

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES

April 20, 2021

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
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 CVRWD received a copy of letter that was sent to the Chair of the Select Board from the Moose Hill Water Commission dated April 10th. It is centered around the Leicester Water Supply District, Moose Hill and a handful of items regarding CVRWD that are not correct. There are allegations noted in the letter not naming specifically but relate to the CVRWD. That CVRWD had to retrofit to connect to Worcester for the purpose of supplying the water to us as opposed to supplying water from Worcester to Henshaw Pond. The interconnection is on the Dead Horse hill side and the Apricot side and the District receives water from Worcester when Henshaw Pond came off-line. CVRWD was not to feed Worcester. Another comment, that we pay a 350% higher base rate than the City of Worcester resident's rate. The price to us from the City of Worcester is \$3.93 per 100 cubic foot. If you are in Worcester, you would pay \$3.67 per 100 cubic feet that is a 6.9% increase not the 350%. There is a reference that the Superintendents salaries, pension is a multi-million job. This also is incorrect and a gross mis categorization. In the letter it states water and sewer meetings are held in secret. All meetings are in public and have been televised. Another comment is that the District water rates are marked up. We do not mark up the price of water. The water is a line item listed in the budget based on the \$3.93 per 100 cubic feet. This is what is billed to us and it is not marked up. The letter goes on that it is the intent for Moose Hill to supply City of Worcester or possibly regionalize with another town such as Spencer. There is an attachment to the letter that is from Spencer that they are not in need at this time but would entertain if needed. It is unclear why we received this letter but there may be other items that are not accurate. Chairman Bergin leaves it to the other Districts to address if there is incorrect information pertaining to them. Commissioner Lemieux entered the meeting late and asked to be brought up to speed on what the letter was. Chairman Bergin summarized for Commissioner Lemieux. There were no further question or comments. Commissioner Levesque motions to end the District Member Forum.

Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in favor. Approved. The District Member Forum ended at 10 minutes and 26 seconds.

III. APPROVE MINUTES

- A. April 6, 2021 Meeting Minutes** – Commissioner Levesque motioned to accept as corrected to approve the minutes of April 6, 2021 Meeting Minutes. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in Favor. Approved.

Commissioner Levesque question of last meeting Treasurer Report on March after reimbursements gives a balance \$538,95.15 and believes that this may be a typo. Page 2 in the Operating Expenditure \$538,95.15. Per the recording secretary Cheryl Balkus, the typed amount should have been \$538,905.15. Commissioner Levesque motions to accept as corrected. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in Favor. Approved.

IV. FINANCE

- A. Approve April 12, 2021 Warrants** – Commissioner Levesque motions to approve the April 12, 2021 warrants. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in Favor. Approved.

Commissioner Lemieux asked what did we need Bachrach & Bachrach legal fees for? Per the Superintendent at this time of the year we needed advisement for the input wording of the Annual Articles of the one bill one vote and the vehicle lease articles.

Commissioner Lemieux asked what Bond Construction / field supplies was for. Per the Superintendent this was an order for gravel. To clean up, level the area of the knock down of where the garage was.

- B. Approve April 19, 2021 Warrants-** Commissioner Lemieux motions to approve the April 19, 2021 warrants. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in Favor. Approved.

The warrants consist of repair and maintenance, legal \$486.00, small tools, pipes, office expense, field supplies, technology, phones, salaries, service agreement, Grindstone Well \$12,563.28, subcontractor, insurance, electrical, meters, City of Worcester \$18,612.48.

Subscriber Buteau regarding Grindstone / engineering if there was a figure available. Per the Superintendent requested if he sends him an e-mail, he can get the information to Subscriber Buteau.

Commissioner Lemieux wanted to know from the warrant what the Grindstone Tata & Howard amount of \$12,563.28 is for. Per the Superintendent this is a portion of their contracted amount for the design project. Invoices are sent periodically, and this invoice is of design of what has been done to date.

Commissioner Lemieux asked what D Johnson and Trucking in the amount of \$5,000.00 was for. Per the Superintendent D Johnson is from the approved contractors list that was hired to demolish, and removal of all debris associated with the old garage and screen house on the property. The falling garage was in the way for the well project and the screen house was a safety issue.

V. ADMINISTRATION

- A. FY' 22 Budget Approval** – Per Superintendent Morris no changes in the budget since prior meeting. If there are not issues, he will need the Board approval, so the information is in the with next bills.

Subscriber Buteau for clarification. If we are lucky with the Grindstone Well and we get on-line and anything we do not spend in the budget, will it go towards the free cash? Per the Superintendent anything we do not use out of the budget will be a savings and roll over. He is hesitant of reducing this currently, he wants to get the hard numbers from when the well is online and flows and from there for the coming of the next year to generate our savings.

Commissioner Levesque motions to approve the proposed FY' 22 Budget. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in favor. Approved.

Per Chairman Bergin there is a reduction of almost a \$50,000 savings decrease in the budget from the prior year.

- B. FY' 22 Warrant Article Approval** – Per Commissioner Levesque motions to approve the FY'22 Warrants. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in favor. Approved.

Article 1-8 no changes. Article 9 Enabling act change. Back and forth with legal to give the best advice and came up with a cost associated amount of \$3,000.00 just to get it started. This should be enough for legal to get the first phase done. Will have to be rewritten with a special district meeting for the voters to authorize and then to go back to the statehouse. None of those costs included to do this is included with the article. The amount is just for getting it started.

Article 10 Vehicle Lease Purchase – Per the Superintendent a few small changes speaking with the vehicle supplier that some of the prices for steel has changed. Recalculated and did not go up even \$100.00. If we are to proceed and if approved at the meeting delivery would be 8-9 months unless something in stock on the lot. This article will be 2/3'rds vote. Every other article is a majority.

Commissioner Levesque regarding Article 9 – There are the unanswered questions how it will be administered such as what happens if someone owns in town and the owner resides out of town, if sells will it be moved to the new owner. Per Chairman Bergin if the Statehouse approves it will come back to the District of to how to create the rules and regs to implement. **If the one wallet one vote gets approved by legislation.**

Subscriber Buteau – Regarding Article 9 after attorney does his thing it would have to come back to us at a special annual meeting to approve the revised addition? Does legal go forward with the changes or does it have to come back to the voters? Subscriber Buteau asked why isn't the cost of the meeting in the attorney's fees? Who is going to foot the bill for a special town meeting? Per the Superintendent we could find a way within our means to save such as to include a notice in with the monthly bills instead of separate.
Subscriber Buteau What is the trade in? Per the Superintendent the trade in of the F150 is \$8,000.00.

Commissioner Lemieux asked who the dealership is for the Vehicle – Per the Superintendent they are the Colonial Municipal Group. They are on the state bid list. He also reached out to MHQ. Colonial was \$3k-\$4k less than MHQ for the same vehicle and went with Colonial. When talking with the finance company MHQ higher interest rate and shorter term. Colonial gives a longer term and receiving pricing this way over the 5 - year plan, this why he went with Colonial. Commissioner Lemieux ask that there be a spec sheet included the day of the meeting about the vehicle. Per the Superintendent has the entire break down to have available at the meeting for a hand-out. There were no further questions or comments. Commissioner Levesque motions to approve the warrants. Seconded by Commissioner Lemieux. All in Favor. Approved.

C. Annual Water Use Restriction – Per Superintendent Morris per the Water Management Act Permit Water Use Restriction is May 1 through September 30th 9am – 5pm. Commissioner Levesque motions to approve the Annual Water Use Restriction. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in favor. Approved.

VI. Operations

A. Superintendent's Report –

Hydrant flushing began in Cherry Valley and will be the next nine days. Refer to the website to get a list of the streets. Could change daily because an area takes longer than expected.

Arsenic media is removed and picked up. In discussions to remove the remainder media and replace in the vessels.

The State is continuing to monitor drought conditions. We are labeled as abnormally dry and low end of a drought. Need to place close attention if put into a higher level. Worcester is in good capacity but still need to watch.

95% of the drawings sent to the DEP with a memo of the changes, no comments back from Tata & Howard or the DEP. All in for their approval process.

A draft copy sent to the Commissioners of the town wide study of the findings. There are not recommendations or suggestions made in the document. The Superintendent did identify an issue of an area in the draft of mislabeling of the funds and has been corrected.

The Town Administrator reached out to all Districts and has scheduled virtually May 5 for a joint meeting including the 1st phase of the report with Weston and Sampson. Being a combined meeting there will be one positing. The Town Hall will create the Agenda and post to suffice with the open meeting law requirements.

Per Commissioner Lemieux table 3.4 page 3-5 rates compares other Districts in Leicester and Worcester Holden, Charlton and Spencer and CVRWD is significantly higher and is that difference only related because we are purchasing the water from Worcester? As a subscriber what is the biggest contributing factor? Per Chairman Bergin yes. Water used to be zero we would pump it and treat it, now the line item is over \$400k.

Commissioner Lemieux is there anything else we are spending more on than our sister districts or other areas we are spending more per year for the same. Per Superintendent Morris we can look at theirs however they operate differently with having wells. We do have a higher customer base and we purchase water from the city. We based the information from old pumping data and the budget is reduced each year and keep getting adjusted each year.

Per Commissioner Lemieux Page 2-4 what is unaccounted for water?

Per the Superintendent this is taken from the ASR. We must calculate what water we purchased to what was sold to get the difference then take in such as water main breaks, fire dept use, water quality, flushing etc... the amount that we cannot pinpoint becomes unaccounted for. We have gone from 18% and now at 10%. We are not allowed to account for water sitting in the pipes or in storage tanks. This alone is millions of gallons and he has an issue with this within their reporting system.

Per Commissioner Lemieux this is a huge number and perhaps we should invest in the equipment to investigate and get this number down. Per the Superintendent currently we do have someone in that is surveying the system. Last year the Auburn, Main St was a significant leak to attribute to this percentage. Upgrading our water meters is important and will capture all use.

Per the Superintendent believes Weston & Sampson recommendations are to come back in June to open the doors for discussion on the town and district levels. It is a big unknown as he has not been part of something like this.

Subscriber Buteau prior to the 95% submission he read the two-page memo and asked did Tata & Howard have a discussion with DEP going over what they intended to do before proceeding with this? Per the Superintendent he does not believe so. Tata & Howard deals with them on several projects with different divisions of DEP. Subscriber Buteau feels that Tata & Howard are at high risk in doing this. But cannot go back to correct it. He asked if comments were passed on verbally and electronically. Per the Superintendent he has done both.

VII. Communications – Nothing to report

VIII. PERSONNEL – Nothing to Report

IX. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

A. Approval of Next Meeting - Commissioner Lemieux motioned to hold the next Virtual Meeting Tuesday, May 18, 2021 @ 7:00 PM. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in favor. Approved.

X. ADJOURNMENT- Commissioner Lemieux motioned to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in Favor. Approved. Meeting adjourned at 8:30 P.M.

"This institution is an equal opportunity provider, and employer."