

# BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

## VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES

August 4, 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	1- Subscriber
Arthur E.J. Levesque, Commissioner	
Benjamin Morris, Superintendent	
Robert H. Lemieux, Sr., Commissioner	
Jennifer Wood, Treasurer	
Cheryl Balkus, Clerk	
Attorney Barry Bachrach	

- II. **District Member Forum** – Commissioner Lemieux asked when the other team members are in the field is there safety management or a plan to purchase safety equipment. He said approximately a week ago the Operators were in Cherry Valley at the Worcester line and noticed there was not a lot of flashing lights to alert vehicles that they were there. Commissioner Lemieux wants them to be safe or is there anything that can be done. Per Superintendent Morris we had road signs, cone's, and vehicles with the warning lights. He is always interested in new things, but Arrow Boards come at an added cost that we may not necessarily be able to afford on our own or the use to have all the time. Per Commissioner Lemieux he must have driven by at the tail end when they were finishing up and everything was removed and wanted to make sure that they are protected.

There were no further comments during the District Member Forum. Commissioner Levesque motioned to suspend the District Member Forum. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in favor. Approved. Forum ended at 4 minutes 55 seconds.

III. **APPROVE MINUTES**

- A. **July 21, 2020** - Commissioner Levesque motioned to approve the minutes of July 21, 2020. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in Favor. Approved.

IV. **FINANCE**

- A. **Approve July 27, 2020 Warrants** – Commissioner Levesque motioned to approve the July 27, 2020 warrants. Seconded by Commissioner Bergin. All in Favor. Approved.

- B. **Approve August 3, 2020 Warrants**- Commissioner Lemieux motioned to approve the August 3, 2020 warrants. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in Favor. Approved.

Per Chairman Bergin the warrants consisted of Office Expense, Insurance, Labs, Field Supplies, Repairs, Maintenance, Payroll, Consulting Fees, Legal (the legal fee was in the amount of \$364.50), Continuing Education, Postage, Technology. The combined warrants are \$42,348.08.

**C. July Bank Transfer** – Commissioner Levesque motioned to transfer from the Water checking account to the Sewer checking account in the amount of \$58,117.74. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in favor. Approved.

*The money that is collected is collected on behalf of the Water Dept it is not the waters money and is transferred to the sewer account.*

## V. ADMINISTRATION

**A. Rules and Regulations Update** – Per Attorney Bachrach we did not have a ruling in the R&R that require turning off vacant properties. At present gives the Commissioners discretion when asked. We have had instances of leaks, major leaks and because of vacant properties. R&R need to be tightened up and make it mandatory to give us notice to turn off or we turn off the water. He suggests having a subcommittee with a Commissioner regarding situations. As an example, a Subscriber is gone for 6 months. There is a difference between leaks and vacant occupied property. With vacant if no one there to notice or complain. In the situation of Comins Rd. it could have started as a small leak and then turned into a major leak and we really need to prevent further catastrophes. He would like to have a draft done to be presented to the Commissioners at the next meeting. There is nothing in the R&R to collect losses because of leaks. There is that water has been used but not with leaks and how to estimate how much is charged. Per Superintendent Morris he researched and checked with MWWA (Massachusetts Water Works Association). One town has a provision that a person could be charged if the customer did not repair within a certain time and if they did not, they would then charge for losing water in that time. Per Commissioner Levesque suggested a scenario to take into consideration. If we shut off, it is a vacant house and people keep heat on.

Per Attorney Bachrach will take this into consideration when writing the draft.

Per Commissioner Lemieux he would like to be part of the subcommittee. Both Chairman Bergin and Commissioner Levesque are in agreement for Commissioner Lemieux to be part of the subcommittee.

## VI. Operations

**A. Superintendent's Report** – Per Superintendent Morris system wide everything is running well. Staying on top of the yearly maintenance, property maintenance of different locations.

To begin the Valve Exercising Program next week. The goal is to get 80 valves done by end of August. If we can get more done, we can get into another area to get ahead of ourselves.

Police detail for Thursday to finalize GIS work to get completed.

The Well contract was signed with Tata & Howard. The in-house resident engineer to be assigned and preliminary design to go forward. No changes, laid out old

piping at Henshaw to know where everything is to update site plan for Conservation with a notice of intent. It is more involved with Conservation to notify all abutters work to be done. Commissioner Lemieux asked why this route instead of other. Per Superintendent Morris the notice gives more coverage for wetlands and either way requires abutters to be notified. It gives a File # with DEP and that we have taken appropriate measures with the body of water around the building. He does not foresee any issues. Subscriber Greg Buteau 2 Merrick St to thank Superintendent Morris for furnishing contract and answering contract questions and in the future suggests advertising future savings. He asked if there a ballpark review of when piping and so forth to be done. Per Superintendent Morris wants to get the Valve Program and Fall flushing done first and to try to fit in as soon as possible as currently we are short staffed. Will spend a day or two to get started if the window of opportunity is there. Subscriber Buteau looking for more coordination as it took a lot of time to get the meeting together and then the virus. He is pushing the Superintendent to get his things done to push Tata & Howard. Said he himself is driven by time, as time is money. Per Superintendent Morris Tata & Howard showing DEP that voters approved. This is our design and they know when we have to file for permit and informing them that this is the project going forward this gives them 90 days to review and if corrections needed would be resubmitted and then would take another 90 days. To avoid this wants to have all the information ahead of time. Per Commissioner Levesque to clarify savings \$110,000.00 per month? Per Subscriber Buteau the savings could be \$105,000 to 140,000.00 per year. Per Superintendent Morris that was the expected savings for purchasing the water. That number is still to get changed slightly because we reduced the line item in the budget. Commissioner Lemieux asked Mr. Buteau to clarify what he meant by his previous comment about opening the door. Per Subscriber Buteau stated in his own experience with the Federal Government, is to close the loop as soon as possible, that they can scratch their heads and think of other things that were not on the menu send certain items when previous meeting was held and certain items should have been discussed.

## **VII. COMMUNICATIONS**

### **A. 7-30-2020 Customer Request: L. Cleary-Albro**

The Subscriber submitted an email requesting that she would like to receive separated water and sewer bills. It was explained to the Subscriber that in the past bills were sent separately and when the new billing software was brought in, as a cost savings measure to each of the Districts the bills were combined. Commissioner Levesque, Commissioner Lemieux and Chairman Bergin all agree to keep it as it is. To be more efficient and not be less efficient. It was designed to have it done to be a cost savings to both sides it is more work and more money to go back to what used to be done.

Commissioner Lemieux asked Attorney Bachrach if we can we make it mandatory to require that the Subscribers receive their bills electronically. Per Attorney Bachrach does not believe that this can be done. Per Cheryl Balkus many of the Subscribers who are elderly do not have a computer or internet access or some Subscribers do not want to receive their bills electronically. Some of the Subscribers wish to receive their bills electronically only, and some to receive in both paper & electronically.

## VIII. PERSONNEL

**A. Staffing Update** – Per Superintendent Morris there were four potential candidates to replace Mr. Bouley. We heard back from three. Interviews were held between the Superintendent and Chairman Bergin. A top candidate was selected to be trained and get licensed. Christian Leblanc lives in the Tatnuck Square area and that is good to allow to get him to site whenever needed. Per Chairman Bergin he is a well-spoken individual, extremely bright, intelligent, articulate and was by far a twelve on a scale of 1-10. He has customer service experience interacting with people, also with his background understands the water protection through the water shed area of how it is vital, and that water is vital to the town and people. We would be very fortunate to have him. Commissioner Lemieux asked what customer service experience does he have? Per Chairman Bergin he manages at the Courtyard Marriot and handles several situations with the customers as well as staffing members. For water system he is an avid hunter, fisherman. When he was in school he started a project with urban gardening and then added more into several spots in the City of Worcester, he worked up his way in management, putting in infrastructure to grow the food, dealing with volunteers and farmers market. He spoke for about for approximately 25 minutes of all that was involved. He gets the concept of the importance with water, likes to be busy, be part of building or being involved to dig in, get his hands dirty and aspirations of growing with the business. Commissioner Lemieux motions to move forward and offer the position to Christian Leblanc Operator / Maintenance Laborer. Seconded by Commissioner Levesque. All in favor. Approved. Per Superintendent Morris he will contact the candidate tomorrow, submit offer letter, receive acceptance and then notify other two who applied and to thank them for applying.

## IX. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

**A. Approval of Next Meeting** - Commissioner Levesque motioned to hold the next Virtual Meeting Tuesday, August 18, 2020 @ 7:00 PM. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in favor. Approved.

## X. Executive Session

### **A. To discuss strategy for potential litigation**

Commissioner Lemieux motions to move to go into Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to litigation and not reconvene on Open Session.

Seconded by Commissioner Levesque. All in favor. Approved.

**XI. ADJOURNMENT**- Commissioner Lemieux motioned to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in Favor. Approved. Meeting adjourned at 8:17 P.M.