

Minutes of 2/25/20 Sewer Commission meeting –DPW Conference Room –520 Chase Road

Attendees: Chair- Carl Luck, Members: Dave MacDonald, John Reynolds and Brett Ramsden, Business Manager- Barb Lefebvre, DPW Manager-Jack Rodriquez, Minutes Clerk- Jane Ranley

Absent: Mike Nault

Carl opened the meeting at 6:37 pm.

CURRENT BUSINESS – Election of Officers –

Motion: John R.

Second: Dave M.

To postpone election of officers to the next meeting.

Vote: Unanimous

ANNOUNCEMENTS – Brett Ramsden- new appointee- Carl welcomed Brett as a newly appointed Commissioner.

PUBLIC COMMENT- none

APPOINTMENTS – Deb Trumbull, SWSS – Dave began by stating that the Sewer Commission set up the contract according to their budget but have received extra billing that exceeds the budgeted amount. He added that SWSS has had the contract for 7 years and they want to continue to do business, but the Commission needs to satisfy their customers and the budget. The group discussed who pays for extra personnel for the OSHA part of the contract. Deb replied that when they built the contract, they assumed things go well but they cannot predict all the things that go wrong. Dave noted that the contract states SWSS is supposed to go to the stations daily. Deb replied that they go on Monday, Wednesday & Friday. Carl added that when the stations were running smoothly, they did add "as required", but the stations are less reliable now. Dave asked if SWSS has been reporting to DPW weekly. Albe replied he has not and apologized. Jack added that weekly updates are necessary and if he hears nothing, he assumes everything is ok. The group discussed the issue of having only 1 operating pump at Meadowwoods and the need for spare pumps, to prevent backups. They agreed that SWSS needs to sit down face to face with Jack to update issues and Albe agreed to do that weekly. The Commission discussed what is included in SWSS's responsibilities under the Scope of Services. Dave suggested that Deb review her billing to determine what amount the Commission would need to add to the budget to stop the excess billing. He also said that SWSS should be notifying the Commission prior to billing extra charges. Carl suggested going through some invoices to decide where they agree or not on what is covered in the contract. The group discussed bills for snow shoveling and agreed that Jack should be notified if stations need shoveling. John added that he is concerned that there hasn't been enough communication between SWSS and the DPW. The Commission discussed when the extra billing started and agreed that problems started about 8 months ago. Deb said that losing Al Packard has been an issue since he knew the system well. Also Al was certified in generator repair and now she sub-contracts the generator maintenance out. Jack said the model should be calls from SWSS to say what they have done and any issues, so he knows what is going on. Carl asked to clarify how much time it takes to check on 10 stations. Albe replied they spend 3 hours Monday & Friday and 1 ½ - 2 hours on Wednesday, depending on preventative maintenance needed. He added that probes are cleaned each visit. Carl said the Commission believes that callouts are 24/7 but they are getting billed for anything after 4:30pm. Deb replied she knew there were things being done that weren't being billed, so they worked on finding a system to track work done. She is now using Smartsheets, which captures all tasks and they go through the list weekly to determine what is billable. The group discussed being billed for a callout at 10:30am which involved cleaning a probe and discussed what is considered a major repair. Deb said it was agreed in a meeting that she could bill after hours, but Carl replied that SWSS needs to come to the Commission to change the contract. Carl read from the contract that if callouts become numerous, SWSS may request a meeting with the Commission to discuss the increase in volume of work, possible reasons and resolutions. The group discussed meetings they had to talk about the 24/7 coverage and agreed that major repairs would be paid. They also discussed what entails a billable major repair after hours vs resetting an alarm which is included in the contract. They further discussed at what point the callouts would warrant added compensation and why they are getting more callouts now. The group discussed the callouts for mopheads, and rags being caught in the pumps. Carl asked why they were billed on 1/23/20 for checking all 10 stations and cleaning road salt off locks. Deb agreed it should not have been billable. Carl inquired about the generator contract, for major and minor maintenance on each generator, which is an extra \$9,500 a year and why they were billed

\$2,100 for SWSS staff to also be there. Deb agreed that is double billing. Brett noted that what keeps coming up is minor issues vs major repairs and they need to make a distinction between the two. Deb replied that the contract did say if a repair is more than \$1,000, they need to call for approval, but they have not been doing that. Dave added that if Deb and Jack agree on something, it needs to be noted on the contract, so it is updated on the next contract. Deb noted that they are on a weekly retainer with Dracut and they may want to consider this on the next contract. Deb will review the invoices discussed and give credits. The group discussed the generator contract and suggested the Commission could contract the generator maintenance directly. Deb added she needs to refine going through the invoices and do more internal training. The Commission discussed ordering a spare pump for Meadowwoods and the spare parts list. Jack suggested revisiting the spare parts list after the Meadowwoods pump is received. Albe noted that he is having trouble getting parts for Dana Street station and Jack added that in the future it is possible they won't be able to get parts for some pumps. The group discussed determining what is billable and non-billable. Carl added that the new year is coming up, with an opportunity to modify the contract and they need data.

BUSINESS –

I/I 3rd party review project status- Carl said Woodward & Curran(W&C) is working on the project and communicating with him. Jack added that he has also been in contact with Kellie from W&C. The Commission discussed what data is still needed by W&C, including the videos from Weston Sampson and information on the 2A manholes. Jack replied he has his workers visually inspecting the manholes on 2A. Carl added that they also needed information on any other work performed on the system. Jack noted the work on Elizabeth Street and on cracked pipes.

Maintenance Plan status- Carl reported that Heather (Town Manager) asked to reschedule to March 31st.

Definition of Roles Town Manager regarding Sewer Commission and Charter- also to be discussed with Heather on March 31st.

FY21 Budget- review and approval, rate increase – The Commission discussed needing to clarify the grey areas in the SWSS contract and working on a new RFP for bid. The Commission agreed to keep the SWSS figure around \$150,000 and discussed figures for outsourcing in the budget. They also discussed the figures for billable parts and service. Dave offered to go with Mike to talk to the Leominster mayor about spreading out the new charges.

Motion: John R.

Second: Carl L.

To authorize Mike and Dave to talk to mayor of Leominster.

Vote: Unanimous

The Commission discussed the Generator Maintenance contract. Carl said that he called F&M and got a price for less than \$6,000 for minor and major generator maintenance. The Commission agreed to go direct for Generator Maintenance for FY21 and budget at \$12,000. The Commission discussed the figures for Leominster Usage, based on meter readings and the 4% rate increase. They also discussed a figure for the rate increase based on an estimated deficit of \$310,000, which would be about \$353/rate payer per year. Barb said there are 885 rate payers and about 25% paid the minimum charge of \$97.20/quarter in the last billing. The Commission will look at the minimum rate change vs increase to the rest of the rate payers and discuss the rate increase on 3/10. Carl asked Barb to find the actual number of minimum rate payers.

1170 Mass Ave Betterment-notice of intent to move to rescind vote to "put 1170 Mass Ave. Betterment payments on hold" at 3/10/20 meeting – Carl would like to revisit the discussion and will propose to rescind it based on other information he has.

Articles for Town Meeting Warrant discussion- FY21 Budget, Stabilization articles-- Barb said they will need to approve articles at the 3/10 meeting. The Commission discussed the retained earnings transfer and stabilization figures. **Irrigation Meter changes required by 7/1/20** was on the agenda just as a reminder. **Privilege Fee Lien**—10 Whiting St –Commission already voted to assess, but the homeowner did not pay the fee upfront.

Commissioners signed the document to have it recorded and will be added to the homeowners' tax bill.

Minutes for 2/4/20

Motion: Dave M.

To approve the minutes for 2/4/20.

Second John R.

Vote: Unanimous

Minutes for 2/4/20 joint session with Board of Selectmen

Motion: Dave M.

To approve the minutes for 2/4/20 joint session with BOS.

Second John R.
Vote: Unanimous

Minutes for 2/11/20

Motion: Dave M.

To approve the minutes for 2/11/20.

Second John R.
Vote: Unanimous

Business Manager Report – Commission openings—May election – Barb noted that there are 4 openings on the ballot. Carl said he has not sent out a resignation letter because it is too late to get his opening on the ballot. He would like to stay until the 2 projects are completed. Dave, Brett and John confirmed they will run on the ballot. Dave added that Mike does not want to run on the ballot but will stay on the commission if he is appointed. **Invoices-** Fitchburg monthly -\$15,643.38, Leominster quarterly - \$91,825.05 and Wright Pierce- \$782.26. Barb noted that there is \$897.33 left on the Wright Pierce contract. **Irrigation fee-**will be on Q3 billing. **Grease Trap program** – the information has been moved over to the new shared drive.

Member Agenda Inputs for Future Meetings- wrapping up budget and rate increase, 1170 Mass Ave.

The Commission discussed the transfer of Sean Patricks restaurant to Il Forno.

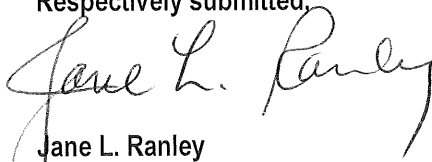
Public Comment- none

Motion: John R.

To adjourn at 9:20pm

Second: Dave M.
Vote: Unanimous

Respectively submitted,



Jane L. Ranley
Minutes Clerk