

Minutes of 11/19/19 Sewer Commission meeting –DPW Conference Room –520 Chase Road

Attendees: Chair- Joan Pease, Vice-Chair- Ryan Stober, Clerk- Carl Luck, Members: Dave MacDonald, Mike Nault, Business Manager-Barb Lefebvre, DPW Manager- Jack Rodriquez, Minutes Clerk- Jane Ranley
Guests: Peter Venuto (A&D Crossroads), Deb Trumbull, Albe Packard and John Mohammed (SWSS)
Joan opened the meeting at 6:30 pm.

PUBLIC COMMENT- none

APPOINTMENTS -

Peter Venuto for A&D Crossroads- Joan gave a summary of the fee payment history for A & D Crossroads. Peter talked to the owner, David Brambila, concerning the permit due 8/16 and sent Jimmy (Ixtapa restaurant owner) to the town hall to pay the late fees on 8/29. Instead of paying the \$700 due, Jimmy paid \$4,500, which was the amount for the sewer and water bill. Joan reviewed the timing-the annual permit fee due on 8/15 of \$650, the \$50 non-compliance fee when it was not received by 8/28, and then the \$25/day fee was assessed mid-September back to 8/16 when payment was still not received. She added that if it was paid on 8/15, there would be no problems and that the permit needs to be paid on time—every time. The current amount due is \$950 for fees accrued to 9/22, when the \$700 was received. Peter offered to pay fees for 8/15-8/29 when they came in to make the payment, or \$350. Commission agreed to have Peter just pay the \$350 late fee.

Motion: Ryan S.

Second: Mike N.

Reduce the late fee for A & D Crossroads from \$950 to \$350.

Vote: Unanimous

CURRENT BUSINESS -

Privilege Fee assessment – 400 Electric Ave. was connected in September and the privilege fee to be assessed is \$23,102.94. Barb added that they were assessed 3 units and had already paid for 1 unit.

Motion: Carl L.

Second: Ryan S.

To assess the Privilege Fee for 400 Electric Avenue

Vote: Unanimous

Minutes – Regular meeting – 10/29/19

Motion: Ryan S.

Second: Carl L.

To accept the minutes of 10/29/19.

Vote: Unanimous

Past Highfield Village Executive Sessions – 8/1/17 & 9/24/19

Motion: Carl L.

Second: Ryan S.

To move that the Board/Commission vote to approve the minutes of its 8/1/17 meeting, provided that members not in attendance at such meeting, or not then members of the Commission, are voting only as to form and not substance, where they have no firsthand knowledge of all that occurred at such meeting.

Vote: Unanimous

Motion Ryan S.

Second: Mike N.

To accept the Executive Session minutes for 8/1/17 and 9/24/19.

Vote: Unanimous

Motion: Carl L.

Second: Ryan S.

To make the previous Highfield Village Executive Session minutes public.

Vote: Unanimous

Business Manager Report –

Sewer Service Area (SSA) Expansion approval at Special Town Meeting -189 Cross Rd – Barb reported that the full parcel at 189 Cross Road was approved to be included in the SSA at the special town meeting on 11/12 as written in Article 8 and Commission agreed to have Barb send the update for the SSA map to Cartographics.

Grease Trap/Interceptor program- 1st Tuesday reports status- October logs all in except Smokestack Roasters, who recently opened. **Invoices** - Fitchburg monthly invoice for \$ 12,730.87 approved. **Leominster IMA-** Barb

reported that Adam (Town Counsel) advised that the contract negotiation does not qualify to be discussed in Executive Session. The Commission agreed to have Barb and Carl carry out the negotiations with Leominster. The Commission will discuss updates at the 12/10 meeting.

SWSS O&M Contract & Invoice discussion – Joan thanked Deb, Albe and John for coming to the meeting to discuss the billing. Barb passed out copies of the letter received from SWSS. Deb said that there has been a change in the person doing the billing and she wanted to focus on 3 issues of concern.

1st -- Deb noted there was ambiguity between corrective maintenance and repairs. Repairs and replacements are billable outside of the contract. Emergency response calls outside of normal working hours, Monday to Friday, are also billable.

2nd– Safety issues – Deb explained circumstances where a police detail and/or 2 operators are required for safety reasons. She added that if they are training a new operator, they don't charge for the trainee. If they are getting constant calls for an issue, that work will be billable. John said that Albe has taken over Lunenburg.

3rd- Deb does not add a markup on parts and has given Barb vendor information for some purchases so she can order parts. The parts come directly to the DPW.

The Commission discussed with SWSS what is covered under 24/7 in the contract. Deb added that they have agreements with other towns for so many hours per week, with excess hours billable, but Lunenburg is not set up that way. Joan suggested having a notification when work is becoming excessive. Carl read from contract that SWSS could ask for a meeting to discuss excessive service. The Commission discussed the callouts, preventative maintenance, corrective maintenance and billing with SWSS. Jack added that it is unfair if SWSS is called in extreme off-hours and not paid extra. Joan stated that there is a clause that says that if something is excessive, they should notify the Commission that they will be billed extra. The Commission discussed the process for excessive callouts. The Commission also discussed the renewal process for the contract and the need to make the contract profitable for SWSS. Carl pointed out that the contract was structured to encourage maintenance. He is also concerned about the reliability of the system since callouts are increasing. John replied that the age of the system must be considered and that they have installed new pumps. Jack noted that resident issues, such as mopheads, are causing the big problems. Ordering spare parts was discussed. (Dave M. entered the meeting.) Jack added that it may look like an increase in callouts, but it is the same as in the past. Deb noted that SWSS is available 24/7. The Commission discussed whether they needed to rewrite the scope and percentage increases to the contract amount. Deb reviews the work performed line by line on Smartsheets to determine what is billable and her goal is to figure out the gray areas in the billing. Barb added that she and Jack discuss every bill. Joan suggested making a firm plan as to what should be done going forward. Mike said that the contract should be profitable for SWSS and that we rely on SWSS to keep upgrading the system. Dave suggested monitoring the work for next 6 months, work with SWSS and have it reflected in the next contract. Carl said they need to comply with contract and understand when it becomes a billable task. Ryan would like SWSS to come to meetings periodically and possibly write the contract based on hours/week. Joan is opposed to re-writing contract and putting it back to bid. If there are going to be extra charges, SWSS needs to call Jack and add an explanation for the charge on the bill. The Commission agreed that it all comes down to better communication and agreed to have SWSS come in for the 1st meeting of every quarter. Commission discussed paying for callouts after 11pm. and that until the contract is re-worded, there will be a reasonable amount of excessive charges for repairs. Invoices will be shared with the Commission each month and the Commission can discuss any issues with SWSS quarterly. Jack added that invoices need to be paid. Commission will discuss charges in a meeting and if all agree, will ask Barb to go to Jack with any questions. Barb suggested having a liaison to go to Jack with the questions. Joan thanked all members of SWSS for coming in.

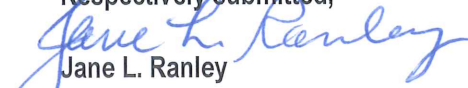
Member Agenda Inputs for Future Meetings- Leominster IMA

Public Comment- Joan asked that we include everyone on any emails that go out and that there cannot be any discussions. Ryan was glad that the SWSS discussion went well. Jack reiterated how important it is to have this maintenance component and it was good to have a cooperative meeting. Dave added that it is important to communicate and to let the town know the Commission is working together with vendors.

Motion: Ryan S.
To adjourn: 8:44pm

Second: Mike N.
Vote: Unanimous

Respectively submitted,


Jane L. Ranley
Minutes Clerk

Handouts: SWSS Clarification Letter from Deb Trumbull

