

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES

March 2, 2021

7:00 P.M.

CHERRY VALLEY & ROCHDALE WATER DISTRICT

- I. CALL TO ORDER - The meeting was called to order by Chairman Bergin @ 7:01 P.M.

The following were in attendance:

Kevin Bergin, Chairman

3 – 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** – Subscriber Greg Buteau for an update on the Risk Assessment. Per Superintendent Morris work in progress working with RCAP virtually. The goal is for them to have a draft for him to review and move to the next phase.

There were no further comments or questions from the Commissioners or the listening audience. Commissioner Lemieux motions to suspend the District Member Forum. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. The District Member Forum ended in 3 minutes and 50 seconds.

III. **APPROVE MINUTES**

- A. **February 16, 2021 Meeting Minutes** – Commissioner Lemieux motioned to approve the minutes of February 16, 2021 Meeting Minutes. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in Favor. Approved.
Per Commissioner Levesque there is a discrepancy in dates of the Moose Hill meeting one being the 24th and the other the 25th. They should both read February 25 and should be amended.

IV. **FINANCE**

- A. **Approve February 22, 2021 Warrants** – Commissioner Lemieux motions to approve the February 22, 2021 warrants. Seconded by Commissioner Bergin. All in Favor. Approved.
- B. **Approve March 1, 2021 Warrants**- Commissioner Lemieux motions to approve the March 1, 2021 warrants. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in Favor. Approved.

The warrants consist of the Grindstone Well \$15,463.23, lab work, insurance, accounting, electricity, heat, office expense, payroll, licensing fees, postage, motor vehicle expense, continuation education, repairs & maintenance, City of Worcester \$24,735.42, technology, service agreement, and phones.

The total of the combined warrants is \$70,235.34

C. February Bank Transfer – Commissioner Levesque motions to transfer \$65,602.59 from the water checking account to the sewer checking account. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in favor. Approved.

This is money that the Water Department bills and collects on behalf of the Sewer Department. This is not the water departments money. We make these transfers to have the monies to fund and run their operation.

D. Draft Budget – Per Superintendent Morris chemical supplies and lab work pending final numbers. He is waiting to determine when the well will be online, and it will not be online in July. He wants to get a better timeline first as this will change the amount of money for chemicals and lab work. The goal is to have an answer for April.

There are a lot of reductions in the budget, purchasing less than previous years. City of Worcester is being brought down to \$390,000.00 which is about a \$35,000.00 less than previous year.

A reduction in consulting services as we have not been using as much as previously used.

A slight in increase to heat as prices going up and to be prepared. We did have a lot of service work done this past year to our heating equipment at the office.

We are taking small tools, pipe account, field supplies, repair & maintenance and combining into one overall account since they all go together. This an idea but trying to simplify the budget.

Included the Vehicle lease purchase amount for an annual payment if we go down this road. Wanted to include to see what it would do to the overall budget show and could see the numbers with the annual expense.

Commissioner Levesque suggests keeping education at \$10 if we are required, we have it if we need to transfer money to it. Per Treasurer Wood we have not used in the last six years that she has been the Treasurer. Per Commissioner Levesque long as we can get it from someplace was his concern.

Commissioner Lemieux to the Superintendent and the Treasurer to clarify the \$11,500.00 in motor vehicle expense. Per Superintendent Morris this line item is for maintenance and the fuel purchasing of the current vehicles. The motor vehicle lease is on another line of the draft budget.

Per Chairman Bergin has no questions and consolidation of the accounts, he is okay with this and will need to make the ratepayers aware at the annual meeting of the changes. Overall, there is the reduction, unknown of additional lab work and chemicals when getting the Grindstone online.

Commissioner Lemieux had a question regarding the subcontractor line in the amount of \$42,000.00. Per the Superintendent this is for us to hire excavation companies and the labor on our leaks. We supply the materials, this is for excavator, backhoe, trench boxes. Commissioner Lemieux wanted to know if the price will go down if we have a dump truck.

Per Superintendent Morris he does not want to reduce to much as with one leak everything changes. Some leaks are 4-5 hours others can be 12-15 hours. The average is 8 water breaks per year and would be \$5,000.00 per leak and it is cutting it close. The one we had on July 4, 2020 was \$27,000.00. The \$42,000.00 could be gone quickly.

Commissioner Lemieux to clarify the Consulting line in the amount of \$26,000 - Per Superintendent Morris the consultants were Tata & Howard to evaluate for us, not a project and needed an engineer opinion on and past rate studies. There is also Toomey Water who is used for backflow devices. They need to be tested twice a year and subbed to them to do. This is compliance item with the state. They handle the scheduling and so forth. Per Treasurer Wood the property owners are charged, and we need to have it as a line item to pay the bill.

John Shocik 7 Folsom St commented that when the contractor shows up with their equipment, they need a large truck. These trucks require CDL license. Some leaks with debris involved that does not require CDL may not safely remove the debris. He agreed to listen further when the Superintendent addresses later in the meeting.

Greg Buteau 2 Merrick Street asked the Superintendent if the City of Worcester line item does this assume that we will get all water from the City of Worcester or will it be part of the Grindstone Well.

Per the Superintendent the \$390,000.00 represents 100% of the water is purchased from the city. Grindstone not included because he needs a better timeline and then see what hard data, meter data back, we get from the well out to the system instead of all from the city. Then see what will happen with the making of changes for the following year.

Greg Buteau to clarify Leak Detection & Standpipes - Per the Superintendent unaccounted for water has been over and we must begin a system wide survey for this year that is approximately \$3,000.00. We have money for standpipe inspection because they are required to be inspected on an annual basis. The company that does this comes in to do this and reports. He feels if we reduce, we may need it and with constant changes with standpipe inspection and leak detection and why it is level funded with no drastic changes.

Mr. Buteau has concern of the placement of the truck, his main concern is where it is placed and, in his opinion,, it is inappropriate that it is included in the operation & maintenance budget.

No additional comments or questions relating to the Draft budget from the Board or the listening audience.

V. ADMINISTRATION

A. 2-12-21 Customer Request: 12-month payment plan.

The plan is to begin March 2021 through March 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 – With the Risk & Resiliency Assessment he is working with RCAP. It is being done virtually a bit slow but moving forward to have done by the June 30 deadline.

DEP sent to the information available of the ASR (Annual Statistical Report) that must be filed on an annual basis provides statistics of water consumption of the previous year. Nothing out of the ordinary.

Prowler to come in March to do the system leak survey, graph map and report.

Month of February we purchased about 4.5 million gallons of water from the City of Worcester with the average daily demand down to about 160,000 gallons per day – not sure why we dropped so much. Looking at some data usage not changed to much could be due to fluctuation in tank heights due to icing.

RT 56 marijuana facility – no drastic changes to their design, letter issued to proceed with the 4" water line into the building and that they need to coordinate their efforts with us. To recycle 80% of their use. They will be using 8-10,000 per day from us while using the 80% at the same time.

Commissioner Levesque asked if we were reimbursed for the leak that was in front of his house last July. Per the Superintendent we were reimbursed in December.

F550 – The Superintendent provided the Board with a list of what he is looking at and why the need. We are not looking at a CDL truck because of the licensing that would be required. We are looking at a F550 1 ton dump, under CDL, has a tow package, PTO driven hydraulic system for the dump body & v10 engine.

For smaller quantities of materials sand or needed at the time. A dump trailer strongly against due to safety as it adds size to the work zone, dumping where to dump is limited at disposal of material with leaks, middle of the night needs to be two people and safety issue. A dump versus trailer takes up less workspace and movement of

material. Two of the trailers we have are only able to be towed by two of our vehicles because of their weight. The jack hammer trailer can be towed by the F150. He reached out to the dealers to trade in the F150 to reduce some of the overall costs of the dump truck of \$65,224.30 with a trade in of the 2012 F150 of \$8,000.00 making the amount \$57,224.30. Proposing that this would be a lease purchase and to reduce the overall burden of the District to spread out the costs and be used as a vehicle replacement program going forward. We will be in FY26 the truck would be paid off and then move into the next vehicle. The vehicles would be 15 years old when the time and we want to make sure that they are all reliable. The average age of our current vehicles are 10 years old. With the program we can have something in place on a rotating schedule and will be a reoccurring cost. With trade \$12,500.00 annual payment without a trade \$14,307.00. It will be 4-wheel drive, with plow, no sander. We have one in our F250 now.

Commissioner Lemieux asked if the Superintendent priced out a diesel. Per the Superintendent he did not and feels for our operation that it was necessary of a diesel right now. The F550 is strong gas motor with the 7.3-liter v10 and from discussion about the diesel you get into emissions, def fluid and other added costs of owning a diesel and wanted to keep it simplified and keep costs down. He can get a revised quote of a diesel. Commissioner Lemieux understands more expensive initially but has more for power, resale value, burns less fuel, very durable, consistently generates more torque. He would like a comparison of numbers for diesel vs the gas and the maintenance costs and performance numbers before deciding to purchase. Also asked if he has looked at other manufacture other than Ford as Dodge. There commercial line has a great product. Per the Superintendent he did not, he reached out to the state bid contractors and if we purchase on state bid list we do not have to go out and put the vehicle it out to bid. The 2 local state approved companies MHQ & Colonial State. They both deal with Ford and will look more if there are others on the state bid list who offer Chevy or Dodge. Commissioner Lemieux he would like to request and be able to compare if he were to purchase, he would be more towards diesel and Dodge. Per the Superintendent the F350 is not intended to not get rid of in the near future as this may be one of our strongest vehicles we have and not necessary to be rid of at this time. It is a 2006 with approximately 100,000 miles, the 2012 F150 has approximately 65-70,000 miles and the 2015 F250 has approximately 40,000 miles.

Commissioner Levesque wanted to confirm we purchase our gas from the town pumps and to confirm that they also have diesel. Per the Superintendent confirmed. There are state bid contractors that deal with other vehicles and the Superintendent to research and get it back for another meeting.

Per Chairman Bergin as for diesel if making an inquiry when doing our repairs are they qualified to work on diesel trucks and if not then what would the costs be or increase costs in overall maintenance.

Greg Buteau 2 Merrick St commented he is only one person and that the lease price should be an outside article as this is the way it has been for years.

B. Grindstone Update – Per the Superintendent from the last meeting there are the potential changes, and these are going to be the design as it goes onto effect. By

changing the design, we are eliminating the use of the Clearwell all together. We will have to put an article on the annual meeting to amend and reappropriate the funds of the project to continue the aspect of the project. Per tat & Howard this is not going to be a major slow down. There is enough money in the Grindstone account to get it to the DEP go through their process and get it out to bid. Cannot award the project until the article is amened at the annual meeting. This change will save over \$100,000 total in the project costs. We were looking at \$515,000 between the two and the overall estimate is \$402,000.00 with a substantial change. The changes of the contract should be available at the next meeting and with the overall savings of the total project makes up for some of the lost time. He wanted to make the board aware to be not caught off guard.

Commissioner Levesque to clarify – we will have no place to store extra water or a backup. Per the Superintendent it will be just like we have not we do not have the back up now.

Commissioner Lemieux with these changes wants to make sure that it will continue to boost the pressure. Per the Superintendent the changes will meet the objectives of boosting pressure and getting the well online. It is still going to get done however it will be about \$113,000.00 cheaper. There will be a poly tank in one of the buildings to take the water in from the well, creating a buffer before going out into the pump then out to the system.

Per subscriber Greg Buteau would like to make sure that the amendment includes that it will take care of the pressure loss on Henshaw and that MADEP needs to be kept in the loop. Could be losing \$10,000 per month not being online and needs a schedule. He does not disagree with the change and agrees of the condition of the Clearwell. Need to have what is the timeline with DEP should show this and have a schedule.

Per Superintendent Morris he will have the conversation with Tata & Howard to receive revised contract and he asked for the updated timeline. Plan to be sent to DEP once we are okay with the project changing. We cannot give the okay until it was discussed with the Board. If the Board is okay with the new scope, he will notify Tata & Howard and they will notify DEP.

VII. Communications

A. 2-15-21 Customer Request: M. Zuhairi – new oner of a duplex and received the first bill for each of the units that was for 15 days. The bills included \$25.00 customer charge and the price for water. The customer is disputing the \$25 customer charge for only 15 days.

Commissioner Lemieux motions to waive the \$25 customer charge only for each unit of the first bills and not to waive the water charge. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in favor. Approved.

Subscriber Buteau asked if we have received a report from the water study. Per the Superintendent we have received a draft that has been reviewed and changes to be made. Once the draft of the draft is done will have for the Board to review.

VIII. PERSONNEL

A. Employee Updates

John O'Day passed his next class and exam, license comes with \$1.00 per hour increase. Commissioner Levesque motions the increase of the \$1.00 per hour increase. Seconded by Commissioner Lemieux. All in favor. Approved.

Christian LeBlanc is enrolled in treatment classes and license process by end of the fiscal year.

As we are getting closer to Treasurer Woods maternity leave there was the discussion of the hire of a temp agency to fill the void and take the burden off the Superintendent and Clerk. The Superintendent had concerns with his time with the Grindstone project and needs to focus his efforts to this.

Treasurer Wood reached out to Robert Half agency if we go thru them pay varies \$28.00 - \$36.00 per hour based on experience. Every candidate goes thru background reference checks, workman's comp, someone who has experience with water utilities provided by them and they could start in 3rd week of April. Chairman Bergin will we be getting this person for the duration. Per Treasure Wood, we keep the same person for the duration.

Commissioner Lemieux what is the cost of this, is factor into the budget? Per Treasurer Wood she is not paid while on maternity leave unless the board wants to change that. They will be working 20 hours per a week; the Superintendent and Clerk will be doing some items and other items will wait till she is back from leave and it is part of the payroll expense. The Superintendent will be doing the bank deposits and signing off the checks. If we were to bond them it would be approximately \$100.00. Commissioner Lemieux gives high marks to the temp agency to be considered. Commissioner Lemieux motions to move forward with the temp agency to hire a temp while Treasurer Wood is out on maternity leave. Seconded by Commissioner Levesque. All in favor. Approved.

IX. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

A. Approval of Next Meeting - Commissioner Lemieux motioned to hold the next Virtual Meeting Tuesday, March 16, 2021 @ 7:00 PM. Seconded by Commissioner Levesque. All in favor. Approved.

Commissioner Lemieux asked of the report Subscriber Buteau inquired of and to confirm if this is the report of the working group and wanted to know when it will be shared. Per the Superintendent the draft 1 report of the study and was sent to the three water sewer superintendents to review, there are some items that he identified that needed to be addressed and once those updates are done and reviewed it will be given to the Board.

X. ADJOURNMENT- Commissioner Lemieux motioned to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in Favor. Approved. Meeting adjourned at 8:38 P.M.