

**CHERRY VALLEY SEWER DISTRICT
BOARD OF SEWER COMMISSIONERS' MEETING**

**VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES
February 10, 2022
7:00 P.M.**

- I. CALL TO ORDER Commissioner Lemieux called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm

Donald Manseau, Chairman - Absent

2 – subscribers 1 - nonsubscriber

Robert H. Lemieux, Sr. Commissioner
Michael DellaCava, Commissioner
Benjamin J. Morris, Superintendent
Jennifer Wood, Treasurer
Cheryl Balkus, Recording Secretary

- II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. **December 14, 2021** - Commissioner Lemieux motioned to approve the meeting minutes of December 14, 2021. Seconded by Commissioner DellaCava. All in favor. Approved.

- III. FINANCE

A. **Approve Warrant of December 23, 2021**- Commissioner Dellacava motioned to approve the warrant of December 23, 2021. Seconded by Commissioner Lemieux. All in favor. Approved.

B. **Approve Warrant of January 6, 2022** - Commissioner Lemieux motioned to approve the warrant of January 6, 2022. Seconded by Commissioner DellaCava All in favor. Approved.

C. **Approve Warrant of January 13, 2022** - Commissioner Lemieux motioned to approve the warrant of January 13, 2022. Seconded by Commissioner DellaCava. All in favor. Approved.

D. **Approve Warrant of January 27, 2022** - Commissioner Lemieux motioned to approve the warrant of January 27, 2022. Seconded by Commissioner DellaCava. All in favor. Approved.

E. **Approve the Warrant of February 3, 2022** - Commissioner Lemieux motioned to approve the warrant of February 3, 2022. Seconded by Commissioner DellaCava. All in favor. Approved.

F. **Approve the Warrant of Feb 10, 2022** – No warrant

- IV. ADMINISTRATION – Nothing to report

- V. Communications

A. **Sewer Betterment Deferral** – The subscriber submits application yearly for approval. Commissioner Dellacava motions to approve sewer betterment deferral application. Seconded by Commissioner Lemieux. All in favor. Approved.

B. Town Wide Study Update – Per the Superintendent asked the board if there was any more discussion with the subscribers or commissioners. Per Commissioner Dellacava should we go under one entity combined water and sewer or should we remain separate? Per Superintendent Morris it makes more sense to be combined since same crew of people handling both and would continue to keep separate budgets. To the board shall we put this as an article item for the Annual Meeting? Per Commissioner Dellacava believes we should go to legal counsel to determine if should be one combined article or should it be separate articles.

The Superintendent is to follow up with Town Administrator if they intend to have something on the annual meeting and a joint discussion may be needed with the water board, to speak with legal counsel if he is the right person. He does not see that this will move quickly if the town side does not proceed. If the town does proceed, we would then be coming in as a one district. Per Commissioner Lemieux if we are going to do this, we would, then need to ask the subscribers at the annual if they want to entertain this and if everyone has the same consensus, we can then look at the how or legal. Commissioner Lemieux motions to table the item till the next meeting and to get input from Chairman Manseau who was not on the call.

Nonsubscriber Greg Buteau asking the board not to pursue this when a \$200,000.00 study was done and was not an option. He does not see any benefit and sees it as more of a liability to the water district. Water has \$400,000 – \$500,000 debt and sewer have \$2.5 million debt.

Subscriber Peter Cusolito agrees with the challenges with a merger of the two districts. With the town wide study report it did not meet the scope of work, it should have not been accepted, sees a problem to give this to the selectboard to work with, no discussion about costs, rates, or legal issues. He also does not see how the town would take the report and do anything with it.

Per nonsubscriber Buteau the RFP was to come up with cost savings and rate reduction and in his opinion, it came up with a generalization.

Per Cusolito the town accepted the report, the consultant was working for the town, and he is disappointed. He has worked with Weston & Sampson in the past on other items and the people in the project was tone deaf. He does not know if we are better off with a little information and does not see a clear path forward for the report that was given. ex: no financial analysis. He also wanted to be on to commend the staff for getting the USDA loans changed and the reduction of the sewer rates.

Per Commissioner Lemieux it appears in these situations is to have a consultant. Is it to pass the buck or to point to them if something goes wrong? In the beginning he was not for the outside consultant and as going along felt better at the end that they did do the study. It's a very challenging situation and there is no easy answer to this. If any sort of consolidation someone is going to feel heated because they are going to bear the expense. He personally cannot believe that this has been allowed to go on for so long. If looking to build up the town to make it look attractive you need to have a solid infrastructure. Over the decades the ball has been dropped. Knowing what we know at this point can only continue with what we were planning to do and come up with some collaborations and see where we can go from there. It can't be solved tonight. Commissioner Lemieux motions to table the discussion of

consolidation of the sewer district with the water district. Seconded by Commissioner Dellacava. All in Favor. Approved.

C. **Upper Blackstone Update** – Per Superintendent Morris has preliminary budget numbers for the Upper Blackstone for all the towns that contribute. Fortunately for us we are going to see a significant decrease ranging from a 19 – 21% decrease in sewer disposal fees due to the 3-year average gone down. Commissioner Lemieux asked how he thinks it will affect our rates. Per the Superintendent at most a \$76,000 savings to the budget. We need to look at other line items that may expect increases and could offset it. We are reviewing the future budget now to see where we will be at. Commissioner Lemieux commends the staff of getting I/I (Inflow Infiltration) under control and looking at outside of the box.

VI. **Operations** - Per the superintendent we have some crazy weather, a lot of frost heaves around manholes with ponding on them. We have worked with highway on a few instances to cover completely with cold patch till the spring and in the Spring, we need to find a way to do our manhole repairs. Twelve were not on the high priority and need to be moved up on the list. Issues are on Howard Terr, Chapel St, Auburn St, Willow Hill and Bottomly Ave.

Flows have been up and down with the weather.

There was a problem with the pump station on McCarthy Ave. area requiring replacement of check valve, rebuild kits of gaskets and O rings. All pumps repaired in better working order.

He is working with Treasurer Wood on preliminary numbers of the budget and to have a draft prepared for next meeting.

An upgrade to the communications systems was required as they are on a 3g system that is being phased out to 5g. All up to date and online.

VII. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

A. **Approval of Next Meeting Date** Commissioner DellaCava motioned to hold the next Virtual Sewer Meeting March 10, 2022, at 7:00 P.M. Seconded by Commissioner Lemieux. All in favor. Approved.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT Commissioner DellaCava motioned to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Lemieux. All in favor. Approved. Meeting adjourned at 8:20 P.M.

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