

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

MEETING MINUTES

March 17, 2020

7:00 P.M.

CHERRY VALLEY & ROCHDALE WATER DISTRICT

I. CALL TO ORDER –

The virtual meeting was called to order by Chairman Bergin at 7:07 P.M.

The following were in attendance:

Kevin Bergin, Chairman	2- Subscribers
Arthur E.J. Levesque, Commissioner	
Robert H. Lemieux, Sr., Commissioner	
Benjamin Morris, Superintendent	
Jennifer Wood, Treasurer	
Cheryl Balkus, Clerk	

II. District Member Forum –

Subscriber, Christopher Reilley 97 McCarthy Ave. stated that he understands the Board does not interact outside of posted meetings and was wondering if all three Commissioners were sent an email it would go against open meeting law. Per Chairman Bergin that he is correct since there is only three Board members two of them together would constitute a quorum. They do not communicate with each other via email because they do not want to go against open meeting law. If the Superintendent needs to discuss something outside of a meeting, he will call us each individually. The only thing they get as an email with them all listed is when Cheryl sends the agenda's out for the meetings. Subscriber C. Reilley stated that the reason he asks is when he sends grants over, he was wondering if he should be sending them to all the Commissioners. Per Chairman Bergin stated that his contract states for him to send them to himself along with the Superintendent.

Customer Buteau asked if for the next meeting we could put the Draft Budget as well as the warrant articles pertaining to the Grindstone Well and Clear Well on the agenda. Per Superintendent Morris he is not sure if the Draft Budget will be on the next agenda or will be on the agenda two meetings from now. We are still waiting on numbers from health insurance and the audit. We did put an ad in the T&G for audit proposals and we have not heard anything back on it to date. We are supposed to get health insurance numbers in next week but with everything going on he is not sure we will still get it by then. He is more than welcome to answer any questions he has in the meantime on the budget.

Per Chairman Bergin there continues to be some miscommunication out there on social media. There is a rumor going around that CVRWD is going to raise the rates in order to fix the water line at Auburn St. that goes across Route 9. This is not true we are going to try to fix this using money in the current budget and not have to borrow money.

Commissioner Levesque made a motion that we suspend the remaining District Member Forum. Chairman Bergin Seconded. All in Favor. Approved.

III. APPROVE MINUTES

A. **March 4, 2020** – Commissioner Levesque motioned to approve the minutes of March 4, 2020. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in Favor. Approved.

IV. FINANCE

A. **Approve March 9, 2020 Warrants** – Commissioner Lemieux motions to approve the March 9, 2020 warrants. Seconded by Commissioner Levesque. All in Favor. Approved.

B. **Approve March 16, 2020 Warrants** - Commissioner Lemieux motions to approve the March 16, 2020 warrants. Seconded by Commissioner Levesque. All in Favor. Approved. Per Chairman Bergin he does not have the warrants in front of him and does not have a total or the categories. Per Treasurer Wood she did have them in front of her. The categories consisted of Office expense, field supplies, insurance, service agreement, motor vehicle, payroll, telephone, lab work, City of Worcester, consulting fees, heat, and postage.

C. **Draft Warrant Articles** – Per Superintendent Morris this is what we plan on presenting as the Annual Meeting Articles. Commissioner Lemieux noticed that there are no borrowing amounts referenced as far as the projects that are being presented as far as the Grindstone Well and Clear Well. It does not state any dollar amounts. Per Superintendent Morris that the actual warrant does not have a dollar amount, but the motion states the dollar amount which is on the next page. The amounts will be listed in the Annual Reports that are handed out to people at the meeting. Per Subscriber Gregory Buteau he does not have a copy of the packet but he is assuming they are all the standard articles. He believes that the Risk and Resiliency should not be part of the budget and should be a separate warrant article. He stated that it is not an annual thing it is something that would be done every so many years. Per Superintendent Morris that we will have to update the emergency response plan that needs to be updated every 6 months. He is also afraid that if we put it as a special article it risks getting voted down. If it gets voted down that we would be in violation of a federal regulation and we really do not want to do that. We can always remove it from the budget next year. Per Subscriber Buteau the regulations state it should be done as a special article. Superintendent Morris stated that he would look into it. Superintendent Morris also stated that if we are using the free cash for both the Clear Well and the Grindstone, we are limiting our free cash. If we move the Risk and Resiliency down to a special article and use free cash, we will be making our free cash to low and will not have any money left in case of an emergency. Subscriber Buteau said you can still use rates to fund it if it is a special article you just have to state that you will raise and appropriate the money rather than use free cash money. Per Subscriber Buteau had a discussion with the EPA the person in charge from Washington and there is different categories a population for 50,000- 90,000 and they are having training that is being held on April 22nd the DEP had us at 50,600 and now we are at 50,160 based on our 2010 census we still have to do it but the person from EPA you cannot put a cost figure that is unknown as they are still creating a check list of what still needs to be done as part of the Risk and Resiliency plan.

Superintendent Morris stated he did try to reach out to those contacts that Mr. Buteau gave him from EPA and I had negative feedback. Customer Buteau stated that he is not stating we will not have to do it. Even if we were one over they would still make us do it.

D. Grant Researcher – Per Grant Researcher Mr. Reilley he had sent an email to Superintendent Morris with a breakdown of what he has found for us this month of February. The first grant he found was an EPA Data exchange grant which the deadline is to soon so it is unlikely. The 2nd Grant is an economic development grant our eligibility on this one is questionable and is highly unlikely but he included it anyways. The 3rd grant is a response of environmental development planning including drought study, rate study, demand management in local communities, they provide you money to plan and study what you would do in a drought situation. DEP grant for drought planning. The 4th grant is an upcoming grant about bacterial monitoring data collection, 21st century technology for data collection having to do with bacteria in water if there was some EPA or DEP advancement that we could monitor bacteria in our water. Lastly I conveyed the key words that I am searching certainly open to adding any other key words, water district, water source, water source, town water, water meter, water infrastructure, water reclamation.

V. ADMINISTRATION – Nothing to report

VI. Operations

A. Superintendent's Report – Per Superintendent Morris there has been an uptick in water quality in Auburn Street area which is where we rerouted the water. This is going to be a stubborn issue that we are going to have to deal with until the weather lets us fix the issue. He is still working on costs to see how much this is going to cost us. He also spoke with the Police Chief and we are discussing how to do this without making a major shut down of Route 9. Currently we have a water main break on Carlton Road. John and Roger are working there right now and as soon as we wrap up this meeting I will be heading there to help them.

COVID19 – I think it would be a good idea to extend our moratorium of termination of water services and eliminate late fees that people may get for being late. We put a sign on the door that we will no longer be accepting payments in the office which is following what the town is doing. Commissioner Lemieux states that he thinks we should have this in place until 60 days after the COVID19 thing is over so we can give people 2 months to get back on their feet. Superintendent Morris stated he was thinking we would go until May 1st than we can reevaluate it.

Commissioner Levesque makes a motion to hold off on terminations and late fees until May 1, 2020. Seconded by Commissioner Lemieux. All in favor. Approved.

Superintendent Morris asked if we want to put anything in place in light if they in fact any more restrictions on us. I know Jen, Cheryl and I have access to remotely access our computers in the office so we can do 85% of our work from home. We would have to each go into the office at least once a week to keep things going. We would have to do it on a rotating schedule so we do not come in contact with each other. Commissioner Lemieux does not have a problem with this.

Commissioner Levesque thinks rotating of the personal is a good idea. Chairman Bergin stated I am assuming the 85% does not include the testing and stuff we

have to do. Superintendent Morris stated that this is for Jen, Cheryl and I. So basically I would have to come in the office and get the mail. Cheryl would then would have to do her end on the mail and Jen would have to come in to deposit the checks and cut checks. Than all the behind the scene stuff could be done at home. Ben stated he already has his desk phone forwarding to his cell phone and we can change our message when people call and leave a message Jen and Cheryl will get the voicemail and will be able to call them back. For our two operators who are hourly employees I know Congress is trying to pass something to protect them. President Trump wants us to distance people as much as possible. My thought was to put them on a rotating schedule so they are not working at the same time and put them on a temporary salary for the 40 hours until this is over. They would have to come in every day on a rotating schedule and do the essentials that need to be done on a daily basis. They will both have to be available in case we have an emergency but they will not be paid overtime unless they work over 40 hours a week. We cannot lay them off and let them get coverage there because we need to have the two Operators on hand and we need them in an emergency. We need to set something up that protects them and makes sure our essential needs get accomplished. Superintendent Morris as far as contractors we would make sure they have not come in contact with the virus to make sure we are being safe. We have also canceled all house work orders such as changing out meters. The only time we are going to customer's house is if it is an emergency or a severe complaint were we need to go access the situation. Per Superintendent Morris this is not an added cost to the District. Chairman Berin asked if we are only going to implement this if the Governor or President put further restrictions on things or are you asking to implement this now. Superintendent Morris stated he is willing to see were things go the next few days and be able to implement it were he sees it is needed. We do have one employee who is a high risk and we want to try to limit the risk for him. Commissioner Lemieux, I think we should go at Ben's discretion if any of the staff is in risk that we in act on this immediately. Chairman Bergin stated that he agrees we should have something in place because unfortunately it is going to come into play quickly at either a State or Federal level. I think to have these plans in place now is prudent. Superintendent Morris stated that we are part of MAWARN which is basically like a mutual aid agreement with other utilities in the state. So basically, if we had an Operator that became ill with this someone else can come in and help us out from a different District. We do have that flexibility if something dire does happen. Chairman Bergin I think you have full Board support to use your discretion on this issue. Superintendent Morris stated this is something that the risk and resiliency program will address as we do not have anything written on how to respond to a pandemic because this has not happened in over 100 years. We are still waiting on some numbers for the budget, I am working on the ASR waiting on some of DEP links to become available so I can finalize the report. It looks like we purchased around 73 Million gallons and sold around 54 million gallons of water to our customers. Once we factored in our street sweeping, water main breaks, hydrant flushing, firefighting, water main breaks, water quality flushing, draining of the tanks we are about 13% of our water is not accounted for which is in the pipes and in the tanks and we are not allowed to use those in our calculation. That is kind of where we have been for the last 5-6 years so I think we

are doing really well with that. Next meeting, I should have a draft Commissioner's Report to read and go over to get ready for our Annual Meeting if we can still have our Annual Meeting at its set date. Commissioner Lemieux is there an interim date that we would postpone the Annual Meeting to. Superintendent Morris from what I have been reading it sounds like the DLS is going to authorize towns to go month to month after the fiscal in order to cover cost until they are able to have a meeting and approve a budget. They will allow communities to use free cash to cover expenses until they can hold a meeting. I am assuming because it applies to towns it would apply to us as well. We are going to have to start brain storming on a backup plan.

VII. COMMUNICATIONS – Nothing to report

VIII. PERSONNEL – Nothing to report

IX. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

A. Approval of Next Meeting – Commissioner Lemieux motions to hold the next meeting Tuesday, April 7, 2020 @ 7:00 PM. at the Leicester Town Hall or via Virtual Meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Levesque. All in favor. Approved.

ADJOURNMENT- Commissioner Lemieux motions to adjourn the virtual meeting. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in Favor. Approved. Virtual Meeting adjourned at 8:10pm.

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