

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES

November 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 PM

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** – Subscriber Greg Buteau asked how many people may have filled out the survey. Per Superintendent Morris there have been approximately 30 papers surveys received. At this time, we do not know how many have been done online. 300 are required. Middle of next week he will inquire how many have been conducted along with the paper and get an idea of what we are looking at from there. If we need 50 or 60, we may need to get a second letter out to get them in as soon as possible.

Per Chairman Bergin he has seen on social media as to why asking for financial information as part of this grant process and the feedback is it does not seem fair. This is part of the process for the grant through in partnership with the Town of Leicester and regional funding opportunity through the Central Mass area. We did try in the Fall a particular area and did not get the participation. If we get this now, we can take this to streamline for the grant. It will determine if we are eligible. For anyone in the listening audience if you are in the Cherry Valley & Rochdale District, we encourage those who have not filled out the form to complete it. It is anonymous doing this online. Per Commissioner Levesque people will know because it has an address. Per Chairman Bergin unaware that this information is being shared. Per Superintendent Morris it is entered to populate a map to show the income for certain areas and see what it is for the District. One thing could hurt is landlord tenant situations. The data needs to be provided from the tenants and not the landlord.

Per Chairman Bergin social media posting about water and sewer rates and he had had been following a comment thread and it seems to be in the Valley about the combined water sewer charge and saying this is my water bill when it is a combined bill. To clarify the bill that was shown on Facebook the actual water charge was \$49 and the sewer was significantly higher. The following month bill has the carry over balance and then the new bill. The water side of the bills were \$50 per month. There are a significant number of Subscribers who have water bills that are under \$100.00.

The water is reasonable, the big amount of the bill is the sewer side that this Water Board has no control off. He believes that the bill that was posted was for a single-family home and feels it is worth noting what the water bill is and what the sewer bill is. From our side the water rates are overall for what we have and what do to is responsible for now until we can get the Well online and not purchasing as much from the City of Worcester.

Per Commissioner Lemieux one of the posts was from outside of our District. When they are posting on social media, they are not identifying what District that they are part of. He is not engaging anyone on social media as it is a losing battle. It would be great in creating a District page or a way we could as a District somehow engage those FB posts with the information that was mentioned by Chairman Bergin. Office staff would need to monitor but could get out of hand but perhaps quickly intervene to state the information getting the word out. Everyone is quick to let their thumbs start walking and none show up for the meetings. Without coming and logging in when having our meetings maybe we can engage them to check out our meetings to voice concerns and have questions answered. It is the same people who are doing the social media. It is unfortunate with virtual meetings he would have thought there would be more involvement. Per Chairman Bergin agrees it is a full time, issue to monitor social media. Having existing staff, it would occupy a disproportion amount of time. In the beginning 2 years ago was a lot of hearsay. Thru the benefit of LCAC and consistent meetings we are eliminating the back and forth. It is recorded, LCAC rebroadcasts and reports what is being said. It is a record, and it is there. Commissioner Lemieux motions to suspend the District Member Forum. Commissioner Levesque seconds. All in Favor. Approved. The District Member Forum ended in 24 minutes and 1 second.

III. APPROVE MINUTES

A. October 20, 2020 - Commissioner Levesque motioned to approve the minutes of October 20, 2020. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in Favor. Approved.

IV. FINANCE

A. Approve October 26, 2020 Warrants – Commissioner Levesque motions to approve the October 26, 2020 warrants. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in Favor. Approved.

Commissioner Lemieux item 2 page 1 \$250.00 charge named Mark D Abraham. Per the Superintendent it a Treasurer course for municipal agencies and a class for the Treasurer.

Commissioner Lemieux asked what GH Excavation for subcontractor in the amount of \$2,600.00. Per the Superintendent we had a small water leak on Church St. GH Excavation was the next scheduled contractor to use to fix the leak and was used to repair another customer's curb stop. The customers are repaying for the cost of the repairs. The homeowner owns the service line, and they are responsible to repair it. We provide them the list of the approved contractors. They would normally work and pay the contractor directly. In this case GH was used for one job and asked to do the other customers work. We billed the customer and paid by the customer. Commissioner Lemieux concerned about this practice because what if they do not pay and it seems that we are providing without charging interest like a free loan. Per the

Superintendent the potential of a Subscriber not paying the bill could result in their service being terminated for nonpayment or placing a lien to the property. Customers who have been billed are quick to pay for the services and has not in past or current been an issue.

B. Approve November 02, 2020 Warrants – Commissioner Lemieux motions to approve the November 02, 2020 Warrants. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in Favor. Approved.

Per Chairman Bergin the summary of these warrants does not include any Tata & Howard expenses. The warrants include automotive, continues education, payroll, office expense, subcontractor, insurance, technology, postage, retirement, electricity. The combined amount is \$36,988.24.

C. October Bank Transfer – Commissioner Levesque motions to approve the transfer from the water checking account in the amount of \$65,720.67 to the sewer checking account. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in favor. Approved.

D. Budget Transfer #1 – Commissioner Levesque motions from the FY21 Water Account \$5,500.00 from the Reserve Account to the Motor Vehicle expense account. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in Favor. Approved.

E. Potential Audit Date 12-1-2020 – Treasurer Wood the Auditors would like to do a combined Virtual Water and Sewer Meeting as we have done in the past and suggest to begin at 6:00 PM or 6:30 PM instead of 7 PM.

V. ADMINISTRATION

A. 9-15-2020 Customer Request Payment Plan Approval. Commissioner Levesque motions to approve the 12-month payment plan. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in Favor Approved.

B. 10-15-2020 Customer Request Payment Plan Approval. Commissioner Levesque motions to approve the 12-month payment plan. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in Favor Approved.

C. Grant Researcher Update – Per Superintendent Morris Grant Researcher Christopher Reilley sent an email that he is giving 60-day notice to end his Grant Research. Mr. Reilley stated in his email that he cannot be of any real use to the District, with budgetary limitations at the federal level, and the current size limitations of the District itself, there are no grants that we collectively qualify for. He cannot in good conscience continue to take District money and will be happy to volunteer his research services, such as they are, and assist with any CDB grant program writing, free of charge, if required. For copywriting services, or design services for pamphlets, brochures, mailers, or other printed materials, he will deeply discount his standard rates to help. He remains committed to the cause and will remain available to the District for whatever needs and may be able to assist with but will no longer draw upon the meager cash reserves available.

VI. Operations

A. Superintendent's Report – With the rain received we are still under usage restrictions with the City of Worcester. The operators were sent out to do a system wide leak detection. Nothing found.

A company is coming in the end of month or the beginning of December to do an annual visual inspection of our water tower on Green St for \$1,000.00. It is the same company who did our other West St tower. A full report will be given by their trained professional. It is budgeted for this and will cover us till next year.

The pickup truck should all be complete next week to have the new bed installed with toolboxes and so forth.

Tracking usage for the month of October was on the lower side. Used 4.9 million gallons. The average daily was 160,000 gallons per day. Being extremely low. Looking at November bills 81% of customer's bills were under \$100.00. The billing period was for September use which was warmer. Lower use less water purchased lower bills from the City of Worcester. Chairman Bergin thanks the rate payers to conserve with the restrictions and a significant savings.

Per Commissioner Lemieux any idea what it translates to an average subscriber in savings. Per the Superintendent it will be individualized by customer. He did some adjusting with the tanks to have the valves for the tanks more time than less so when the well is online to play around with the controls to maximize our savings. Per Commissioner Lemieux can let the subscribers know what a great job done in conserving and the operations end working on additional ways to do an out of the box method of the amount of water being drawn.

The Superintendent appreciates and that this is one month will know more when we come to the end of the fiscal year to show the ratepayers the savings.

VII. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

A. Approval of Next Meeting - Commissioner Levesque motioned to hold the next Virtual Meeting Tuesday, November 17, 2020 @ 7:00 PM. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in favor. Approved.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT- Commissioner Levesque motioned to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in Favor. Approved. Meeting adjourned at 8:07 P.M.

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