriber Nancy Ortiz 22 Monterey Dr. asked for a follow up on the \$200,000 town wide study. Per Chairman Bergin the Working Group has not had a meeting since November. The federal money has been approved so the full \$200,000 is available for the study. The group now needs to get back together to discuss what we all want for the specifications of the grant to cover and what will be put out to bid. A date has not been set for the next meeting. Per Subscriber Margaret Darling 17 Brown St. said that she had reached out to the town and was told the next meeting would be mid-January. Per Chairman Bergin he had not yet been notified of any potential dates for the next meeting. Subscriber Nancy Ortiz 22 Monterey Dr. asked if we could put a link on the website to the Eye On Water so it is easier to access. Per Superintendent Morris he does not see that being an issue and we should be able to add it. She also asked if we could put the rates onto the website. Per Treasurer Wood, the rates are already on the website. Chairman Bergin asked if the rates were still on the back of the bill. Per Treasurer Wood they are but when the e-bills were being sent out the rates were not attached. We have since corrected that to include the rates to the body of the e-mail. Subscriber Nancy Ortiz asked why you are being penalized for going over the first tier and getting charged more. Per Chairman Bergin, it is not a penalty for going over, if you use more water you are charged more. If you exceed the amount in the first tier you go into the second tier. It is based off the AWWA (American Water Works

Association) guidelines. This is a standard across several water and sewer districts across the world. Per Commissioner Lemieux the Eye On Water has an App that can be downloaded to your phone that allows you to set up alerts about different things such as if you have a leak and it also gives you some tips on how you can save water. Per Chairman Bergin some of the easiest ways to conserve water is if you are upgrading certain appliances, to do some research and try to find the most energy efficient one's because it can really help you save on water consumption. Commissioner Levesque moved that we close the Open Member Forum. Seconded by Commissioner Lemieux. All in Favor. Approved.

### III. APPROVE MINUTES

**A. December 17, 2019** - Commissioner Levesque motioned to approve the minutes of December 17, 2019. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in Favor. Approved

### IV. FINANCE

**A. Approve December 23, 2019 Warrants** – Commissioner Lemieux motions to approve the December 23, 2019 warrants. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in Favor. Approved.

**B. Approve December 30, 2019** - Commissioner Levesque motions to approve the December 30, 2019 warrants. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in Favor. Approved.

**C. Approve January 6, 2020 Warrants** – Commissioner Lemieux motions to approve the January 6, 2020 warrants. Seconded Commissioner Levesque. All in Favor. Approved. The total amount of warrants is \$33,029.01 this is heat, electricity, office expense, payroll, technology, insurance, postage, motor vehicles, repairs and maintenance, small tools and telephone.

**D. December Bank Transfer** - Commissioner Levesque motions to approve the transfer of from sum of \$42,781.61 from the Water Collection Account to the Sewer Checking account. Seconded by Commissioner Lemieux. All in Favor Approved.

**E. Treasurer Report** – Per Treasurer Wood as of December year to date the Water District brought in \$741,562.59 for revenue. Expenditures for the month of December were \$82,549.91. The amount paid year to date in loan payments is \$88,835.27. The amount paid towards the West St. tank project was \$15,566.00. She also gave an update on the FY'20 budget that is halfway through. To date \$564,948.93 has been spent and \$699,491.88 remains in the budget for the year.

### V. ADMINISTRATION

**A. CMRPC (Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission)** – Commissioner Lemieux made a motion to allow Andrew from CMRPC to speak at the meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Levesque. All in Favor. Approved. Andrew from CMRPC explained they are a state created planning commission for Central Massachusetts and are a community grant program for low income neighborhoods. The grant is actually through the town and they have used it in prior years for small projects such as the elevator at the town hall. The way the grant was written this year allows them to use some of the funds towards water infrastructure. The reason he is here tonight is that we have been looking at a few projects that could help benefit the Water District. There are two areas of Cherry Valley that do meet the low to moderate income level. Those two areas are Locust St. and McCarthy Ave. The highway project is on Locust St. and the water project

would be on McCarthy Ave. The project on McCarthy Ave is listed in the Hydraulic study that Tata & Howard did, and it would be to do some water infrastructure upgrades. In order to be able to use the grant on this project they need to do a survey from people in that area to make sure it meets the low to moderate income criteria. They have tried to reach out to the people on McCarthy Ave. who have not responded 5 times and are struggling to get responses. No response means they have to be put in as over income. Per Andrew they have even gone door to door multiple times with no response. If they do not get enough people to respond to the survey unfortunately, they will not be able to move forward with the project. A Subscriber asked how many of those properties are rental properties. Per Andrew that they do not need the owner information, they need the actual resident's income information. Looking at the street it looks like most of the homes are single-family homes. Subscriber Margaret Darling 17 Brown St. asked what the income guidelines are. Per Andrew for 1 person it is \$52,850 and 4 people it is \$75,450 we are not talking about extremely low incomes. Subscriber John Shocik 7 Folsom St. said he is familiar with this area and knows some of them are being flipped and/or are vacant so how are people supposed to respond if no one is living there. Per Andrew unfortunately those properties will be listed as overqualified. They are going to give them about one more week to respond because it has been 8 weeks since they have been trying to get the information. He encourages people who are watching at home to fill out the forms and get them back if they have gotten them. Andrew had an idea for next time this opportunity comes up is to do an income survey of the whole district and if we can get more than 51% who qualify as low to moderate income, we could redo something for the whole district. This program is not something that will fix huge projects, but you can do small projects one at a time. It all depends on how the town writes the grant each year since it is their grant not the Districts. Andrew stated the grant money is to hire an engineer to construct what needs to be done and will be able to complete the project with another grant. Commissioner Lemieux asked if it was possible for us to send out a massive e-mail to those people on the street explaining to them what is going on and to get them to answer the survey. Per Superintendent Morris we could, but we may not have an email address on file and/or phone numbers. Commissioner Lemieux asked if in the future we could collect more email addresses and phone numbers. Per Superintendent Morris we do try to get as many as we can when people call but not everyone wants to provide us with that information. Commissioner Lemieux asked if in the future we could work with Andrew to reach out to these people. Commissioner Levesque asked what the drop-dead date was and if Andrew could give people on McCarthy Ave. more than another week to respond. Andrew explained that the deadline is in March but there are a lot of factors that must be done before that such as getting all the details together to get it out to bid. Subscriber Gregory Buteau 2 Merrick St. commented that the District has a lot of existing projects in the works, it would be great if we could get funding for those projects but was confused because the number one project on the Tata & Howard report was by Eller's and did not understand why we could not do that project. Per Andrew that it did not meet all the criteria of this grant. Commissioner Lemieux also stated that the issue would be a system wide benefit not just that specific area which is what the grant is for. Subscriber Gregory Buteau said that the reason it does not qualify is because the people benefiting are not low to moderate income level. Andrew stated yes that is

correct. Subscriber Gregory Buteau asked if Superintendent Morris had sat down to go over numbers 1-10 in the Tata & Howard report with Andrew. Per Superintendent Morris stated yes, they did. That is how they came up with the McCarthy Ave project. Subscriber Margaret Darling stated that if item 5 on the agenda stated see attached with a copy of the letter, the letter could have been posted on Facebook ahead of time so more people would know what the project was about.

## VI. Operations

**A. Superintendent's Report** – Per Superintendent Morris he and Commissioner Lemieux meet with Mr. Reilly to get the answers to all their follow up questions and received information back from the other candidate in Mississippi. They have received references for both candidates and will be making a few phone calls. They hope by next meeting they will be able to decide. Superintendent Morris filled out a letter of intent with MassDEP to state that we were interested in GIS opportunity. (Geographic Information System) takes all our gate valves, water boxes, and fire hydrants and makes it all electronic. We could even add every individual shut off which would be beneficial to the District. At the same time, we met with Laurie from RCAP who stated they have the funds available to come in and GIS the Water & Sewer Districts, it would include the software and help us get everything set up. Once we have the software, we would just have to pay the yearly fee which is around \$300.00. Superintendent Morris reached out to Tata & Howard to find out how much it would cost to GIS the Water District, they estimated it would be around \$25,000.00. Consumption for December was 200,000 gallons a day. Our max was 292,000 gallons. From January to December we have used about 75 Million Gallons of water which is down from when we were still pumping from Henshaw Pond. The average when we were pumping our own water was 90 million. This is beneficial to the District because we are below the amount, we are allowed to pump which means if a business wanted to come into the District, we would have the availability to sell them water. Subscriber Gregory Buteau asked about reaching out to Tata & Howard to find out what the breakdown of expenses for Grindstone well are. Per Superintendent Morris that it is on his list to do. Subscriber Gregory Buteau asked if we thought our staff could do some of the work themselves to save on cost. Per Superintendent Morris they will try to do whatever they can to reduce costs, but we would have to either hire a subcontractor to dig or rent a backhoe for the day.

## VII. COMMUNICATIONS

**A. 11/19/19 Subscriber Request: M. Darling** – Chairman Bergin read the request that is signed by 15 District Members to change meetings from twice a month to once a month. Per Commissioner Lemieux asked Subscriber Margaret Darling 17 Brown St. what the rationale behind this request is. Per Subscriber Margaret Darling that a lot of people have other commitments so it is hard for them to get here twice a month and would be easier if it was just once a month. Per Commissioner Lemieux that it is hard for people to attend but we do have it airing on LCAC. LCAC Lucky stepped in to confirm that the meeting it being aired live and it will take 2-3 days for it to be posted on the Town of Leicester Website. Per Subscriber Margaret Darling only the people who have Charter can watch it live. Per Commissioner Lemieux his concern is we have a lot of business coming up and twice a month is mandatory. If we try to condense everything into one meeting

a month we will be here twice as long and may not be able to accommodate everyone. Per Subscriber Gregory Buteau certain times of the year are not as busy as others. For example, you only meet once in December and were able to finish all business in an hour. There is no question from February to the Annual Meeting is the busy time of year. Per Chairman Bergin the meetings are to preform District Meetings, we are not just holding the meetings just for Subscriber feedback. Last year we were accused of keeping information from the Subscribers and there is a lot of miscommunication out on social media. We are able to correct some of that by meeting twice a month, if we went to monthly meetings it would be an entire month before we can try to correct some of the miscommunication out there on social media. Per Chairman Bergin we should continue with having meetings twice a month as it is easier to cancel a meeting than it is to find a time to schedule meetings between conflicts. Commissioner Levesque also agrees with this. All those in favor for moving from two meetings a month to once a month. 0 All those opposed 3. Motion Fails.

- B. 12/30/19 Subscriber Request: N Ortiz**
1. Request that the Water District meetings be held once a month, instead of twice a month. Per Chairman Bergin stated this was already discussed.
  2. Request to remove the termination fee and reconnect fee to zero. Per Commissioner Levesque we must keep inducement for people to pay their bill on time and Chairman Bergin stated that we had already reduced it to \$25.00 to terminate and \$25.00 to reconnect. Chairman Bergin suggested that we wait until Doug does the rate study this year and we can have him look at the fee schedule for everything as well.
  - 3.) Request a town wide tax on septic's and wells to offset sewage rates for those without. Per Chairman Bergin that this it is out of the Districts wheelhouse we are not the town we can not dictate to the town to add a tax. As far as the sewer we are not the Sewer District we are only the water.
  - 4.) Request a credit for collection and use of rainwater. Per Chairman Bergin he is not sure how we would be able to do this because it is not a line item in the budget. Superintendent Morris researched it and the town does offer rainwater buckets at a discounted price thru the recycling center. Commissioner Lemieux mentioned that when we hire a Grant Researcher we could see if there are any grants out there for something like this. We cannot guarantee this, but we can look into it.
  - 5.) Request the Cherry Valley Water District invest in bringing Henshaw Pond back to live. Per Chairman Bergin the current treatment technology the District has does not meet DEP Standard and the District does not have enough land or money to build the type of treatment plant that is needed. Years ago, the District got an estimate of what a conventional treatment plant would cost, and it was \$9 million, these costs have gone up since then. We still protect it because if someone invents something that we could build, and it is cost effective than we could put it back online. Superintendent Morris also mentioned that the District needs 15 acres of land to build the conventional plant and it must be on one area. The only thing we can do now to get some control back is put the Grindstone Well back online which we are in the process of doing the testing now to see if it is possible. The first round of testing passed, and the next test will be done in the spring.
  - 6.) What is the status of the \$200,000 Leicester Town wide water solution? Per Chairman Bergin stated again we finally got the federal portion secured and according to Subscriber Margaret Darling we will be meeting again in January. At that meeting we will figure out what the specifications each of the Districts want to see so it can be put out to bid.
  - 7.) Request to install

the Eye on Water Instructions on the Cherry Valley Water District website, make it more user friendly to access meeting minutes, my water meter rate etc. Per Chairman Bergin we will look into putting a link to the Eye on Water Instructions on the website and make sure you have the right information to get it set up. Per Subscriber Nancy Ortiz said she already downloaded the App. Per Chairman Bergin the rates & water meeting minutes are available on the website at cvrwd.com click on the water page there is a link for rates and the minutes.

**VIII. PERSONNEL**

**IX. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**A. Approval of Next Meeting** - Superintendent. Morris requested if we pick out the next two meeting dates because he needs to give the dates to DEP for a date for them to come out. Commissioner Levesque motioned to hold the next meeting Tuesday, January 21, 2020 @ 7:00 PM at the Leicester Town Hall Seconded by Commissioner Lemieux. Commissioner Lemieux motioned for a meeting February 4, 2020. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in favor. Approved.

**X. ADJOURNMENT**- Commissioner Lemieux motioned to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Levesque. All in Favor. Approved. Meeting adjourned at 9:04 P.M.

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