

Minutes of 3/12/24 Sewer Commission meeting– via Zoom (Video Conference)

Attendees: Chair - John Reynolds, Vice-Chair - Brett Ramsden, Clerk - Mike Nault, Member - Dave MacDonald, DPW Director - Bill Bernard, Business Manager - Paula Bertram, Minutes Clerk - Jane Ranley

Absent: Mike Mackin

John opened the meeting at 6:00pm. and did a roll call of attendees. The Commission began the meeting by saying the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT- Dave announced that he will be leaving the Commission at the end of his term. He thanked the present and past Commissioners, along with Paula, Jane, Bill and past DPW Directors. He encouraged residents to consider joining the board. He noted that this is a good board to work with and there will be new challenges. John, Mike N., and Brett stated that Dave will be missed. Paula noted that Dave has been an integral part of the team and he will be missed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS - none

APPOINTMENTS – **Wright Pierce -Upcoming IFB's and System improvements** -John reported that he, Paula, and Bill did a teleconference with Wright Pierce. They discussed obtaining State revolving funds but found that it is 1 to 2 years to get them, if you qualify, so it is not an option for repairs they need to do now. They also brought up the repairs to Mass 1 and Dana St., which they agreed are a priority to do. Grant funding from the Green program was discussed for purchasing pumps. Paula, Bill and CTE have been having trouble getting information on newer pumps, but Wright Pierce will try to help with that. In regard to repairing manholes, Wright Pierce will be doing a quote for looking at the 30 highest priority manholes and indicating what needs to be done. This information will enable them to come up with an IFB.

CURRENT BUSINESS -

Minutes of 2/27/24 – John asked to hold them until the next meeting so he can review one of the votes on the video.

Budget & Rate Increase Discussion- John requested to review the numbers for the transfer from Retained Earnings. Paula stated they will be spending \$106K on pump stations and Capital needs. The revised figure was \$95K and they will need to transfer from other line items. The Capital costs for FY25 has gone up to \$335K, due to the repairs at Dana St. being over \$100K. This will not leave much of a buffer for emergencies unless they take more from Retained Earnings. John stated that they voted to move \$250K at the last meeting and the Commission discussed whether to move more. Paula noted they voted to move \$35K from Retained Earnings into Capital. She stated the Retained Earnings balance is now about \$1.7Mil. She is proposing moving \$35K to Capital and \$381K into the Operating budget. That would leave them with \$1.36 Mil. in Retained Earnings. The FY25 Capital Expense line item will be \$350K. The Commission discussed numbers for the planned repairs in FY25. John noted that they may need money available to address I/I issues too. Mike N. commented that it is a lot of money and suggested looking at competitive bidding. John replied that Bill and Paula will get estimates from other providers, using Empey's scope. He added that Wright Pierce thought Empey's proposal seemed reasonable. Dave suggested having engineers look at the request for quote to make sure they don't miss anything.

Motion: Brett R.

Second: Mike N.

To increase the amount from Retained Earnings to \$400K.

Roll Call Vote: Mike N.-aye, Brett-aye, Dave-aye, and John-aye.

Budget presentation – John asked for feedback on the presentation and Dave suggested explaining the \$12.34 rate increase up front.

Repairs at Mass 1 Pump Station- Paula reported the repair took place on 2/27 and they pumped 15,000 gallons from the force main, which was more than they anticipated. They transported the sewage to Twin City and also to Dana St. The repair was finished around 3:30 am and all went well. John noted when they shut down Dana St. for repair there will be no other station able to take the sewage pumped. If they look at bringing it to the treatment plant, it will open up all kinds of other issues. He questioned whether it could be put down the manhole. Paula suggested

having someone look at Dana and get a real scope of work. Dave suggested looking at dumping it in near the town line where the Tri-Town buildings are.

FY25 Upcoming Information for Bids- Paula reported that they worked on the language and are just waiting for the specifications from Wright Pierce, along with a date for them to look at the 30 manholes identified with I/I. She hopes to get the IFB done for late May/early June, so they can start at the beginning of FY25. This will be done with the \$100K ARPA funding.

State Revolving Loan Fund- John stated they talked to Wright Pierce about looking at rolling the Capital Plan work into a project and maybe getting some funding.

Business Manager Report – Paula reported that the Spill Sens unit came in. It is a float that will sit in the manhole to identify I/I issues and Robert (CTE) is looking for the best place to install it. The installation and training by the company is planned for 3/19.

--Update on System Maintenance & Upgrades- Paula stated the majority of the generator work is complete, except for a controller on the Leominster Rd. generator for which she is awaiting a quote. She also sent out Robert's logs and noted that he is finding a lot of bricks in the wet wells, which is an indication of I/I. There have been a lot of clogs at Leominster, Mass 3, and Francis. Paula has asked Bill to put on Facebook a list of what is ok and not ok to put in the sewer. She has been in touch with Kelly Brown (regional coordinator for Green Communities) about the 2024 Green Communities Grant. The application is not available yet but money is available for pumps so she is working with Matt (Wright Pierce) to get the data together for the application. Dave asked for a copy of the scope of work. Paula stated that they are not looking at bids, which would take several months, but looking for quotes. She will put together a scope of work and have Wright Pierce look at it. Then it will be sent to several companies.

John noted that the next meeting on 3/26 will be a public hearing on the Regulation changes to Appendix G, Sewer Connection Charge Policy.

UPCOMING SCHEDULED SEWER COMMISSION ACTIVITIES:

March 26, 2024 @ 6pm – Public Hearing and Regular Meeting, Remote Participation

April 9, 2024 @ 6pm – Regular Meeting, Remote Participation

April 30, 2024 @ 6pm – Regular Meeting, Remote Participation

May 4, 2024 @ 6pm – Regular Meeting, Remote Participation

Motion: Brett R.

Second: Mike N.

To adjourn at 6:52pm.

Roll Call Vote: Mike N.-aye, Brett-aye, Dave-aye and John-aye.

Respectfully submitted,

**Jane L. Ranley
Minutes Clerk**