

Minutes of 4/30/24 Sewer Commission meeting - via Zoom (Video Conference)

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

Brett opened the meeting at 7:02pm. and did a roll call of attendees. The Commission began the meeting by saying the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT - Mike M. reminded all that town meeting will be on 5/4 at 9am and will be a busy one. He encouraged all to attend. Dave also reiterated that this town meeting is very important for the future of Lunenburg. Brett stated that their software billing issues are in deplorable situation. It is important for the Select Board and Town Manager to focus on this situation. He added that this has been a problem for a long time and could affect the continuation of the Sewer Department business if it gets worse. The Staff are totally overwhelmed.

CURRENT BUSINESS -

Minutes of 2/27/24 -

Motion: Dave M .

Second: Mike M .

To accept the minutes of 2/27/24.

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

Minutes of 4/9/24 -

Motion: Mike M.

Second: Mike N.

To accept the minutes of 4/9/24.

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

Dave abstained.

Engineering Services - Paula reported that they had asked Wright Pierce for a number of task orders, with the most critical one being a review of electricity for pumps at Dana, Leominster Rd., and Mass 1. This was for preparing a submittal of a grant application. The quote for looking at the efficiency of the pumps came in at \$7,200, which Bill said was very high. Paula and Bill talked to Wade at CTE who said there could be savings with new pumps but he didn't know how much. She noted that they needed to see significant savings in order to get the grant. Paula stated they spend \$25K/year for those 3 stations and the deadline for the grant is 5/10. She has put together figures and specs but no one is qualified to do the calculations. Dave suggested talking to John DiNapoli and rely on the Green Communities Task Force. Paula said she reached out to them and they suggested using Wright Pierce. Bill also talked to RISE but has not heard back yet. Paula will reach out to John at Unitil. Mike N. stated that getting new pumps would be big and suggested asking the pump supplier for data on efficiency. (*John joined meeting and starting chairing.*) The Commission discussed and agreed to not spend the \$7,200 and will apply for the grant if they can get the data in time. They also agreed that the other task quotes were high - especially for the manholes. Dave asked if Ch. 90 money could be used for sewer covers and Bill replied that if they are raising covers, they could use Ch. 90 money but they are doing more work than that. Paula screen-shared a spreadsheet for repairs on the manholes. The Commission discussed the list and agreed up to 21 manholes could be covered by Chapter 90 money. John stated concern that when they start work on the manholes, some may be in worse shape and could end up costing more than \$100K. The Commission discussed coming up with their own scope or having a contractor inspect each one and give an estimate for repairs. Paula suggested it would be 2 separate projects - inspections and a bid to do the work, since it is over \$50K. Paula asked if the company doing the inspections could bid on the work.

Bill replied that would be a question for the Inspector General's office and will ask Julie (Asst. Town Manager). John said they will discuss this again at the next meeting.

Q4 Bill Insert - Paula noted that they talked about increasing the minimum charge of \$133 and the Commission agreed with the wording on the insert. Mike M. said he was pleased to see the Ledger article.

Draft Turnover Procedure - The Commission discussed the new procedure. John said it seemed cumbersome to have staff go to Town Hall to bring checks every day and hoped it would go to once per week.

Waiver of Interest request for 3 accounts- (car washes and office) for total of \$74.75. Paula said they did not receive their bills and there were others who called to say they also did not receive a bill. She noted that they ran them through the postal meter, prior to bringing them to the Post Office. It also appears that certain pockets of town did not receive their bills. Everyone was asked to pay the interest on past due amounts. The owner of the 3 accounts was very upset and refused to pay the interest. Since the amount was over \$15, they cannot waive the amount without a vote from the Commission. The Commission discussed the waiver request and Paula noted if they do it, it needs to be done for others. Bill noted it was not a Munis issue but a post office issue. Paula said a late bill was sent out instead of a demand. If demands had gone out, a \$10 fee would also have been added. Moving forward, she will mail the bills as a bulk mailing with the number of bills sent certified by the Post Office. Dave suggested asking the post office why they were late.

M: Mike N.

Second: Mike M.

To take care of the customer at hand with the interest and anybody who has been current up to this last billing that comes forward in the next 7 days with interest, that they will take care of the interest.

The Commission discussed the motion and Paula noted any charge over \$15, the board will need to sign on it.

Paula added that she will be out for 2 weeks and will not be able to address this until she comes back.

Roll Call Vote: Mike M.-aye , Mike N.-aye , Brett-aye, and John-no . Dave abstained.

Business Manager Report -

--Sewer System Update - Paula reported that there was another major clog at Leominster Rd. John noted that this is the 22nd clog since September.

--Budget Status- Paula stated that receipts are down. She had planned on sending out bills tomorrow but will have to wait until she is back.

--Town Meeting Articles- Paula said she will not be able to attend so someone will need to be present to read the articles. Heather asked for 3 slides on the budget and Paula sent out the draft presentation. The OBEP transfer will be in the consent calendar but the budget will be done separate. Paula screen-shared the budget slides with a picture of a pump clogged by disposables.

--Grant funding - already discussed

--Demands and Q4 billing - Paula noted that demands are still not working on Munis and based on the earlier vote, she will not know who has not received their bill. She will hold off on Q4 billing until she comes back, but she is concerned that it will push out their revenues. They need to give 30 days for payment and that will be right at the end of the fiscal year.

--Munis Issues- John stated that they cannot appreciate the day in, day out problems of dealing with Munis issues and it is overwhelming. Paula noted that John has requested a meeting with

the Select Board and the Enterprise Fund has lost money because of these billing issues. Mike M. asked how it was adopted and Paula replied they had Munis, version 11. An upgrade was required and it has been a disaster ever since. She was unable to send out demands in Q2 and Q3 - a loss of \$8K. Also there have been issues with pay stubs and tax bills in Town Hall so it is not isolated to just the Sewer Department.

OLD BUSINESS - The Reboot- Payment Agreement - John noted that they came in with \$2K but that was it and they are still way behind in their agreement. They will be on the Select Board agenda on 5/21 and the Select Board is looking to the Commission as to whether their liquor license should be renewed or not. Paula noted they have to pay in full by 5/28, but the Select Board hearing is 5/21. However, she will ask if they can move it to the 1st meeting in June. The Commission discussed the agreement and the license renewal. Paula noted there are no penalties other than they had to pay by 5/28. The Commission agreed that if ReBoot does not pay in full, they recommend the Select Board revoke their liquor license.

PUBLIC COMMENT - The Commissioners wished Paula well with her surgery.

UPCOMING SCHEDULED SEWER COMMISSION ACTIVITIES :

May 4, 2024 @ 9am - Town Meeting

May 14, 2024 @ 6pm - Regular Meeting, Remote Participation

May 28, 2024 @ 6pm - Regular Meeting, Remote Participation

June 11, 2024 @ 6pm - Regular Meeting, Remote Participation

Motion: Mike N.

Second: Mike M.

**To adjourn at 8:27pm.
aye and John-aye.**

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

Respectfully submitted,

**Jane L. Ranley
Minutes Clerk**