

Minutes of 2/4/21 Sewer Commission Budget Workshop meeting– via Zoom (Video Conference)

Attendees: Chair- Dave MacDonald, Vice-Chair- John Reynolds, Clerk- Brett Ramsden, Members: Mike Deveikis and Carl Luck, DPW Director- Rob Oliva, Business Manager-Barb Lefebvre, Minutes Clerk- Jane Ranley

Dave opened the meeting at 5:08 pm and did a roll call of attendees.

Announcements - none

Budget Workshop – Dave started by reviewing the process for discussing the budget. Barb explained that User Charges are made up of quarterly billings and Irrigation Meter fees. Connection Charges are estimated as lower than FY21 and she explained other fees collected. Dave noted that in FY21, they waived the **Grease Trap Fee** due to Covid. The Commission discussed whether they would waive the fee in FY22, and that the Commission does not incur any fees currently for inspections. Rob noted that a lot of towns do not charge a fee and would be in favor of waiving the fee again to help the local businesses.

Motion: John R.

Second: Brett R.

To suspend the Annual Grease Trap Renewal Fee for FY22.

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

Barb continued, explaining the remaining revenue figures. The Commission discussed the Reserve Capacity, Flow Capacity transfers and Capital Reserve Funds. Rob suggested increasing the Capital Fund from \$20K to \$50K since replacing a pump costs \$17-18K. Barb noted that payroll figures are provided by the Town Accountant. The Commission discussed Barb's proposal to hire a part-time Assistant for the Sewer office.

Motion: Brett R.

Second: Mike D.

To approve a part-time assistant for 19 hours/week, without benefits.

Discussion: Carl noted he is not against a part-time person but does not support hiring an assistant as a back-fill person, who would later move into Barb's high skilled business manager position.

Roll Call Vote: Mike-aye, John-aye, Brett-aye, Dave-aye and Carl- no.

Barb read a list of the expenses for Infrastructure under Purchase of Services. Rob suggested increasing Capital for major repairs and replacement to \$50K. He would like to come up with a plan for repair work. The Commission discussed Rob's suggestion and Dave suggested taking \$100K from Retained Earnings to fund Capital Expenditures. Rob also suggested doing another pump station evaluation, since the last one was completed 10 years ago. Dave said he still wants to talk to the Leominster mayor and also look into alternatives to solve the Inflow/Infiltration(I/I), such as grants. Mike said he agrees with putting money into the budget for items such as new pumps. John agreed with starting with \$100K. Carl noted the Wright Pierce report had a lot of information on the pump stations. Capital expenses were clarified as being fixed items costing over \$5K. The Commission discussed Capital expenditures and expenses for the Maintenance Plan.

Motion: John R.

Second: Mike D.

To pull \$100K from Retained Earnings to put into the Capital Expenditures.

Discussion: Barb wanted clarification that Capital Expenses would increase from \$20k to \$120K and the Commission agreed.

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

The Commission discussed Engineering Services and agreed to \$10K for the Flow Metering contract and increase Consultant expense to \$10K. Regarding Utilities, Barb reported they are starting to get credits from the Nexamp solar program, but they will not know the total until they go through a full year. Barb said the Miscellaneous Expenses include the Capital costs to Fitchburg for John Fitch Highway project and the debt service to Leominster, which began in FY21. She noted that this was part of the reason for the FY21 rate increase. The Commission discussed the figures for the Fitchburg and Leominster Usage, along with Connection Fees. Barb added that the Indirect Costs amount comes from Karen (Town Accountant). Dave suggested discussing adding an automatic 2% increase every 2 years. Rob commented that it is a great idea but prefers a larger increase every 4 or 5 years. However, he added

that a yearly or bi-yearly increase would make forecasting easier. John said that as a Commissioner and a rate payer, he is comfortable with the 2% increase regularly.

Public Comment- none

UPCOMING SCHEDULED SEWER COMMISSION ACTIVITIES:

February 9, 2021 @ 5pm – Regular Meeting, Remote Participation

February 23, 2021 @ 5pm – Regular Meeting, Remote Participation

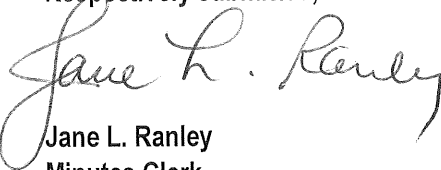
Motion: John R.

Second: Carl L.

To adjourn at 6:38pm.

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

Respectively submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jane L. Ranley". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Jane L. Ranley
Minutes Clerk

Handouts: FY22 Budget Draft