

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES February 16, 2021 - AMENDED 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

2 – Subscribers
Arthur Paquette - LCAC

Arthur E.J. Levesque, Commissioner
Benjamin Morris, Superintendent
Robert H. Lemieux, Sr., Commissioner
Jennifer Wood, Treasurer
Cheryl Balkus, Clerk

- II. **District Member Forum** – Per Chairman Bergin he saw information on social media this week related to the water rates and how they are unaffordable and referenced that the rate is \$2.00 per gallon, how can we get away with this and that they should be investigated.

Per Chairman Bergin the water rates are nowhere near \$2.00 per gallon, We are \$0.1164 per cubic foot, if you divide by 7.48 gallons per cubic foot this would be 1 ½ cents per gallon. This is no where near \$2.00 per gallon. This does not reflect the base charge. The base charge is if you consume water or not. He understands that there are still a lot of people out there that are upset, it would be nice to have more people involved on the calls. It is frustrating to have misinformation being posted and blown out of proportion. He appreciates those who are invited with attendance of the meetings. The rates have been reduced 2 years in a row, we are working on a plan to get a few things going and hopefully be able to streamline the costs and perhaps to get the numbers down a little bit more. We have a fixed overhead and doing our best to make sure its controlled as much as possible. He wanted to let bring to the open that you have heard this directly and not from coffee shop talk.

There were no other questions or comments from the listening audience or the Commissioners.

Commissioner Lemieux motions to suspend the balance of the District Member Forum. Seconded by Commissioner Levesque. All in favor. Approved.

The District Member Forum ended at 6 minutes and 4 seconds.

- III. **APPROVE MINUTES**

- A. **February 2, 2021 Meeting Minutes** – Commissioner Levesque motioned to approve the minutes of February 2, 2021 Meeting Minutes. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in Favor. Approved.

Per Commissioner Levesque the January Bank Transfer from the water checking account to the sewer checking account at the 2/2/21 meeting should have been \$60,031.43 not \$60,0131.33. Per Chairman Bergin to amend the minutes to reflect the accurate from \$60,031.33 to \$60,031.43.

IV. FINANCE

A. Approve February 8, 2021 Warrants – Commissioner Levesque motions to approve the February 8, 2021 warrants. Seconded by Commissioner Bergin. All in Favor. Approved.

B. Approve February 15, 2021 Warrants- Commissioner Lemieux motions to approve the February 15, 2021 warrants. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in Favor. Approved.

The warrants consist of repair & maintenance, service agreement, heat, office expense, phone, salaries, technology, insurance, license fees, electric, sub-contractors, postage, flied supplies, pipes and motor vehicle expense. The total of the combined warrants is \$38,765.34

Subscriber Buteau asked if there are any bills submitted by the district engineers. Per Chairman Bergin there is not.

V. ADMINISTRATION

A. 2-11-21 Customer Request: Payment Plan.

The plan is to begin February 2021 through February 2022. Commissioner Levesque motions to approve the 12-month payment plan. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in favor Approved.

VI. Operations

A. Superintendent's Report

The past 2 weeks busy with frozen water lines, frozen services, the newer meters give us advance notice before a freezing service and useful past couple of weeks. We have had some properties where service had to be shut off to vacant properties or assist customers thawing services of customers occupied homes.

The Well - A few things have changed regarding the project. (The Superintendent shared a screen of the current plant) it is a design to explain. There are two different colored lines to show the current layout of our piping of the plant. We were going to bring the Worcester feed line into the Clear Well to offset the flow of the well to the blue line to get to the system. That was the original design.

Since started have had thoughts of changes in the design and leading the option of bringing the Worcester feed directly into the pump station and Grindstone direct having a small poly tank and have a dual pump system pump installed and pump the Worcester & Grindstone feed to offset and then to the Rochdale service area. This has caused a slight delay. The ultimate goal is the same and system

demands and cost saving measures. Will reduce pressure concerns of the Henshaw vicinity. Fine tuning the design in getting it back out to discuss and have the 100% drawings to make comment in going forward. He has reached out on the pricings and coordinating the timing of the media and working on timetable of projected start and finish dates.

No comments or questions from Commissioner Levesque.

Commissioner Lemieux wanted to know if adding additional costs. Per the Superintendent no and he believes that it will be a substantial cost savings. Trying to get the updated numbers from what was proposed and what is being proposed. Commissioner Lemieux wanted to confirm that we will be performing at the same level and not diminishing or changing services to the customer. Confirmed by Superintendent Morris.

Subscriber Greg Buteau to commend the Superintendent.

He wanted to clarify that we will not rehab the Clear Well. Per the Superintendent if going the new proposed route, would take us away from doing anything in that Clear Well.

Per Subscriber Buteau being sensitive to cost savings, to bring the Clear Well down to a bare concrete surface and put some sort of coating is not easy. Yes, fully agrees if we can do this change it would be tremendous.

He also wanted to know if this information has been shared with DEP.

Per the Superintendent, to his knowledge they have not, as the design has changed 4 different times in 8 days and until they can get it fully figured out and layout what will be the best going forward it will then be submitted to the DEP.

Per Subscriber Buteau as a rate payer and with past engineering experience and if can get away from rehab of the Clear Well speculation on his part is 75% of the costs. Since there is a double effort here what is engineering effective than losing time loss but if this is a significant cost savings the way forward. Strongly suggests can we live with it and send it to DEP as soon as possible rather than 100 % plans and specs and put it in the plans and the specs. For the Clear Well, reading the SUEZ report had other things that raised questions. Example: ladders.

You have a changed project that meets the objectives of the District and Tata & Howard. If you get a buy in from DEP, there are other details and will want the 100% plans and specs.

Per the Superintendent has the DEP thought and considers what they may come back with changes that they say that they need.

The Superintendent received a letter from the Chairman of the Moose Hill Water Commission requesting his presence to meet the 25th of this month to discuss water related issues pertaining to the Town of Leicester. He is not going to jump the gun without permission from the Board or having one of them attending with him. He represents the board and can only say so much to represent the Board to meet or may be more beneficial or if it is necessary to have us attend this meeting. He did not respond as was waiting for tonight's meetings to know if we are to respond with a yes or no and have the board advise.

Per Chairman Bergin the Moose Hill Commission are meeting virtual. We already have a Working Group that involves Moose Hill, Senator Moore, Representative Leboeuf, Commissioners of each of the Water & Sewer Districts, Select Board and Congressman McGovern's office. An immense amount of effort was done by the group, money was obtained to do the study that is underway and awaiting the final report. The purpose of report is going to identify the issue of water within the town, all associated District's, and recommendations of next steps.

It would be premature since we do not have the report that \$200,000 was spent on. Moose Hill is going to be on the outcome, he is confused by the request and its premature. There was an RFP done and everyone had their input. All players are there and need to await what will be presented.

Commissioner Lemieux wanted to know asked if an agenda was included, a list of invited potential attendees. Per the Superintendent he only knows of himself and the Leicester District Superintendent. There was no agenda.

He agrees jumping the gun when it is in the works. He will not attend with permission and or a Commissioner in attendance

Commissioner Lemieux to confirm that this is an open virtual meeting. Per the Superintendent it is.

Commissioner Lemieux asked if anyone can participate? Per the Superintendent yes, they can.

Commissioner Lemieux wanted to know will it affect if he logged in personally, and if Superintendent was logged in with a Commissioner will this affect our District at all? Do we have to post that we would be participating because it would create a quorum?

Per Chairman Bergin it would, and therefore we do not do that.

Per Commissioner Lemieux does not personally have a problem the Superintendent and a Commissioner listening in, and any questions posed to respectively decline to answer until seek advice from the Commissioners. We can listen in and observe as long as reserve the right to consult to make any statements. He is all for sharing ideas and doubts it will speed up the working group study or maybe there are other benefits that could come out of this.

Per Chairman Bergin If 2 out of the 15 parties involved of the working group, Moose Hill is part of that group. We have all regularly met, brainstormed, and having the exceptionally comprehensive working group study done. This is not the first time we have got together to do this. There are some thoughts that Moose Hill will save the day. There has been a Moose Hill Study done and we are near \$30 million to build a treatment plant. It does not include land acquisition or to recognize to be approved as a surface water drinking entity. Because our district having to work with the DEP, he has been involved with the Water District there has not been an approved drinking water pool for one in over 50 years. It is a cumbersome component to get Moose Hill online. With the Working group study this RFP has been tasked with identifying and what savings there is if we do xyz. These people are tasked with identifying what consolidation. It could be partial or full and obviously rate payer approved, and maybe you do not consolidate at all and leave as is. He is a representative of a board member of the working group. The study is going to come back with facts and figures to review and then make decisions from there.

Watching prior Moose Hill meetings there is not audience participation, dialog between the commissioners and it is not been conversation that has been cordial.

The meeting is ~~March 24~~ February 25th. Commissioner Lemieux suggests that the Superintendent ask who is calling the meeting, to get an agenda to know what is to be covered. That he will sign on and say that he is observing and not to commit to anything without speaking with the other Board members. He also suggested maybe should we run this by our council without being an expenditure to see if this is something so that if we should do without breaking ethics or breaking of our rules. Per the Superintendent there is no phone number or email to get back to, just an address on the letter that he could then mail it back and not sure how he would be responded to. He could include his phone number or email to get agenda in advance that is required 48 hours prior.

Per Commissioner Lemieux asked if this is an official invite from the district or a particular board member or the board or the Chairman alone. Per the Superintendent it was received from the Chairman only Mr. Shivick.

Per Commissioner Lemieux since it is not coming back from the entire Board suggests that we speak with our legal counsel, on how to proceed since this does not appear that this is not official as not being signed by the entire Board. We do not want to get into something that we should not be getting into.

Commissioner Lemieux to Chairman Bergin would we initiate something like this.

Per Chairman Bergin does not believe that we would have done a request a presence of others. In past, we were asked to put on a Leicester Water Supply Agenda to determine if we would be able to supply them with water.

Per Commissioner Lemieux given the circumstances he respectfully declines. He finds it odd that it is one person asking and not the entire board. Commissioner Levesque suggest that when responding to ask that the letter is signed for so that we are not accused of saying we did not send back the letter. Per the Superintendent he will respond by letter requesting signature that it is received.

The Superintendent and the Treasurer have a jump start on budget and should have something to present the next or the following meeting.

One thing he is considering we lack a dump truck. Looked at different options and received prices to get us one through a municipal purchased. To make it more affordable he was looking at lease purchasing programs with one payment per year and would be a 5-year lease purchase program could get rolled into our operating budget and essentially become a vehicle replacement program.

It is a vehicle we do not have. We borrow from the town when we can but run into issues with this. Handy for patch and cleanup work and a lot of day to day when doing different projects. Prices for state \$60-65k looking at a lease purchasing option 1 outlet was a 3yr with 6.15% would be a \$23k one time a year payment another at 5yr with a 4.6% int rate with a \$14k yearly payment. This would keep us into a 20-year cycle. Weighing option to trade in the 2013 and adding the dump truck will make work easier. We need to look to the future to make things easier and functional. Per Chairman Bergin we will get a costs savings. Per the Superintendent yes and no right now we are borrowing from Highway & Leicester Water, Leicester Water having issues with theirs and does not know what their plans are with their equipment. we are not in a position to ask for favors. That is why looking at the trade in to lessen the burden. Every week changes we are

doing, every project changes or we are paying for a contractor for a 10-wheel dump than a 1 ton on an hourly rate when we only need a ½ ton. Having our own will save us or small paving will also help save us having the equipment instead of paying someone else. It is a versatile truck to have for what we do. Looking at a F550 or 1 ton dump. The capacity would be 2 or 5 yards and keeps us under the CDL licensing requirement. We have an F250, F350 flat bed and an F150.

Commissioner Lemieux concerns why cannot we go with an easy dump or trailer for the scale and amount of work. A dump is great and used to have one but, in borrowing or easy dump trailer or insert will not get as much capacity per load and lower amount but could be effective and a lot less than a dump truck. Per the Superintendent we already put a sander in the F250, each winter take out the dump body to put the sander in because it won't fit the dump body and becomes a safety issue having an actual dump makes more convenient. As soon as you put an easy dump in a F250 the F250 has a 10k g.v.w. and it would max it out without a ton of asphalt and taking a dump trailer to an asphalt plant a meter of safety and what will be the easiest to optimize our job and it is to have a dump truck. Commissioner Lemieux put the sander on the other truck and not have to spend that much money and still effectively get the job done without it. Matter of price could trade in the 150 but the lease purchase is broken out in annual payments and not a big burden on the district being on an annual basis. From how we have been doing the last couple of years there is safer way to do the work more convenient than using a skid steer down the road and using the bucket to move asphalt after a leak and having a truck to use the ability will be a tremendous help moving forward. Per Commissioner Lemieux we will mull it over and look the numbers.

The Superintendent just wanted to mention this tonight as it will be in the proposed budget and did not want to blindsides them.

VII. PERSONNEL – Nothing to report

VIII. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

A. Approval of Next Meeting - Commissioner Lemieux motioned to hold the next Virtual Meeting Tuesday, March 2, 2021 @ 7:00 PM. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in favor. Approved.

IX. ADJOURNMENT- Commissioner Lemieux motioned to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in Favor. Approved. Meeting adjourned at 8:25 P.M.

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