

# BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

## MEETING MINUTES

December 17, 2019

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	Cheryl Balkus, Clerk
Arthur E.J. Levesque, Commissioner	Jennifer Wood, Treasurer
Benjamin Morris, Superintendent	3 Subscribers
Robert H. Lemieux, Sr. - Absent	
  
- II. **District Member Forum** – Subscriber Greg Buteau 2 Merrick St. Inquired when Superintendent Morris and Tata & Howard spoke if there was the scenario discussed about the testing of the Grindstone Well, of what will be needed for testing. Per Superintendent Morris they all had an understanding if the MPA results come back favorable they would go to the next step of going thru filling out applications for the permitting. The 1<sup>st</sup> phase is to get the MPA results done and then proceed from there. Subscriber Buteau asked if there is anything in writing such as by email to document what the understanding would be. Per Superintendent Morris we have in writing from the sanitary survey language about the MPA results and if those two items met this would only be required. Subscriber Buteau, hopeful the subscribers will go thru with this as it will be a big cost saver to the District.  
Stephen Pawlowskis 595 Henshaw St. – With the attendance being down he asked the Board of Commissioners if they think that business can be conducted once a month. Per Chairman Bergin in his opinion is that he does not feel once a month is good to do business. Further discussion about this will be later in the agenda. There was no further discussion being held during the District Member Forum. Commissioner Levesque motions to close the forum earlier than the 30 minutes. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in favor. Approved.
  
- III. APPROVE MINUTES
  - A. **November 5, 2019** - Commissioner Levesque motioned to approve the minutes of November 5, 2019. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in favor. Approved.
  
- IV. FINANCE
  - A. **Approve November 12, 2019 Warrants** – Commissioner Levesque motions to approve the November 12, 2019 warrants. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in Favor. Approved.
  - B. **Approve November 19, 2019 Warrants** – Commissioner Levesque motions to approve the November 19, 2019 warrants. Seconded Chairman Bergin. All in Favor. Approved.
  - C. **Approve November 26, 2019 Warrants** – Commissioner Levesque motions to approve the November 26, 2019 warrants. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in favor. Approved.

- D. Approve December 3, 2019 Warrants-** Commissioner Levesque motions to approve the December 3, 2019 warrants. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in favor. Approved.
- E. Approve December 10, 2019 Warrants -** Commissioner Levesque motions to approve the December 10, 2019 warrants. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in favor. Approved.
- F. Approve December 17, 2019 Warrants -** Commissioner Levesque motions to approve the December 17, 2019 warrants. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in favor. Approved.
- G. November Bank Transfer -** Commissioner Levesque motions approve the transfer of \$40,823.62 from the Water Collection Account to the Sewer Checking account. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in Favor Approved. The total amount of the Warrants is \$227,075.17.
- H. Free Cash -** Per Treasurer Wood the DOR (Massachusetts Department of Revenue) certified \$726,063.00 in free cash. Voted from the last Special District meeting \$50,000 is deducted from this as a Reserve leaving \$676,063.00 for the District has to use to fund any projects.

## V. Administration

- A. Grant Researcher Update** – Per Superintendent Morris he and Commissioner Lemieux heard back from two of the four applicants. Interviews were conducted with each applicant by phone. One is a woman who is a Professor in Mississippi, the other is Mr. Reilley. The Professor does research and the writing of grants that involves animals and Mr. Reilley's expertise is with Arts. After the interviews were conducted Commissioner Lemieux & the Superintendent sat down together and are to give some follow up questions to the candidates. Chairman Bergin asked if there has or will have reference verifications. Per Superintendent Morris there is additional follow up to what has been received. We want to make sure we don't have someone who does a google search and then say that these certain grants are available. Commissioner Levesque asked if this is what she does for a living, per Superintendent Morris she is a Professor involved with grant research and writing for animals. Subscriber Greg Buteau 2 Merrick St. asked if she had any direct experience in water grants. Per Superintendent Morris not particularly in water and does research for animals. She did send the Superintendent what she did submit and what was awarded. Tata & Howard will also work on one if the District has a project. Subscriber Greg Buteau asked if the subject of money came up as this concerns him because Mr. Reilley requested money up front. Per Superintendent Morris she has a different way for an hourly rate for research and the writing is handled differently. We need to figure out what can be afforded to ensure it is in the budget, she was in the \$40.00 per hour range and we will have to put a cap to what is feasible. Commissioner Levesque wanted to know when this would begin. Per Chairman Bergin once finals rounds are completed it will be amongst the staff to look at the budget, summarize it and then bring it back to the Board.

## VI. Operations

- A. Superintendent's Report** – Per Superintendent Morris the system is running smooth. For the month of November, the average is 200,000 gallons per day

which is good. Staff conducted leak detection. In May it was approved to do repair of the West Street tanks. The tanks took a lot of their time, they were done in November and the early part of December. They are fully operational, and the project is complete. The recommendations are to do this every three to five years. If the Clearwell is back online there will be one done per year schedule. Hydrants have been winterized. The change to the Enabling Acts that was voted on at the Special District was forwarded to Representative Leboeuf who confirmed via an e-mail 11/26/19 that he submitted and provided the language to House Counsel and to let us know as soon as it is filed. It's in their hands and now we wait to get the result.

A subscriber inquired in an email for clarification if subscribers can invite the business owners to join us at meetings. Per the meeting minutes of July 9, 2019, the Board approved the adoption of the speaking policy.

"All attendees who are registered voters within the district boundaries, person who have been issued a water bill, or are a CV&RWD employee, shall be allowed to speak at Annual, Special & other District meetings. Other attendees at meetings not included in the above sentence may speak, by a majority vote of the attendees cited in the first sentence. The majority vote requirement for other attendees to speak may be waived by the moderator at Annual or Special District meetings. The majority vote requirements for other attendees to speak may be waived by Chairman of the Board of Water Commissioners at District meetings that are not Annual or Special District meetings. Per Chairman Bergin because of Open Meeting law anyone can attend. Business owners or property owners who do not live in the district currently are not allowed to vote at this time.

Superintendent Morris spoke with Mass DEP about coming to attend a meeting for Questions and Answers. He needs dates from the board so he can report back to Mass DEP. They are happy to attend when a meeting is to be set up. If you have a question for the Mass DEP it can be submitted via mail or email.

With the free cash evaluation brings concern, with the \$580,000.00 price tag on the Grindstone Well this would significantly lower the remaining free cash and would be the only project that could be done. The District has always been urged by the rate study and the recommendations is not to have free cash be below \$500,000.00. Perhaps we may have to do work in 2 phases one in this fiscal year and then a second phase do in the following fiscal years as the overall goal is not to increase rates. Commissioner Levesque inquired how can the District increase the free cash? Per Treasurer Wood, any money we do not spend in the year has to go back in the fund and be recertified. Per Chairman Bergin we began tracking past dues that are owed to the District, we can continue as we have been and only spend in the budget. Perhaps we can see where we are at year to date and figure out where we are in the budget if we are behind or if we are ahead. He understands that this is a challenge and Treasurer Wood confirms she can do this. Subscriber Buteau suggests he speak with Paul at Tata & Howard as to where he came up with the pricing of getting the well back online. Having the well back online is going to be a substantial savings to the District. He does not recommend to splitting over two fiscal years this is concern because if it keeps being pushed out then regulatory could come in with some unknown requirement. A lot of money is being lost and for the future. Hydraulic is future but getting the push to put the well online will lower the bills from the City of Worcester. Subscriber Stephen

Pawlauskis inquired if is there a such thing for a municipal district to have a line of credit. Chairman Bergin was not aware of this and if the District is to borrow, we still need to have it in the budget to pay it back. Subscriber Pawlauskis does not agree or is comfortable to having less than \$100,000.00 in free cash. Per Chairman Bergin doing the project fixes a long-standing pressure issue on Henshaw St. and produce a savings each month. Everyone must be comfortable with what happens if something is to happen. If the District only has \$96,000.00 and repair is \$200,000.00. The Board works what is best for the District and not any individual. Per Chairman Bergin not speaking on behalf of Commissioner Lemieux since he is not in attendance, but the Board prior to Commissioner Lemieux was in favor and still in favor of getting the Clearwell and Grindstone online for the savings.

## **VII. COMMUNICATIONS**

**A. 11/14/19 Customer Request: Payment Plan Approval –** Commissioner Levesque motions to approve the 12-month payment plan. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in favor Approved.

**B. 11/19/19 Customer Request: M Darling**

“We the Subscribers are requesting the water meetings be changed from tow meetings a month to one meeting a month.” The request is signed by 15 subscriber’s signatures.

Per Commissioner Levesque there’s a lot of work to do, one meeting a month will not work and Chairman Bergin also not in favor. The District does a lot of business week to week. At this time of the year is the beginnings of preparation for the new budget along with other issues. One meeting per month compounds issues and not an efficient use. On occasion we have had to cancel a meeting, however once a month does not work for running the District.

Subscriber Greg Buteau, 2 Merrick St suggests waiting, since there is an absent commissioner in tonight’s meeting and also to consider for some months to only have a meeting once a month and other months may require the increase to twice a month such as when the Annual Meeting or Special District Meeting is to be held. With the summer may decrease to once a month again. Commissioner Levesque agrees that we should we wait and speak about this again with Commissioner Lemieux present and put this on the next meeting agenda.

Commissioner Levesque amends the motion to move the M. Darlings request to the next meeting. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All In favor. Approved.

## **VIII. PERSONNEL**

## **IX. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**A. Approval of Next Meeting -** Commissioner Levesque motioned to hold the next meeting Tuesday, January 7, 2019 @ 7:00 PM at the Leicester Town Hall Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in favor. Approved.

**X. ADJOURNMENT-** Commissioner Levesque motioned to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in Favor. Approved. Meeting adjourned at 8:06 P.M.