

# **SOUTHWEST HARBOR WATER & SEWER DISTRICT**

Approved Minutes, Board of Trustees Meeting

Town Hall Meeting Room

Thursday, May 11, 2017

**Item 1            Convene meeting**

Meeting was convened at 6:12 pm. In attendance were Board members Jim Geary, Jim Vekasi, and Don Lagrange and District Manager Steven Kenney. No Board members were absent.

**Item 2            Approval of minutes from previous meetings**

A) April 13, 2017 meeting. After a short discussion clarifying the wording of two paragraphs:

**Don Lagrange moved** that the draft minutes of the April 13, 2017 meeting be approved as amended. Seconded by Jim Geary. Vote 3/0/0.

**Item 3            Visitors to be heard** - No visitors were present.

**Item 4            District Manager's Report**

A) Mount Desert house fire

Steven was called to the scene of a fire off Beech Hill Road and close to Long Pond to access risk to our water intake from runoff. As the site was recently under construction and still had silt fence in place, as water flowed over land before reaching the Pond, as the Pond flow is away from our intake, and as a visual inspection did not reveal any evident problems Steven concluded that the risk was minimal. DEP was also contacted.

B) Asset management grant- RCAP update (Grant #6). RCAP has started mapping work.

C) Repairs to Raw Water Pump / Installation of intake line

On Friday, May 5, the cast iron portion of the intake line was replaced from the point of the failed connection with more recent HDPE pipe to the 30' deep termination. The wire mesh screen was replaced with slotted well screen. Unfortunately, material entering the intake caused pump failure two days earlier requiring expensive repair. The new intake pipe should prevent this from happening in the future. No system shutdowns were required.

D) DOL Inspection update / final report

As stated in a letter from the State Department of Labor dated April 20, 2017, all Occupational Safety and Health violations documented in the Department's inspection of January 9, 2017, have been satisfactory addressed. The District was required to pay a modest fine of \$110.00.

E) PUC asset transfer update

The final transfer of water and sewer system assets from the Town to the District has been completed.

F) SRF Water Supply Grant / Actuators (Grant #2)

We have preliminary approval and assurance that final approval is likely. Steven has ordered materials and has lined up contractors to begin work when final approval is received. We will need to arrange a loan for the District portion of the cost, estimated to be \$62,873.

G) DWS Inspection Report task update

Most items cited in the March 17, 2017 sanitary survey conducted by the State Drinking Water Program have been addressed and they have granted an extension until June 1, 2017 to resolve the long standing issue of the finished water turbidimeter. These items will be funded as part of a water system grant from Rural Development (Grant #1). The grantor has authorized Steven to purchase the turbidimeter and replacement filter media replacement in advance of the final approval of the grant because of the public health significance.

H) DEP Feb 2017 Inspection Report update.

Phil Garwood of MDEP has requested additional information, some of which is not available to District personnel. Most of the tasks required to address the inspection issues have been completed and significant operational deficiencies have all been addressed by facility or procedural changes.

I) RD Water Plant update and document signing (Grant #1)

Jim Geary and Jim Vekasi signed the required forms at tonight's meeting to complete the formal application.

J) RD Wastewater PER / ER engineering grant (Grant #3a)

We received formal approval of this grant to fund the engineering and environmental reports for the wastewater treatment plant on May 4, 2017. The work will be performed by Olver Associates for \$12,500. With the unanimous concurrence of the full Board, Chair Jim Geary and Clerk Jim Vekasi signed agreement form RUS Bulletin 1780-12 at tonight's meeting to complete the agreement with the United States Department of Agriculture Rural Utilities Service for \$12,500.00 to prepare the preliminary engineering and environmental reports.

K) Wastewater Permit Transfer update

Transfer of the final Maine Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit and Maine Waste Discharge License from the Town to the District was approved by the Maine Dept of Environmental Protection on May 9, 2017.

L) Wastewater high flow event & lift station repairs

Recent heavy rains brought an additional two million gallons flow to the wastewater plant. Two changes allowed operators to better control the situation. The new grinder pump removed an impediment to incoming flow reducing collection system backup. The practice of leaving one aeration basin off-line during the winter allowed the operator to divert high flows into the basin and better control flow through the rest of the process. With these changes and weekend work by the operator, the excess water was treated and discharged with no permit violations.

Lift station repairs . The wet well was pumped at the Manset and Norwood Cove lift stations. The Norwood Cove pump was rebuilt.

M) Capital Efficiency Plan (Grant #4)

The grant from the Maine Drinking Water program has been approved for \$15,000 with \$15,000 matching funds from the District. The work will be accomplished by Tata & Howard.

**Don Lagrange moved** to authorize Steven Kenney to enter into agreement with Tata & Howard to complete a Capital Efficiency Plan for the water distribution system. Seconded by Jim Geary. Vote 3/0/0.

N) District Manager Operator License. Steven has received his Class II license.

**Item 5**

**Financial**

A) Monthly reports / Audit

The auditor is currently working through our records. It is proving to be difficult to reconcile all accounts and it is taking more time than anticipated for the auditor and Michelle.

The monthly financial reports showed that much of the personnel cost has not been entered into Trio and a number of items are running significantly higher than budgeted. Because of the lack of complete entries, it was not possible to review the monthly financial reports.

With the difficult situation of changing metering and billing systems, responding to multiple inspections, and implementing projects to remedy numerous deficiencies combined with new office personnel, it will take a while to get all aspects of the financial management system working adequately. However, it was noted that the high priority work of paying employees, paying vendors, and tracking non-personnel costs in TRIO is working.

**Item 6**

**Approval of Warrants**

**Don Lagrange moved** to approve Water Warrants 26 and 28; Sewer Warrants 25 and 30; and payroll warrant 27. Seconded by Jim Geary. Vote 3/0/0.

**Item 7****Old Business****A) Meter Reading program figures**

Zenner has started working on our meter upgrade. They have discovered a number of problems with the software that communicates with the meter. These must be resolved before embarking on replacement of transmitters. Approximately 500 of the existing transmitters are working and there are about 300 accounts without transmitters, some of which have non-functioning meters. (As with almost every aspect of the District, we are finding that we must start upgrades from the beginning - repairing the root of the systems and building from there. Upgrading individual components has not worked.)

**B) CUSI account billing program.**

Re-building the accounts is requiring systematic evaluation of every aspect of every account. There is a striking lack of consistency between accounts with users on a variety of plans. Per PUC regulations, this must be addressed. Although we have found many instances of under-billing due to lack of accurate meter readings or unusual customer agreements, we have not found any evidence of over-billing. CUSI plans to be ready to use the new program for parallel billing with TRIO in late June.

**Item 8****Executive Session - None****Item 9****New Business****A) Town Sewer Debt repayment.**

We plan to make the first payment to the Town in June. Don and Jim Geary will discuss the terms of the repayment with the Select Board.

**B) Salary discussion**

In light of increasing pay for water and sewer district personnel in surrounding communities and competition for a limited pool of qualified staff, we need to reconsider some of our pay levels in order to stay competitive and retain our staff.

**C) Commercial property inspections**

Steven and Josh have been inspecting commercial properties, particularly with regard to grease traps and cross connections. They have found a number of issues and are working cooperatively with the businesses to come into compliance. In one case, a letter will be issued with a deadline to resolve an apparent cross connection issue.

**D) Billing policies.**

As we make our billing policies more consistent, some customers will see an increase. We need to develop a plan to address the inevitable dissatisfaction.

**E) Grant list**

Steven and Jim Vekasi created a list of ongoing grants to help track their status. The current version is attached.

**Item 10**      **Date of next meeting**

A) Tentatively Thursday, June 8, 2017, 6:00 pm.

**Item 11**      **Adjourn meeting**

**Jim Geary moved** to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 pm. Seconded by Don Lagrange. Vote 3/0/0.

Submitted,



Attached: Grant list

Approved June 8, 2017



Jim Vekasi  
Clerk