

**GRAY WATER DISTRICT  
TRUSTEES' MEETING  
January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

Present: Bruce Sawyer, Joe Murray, Steve Dunn, Mitch Berkowitz and Superintendent Jim Foster. Cathy Robinson was also present to speak on the rate case. Bruce called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

**Rate Case: Cathy Robinson of Maine Rural Water Association (MRWA):**

Cathy presented draft rate case documents detailing amounts and percentages of increase. Trustees discussed future labor costs and making sure we are covering them in these rates. Trustees and Cathy discussed how customers will be affected by the increase and how the increase and the need to give early notice of the increase to the Town so it can be factored in to their budget deliberations. They also discussed, at length, the establishment of a Capital Reserve Account and how to do that. Establishment of a Capital Reserve Account or an Infrastructure Surcharge requires us to complete an Infrastructure Needs Assessment. Joe will work with Jim to complete the required assessment. Due date for submission to the PUC is NLT April 1<sup>st</sup>. In the end it was agreed that the office manager would get some updated 2019 usage numbers to Cathy so she can rerun a few numbers for better accuracy.

**Mitch made a motion to accept the full rate increase that includes the full depreciation, full contingency and that requires us to begin paying off the bond debt in 2021. In addition, to setting up a capital reserve as quickly as we can in accordance with the statute (3%). Steve seconded. Steve then moved to amend the original motion to allow it to be divided into two years, the original motion of increasing the rates in 2020 with full depreciation, full contingency and the District starting to pay off the Maine Municipal Bond Bank debt service in 2021 and a 3% capital improvement fund. Trustees voted yes unanimously on the amendment and on the motion as amended.**

**Superintendents Report:**

- a. AGM: 236
- b. Bacteria tests for December were absent for E-coli and total coliform.
- c. VOC test results were below detection limits.
- d. Acquisition of Real Property:  
**Joe made a motion to go into executive session at 8:29. Steve seconded, vote was unanimous. Joe made a motion to come out of executive session at 8:38. Steve seconded, vote was unanimous.**
- e. Bruce Fowler of Sevee & Maher Engineers (SME) has started a Salt Study data base for the new test well installed near the Rt 26/bypass intersection.
- f. We are working on an estimate for new water service to the NOAA site as requested by the National Weather Service.
- g. We have the 2018 audit (Jim handed out copies to each Trustee).
- h. The Storm Water & Spill Prevention Report for the landfill was given to Joe Murray for review. Report from the garage has not been received as of this date.
- i. We received a call from Steve Hardy, a relative of Mr. Qualey, regarding property off Weymouth Rd. Mr. Qualey has passed away and his wife now has the property. Mr.

Hardy was asking if we were interested in the property for a possible well site. He mentioned a number of \$400,000. Trustees discussed that it could be a potential source but, in this price range and distance away from our facilities that it is probably cost prohibitive.

#### **Establishment of Performance Evaluations:**

Mitch gave Trustees and Jim handouts containing draft performance evaluations that could be used to fulfill the requirement in our Personnel Policy that written performance evaluations for employees in groups I, II and III will be completed every 12 months. Bruce thinks the forms are a good idea for consistency and memorialization. Joe stated that position descriptions and salary schedules were a part of the updating of the performance evaluation section of the personnel policy and need to come before the evaluations. Trustees discussed and agreed that the position descriptions are an important first step. Mitch offered to help get that going and Jim stated that examples would be helpful. Mitch is to find formatting information to get help started.

#### **Executive Session Criteria/Legislation**

Joe provided handouts detailing the 8 different conditions under the Title 1, section 405 Executive Sessions citation. Joe explained that they are very specific and that we are not allowed to enter into executive session unless those criteria are met. The two we are most likely to use are C and E with E only being appropriate if our lawyer is present. Trustees agreed that a refresher on this topic is a good idea.

#### **North Raymond Road MDOT Project STP-1876(600):**

Jim confirmed with Trustees that it has been decided that this project will be funded with a loan and payments on that loan funded through rates. This would be instead of using existing reserves that are already quickly depleting. Jim then reported that the project cost is now \$341,000 and asked for authorization to sign the secondary agreement.

**Mitch made a motion to Authorize Jim to execute the agreement for the Route 26/North Rayment Rd as revised. Steve seconded, vote was unanimous.**

#### **Town of Gray Sidewalk and Storm Drain Upgrades on Rt 26:**

Jim asked Trustees for direction as to how to move forward. Jim thinks we should work with the Town and put our part of the project in their bid process. Mitch expressed concern about the state coming to us saying we have to pave the entire section of Rt 26 after the project is done because of the opening of the highway and the quality of the travel portion when we're done. Jim stated that it will be up to the Town as to whether we are allowed to open the highway because of the Urban Compact. It is probably best to drill under the road for the long side services. The right time to do it when part of the cost will be covered by the project the Town is doing. Trustees discussed and decided it's time to get Gorrill-Palmer Engineers (GPE) to start planning.

#### **Route 100 TIF:**

Trustees discussed that the Town still hasn't decided if they are keeping the existing TIF or starting a new one. They also discussed the amount the Town still owes to our bond debt and that their numbers don't match with ours. There are many different projects that could be done to upgrade/create new facilities. Steve mentioned prioritizing our project list. All the projects we've

listed are viable and would benefit the system. We will have to wait and see what the Town decides to do before we can really pinpoint the best way to move forward.

**PFAS Water Quality Sampling:**

We are waiting for a quote from SME, it should be coming very soon.

**Planning for the Future:**

**Mitch made a motion to postpone discussion until next meeting. Joe seconded, vote was unanimous.**

February meeting was scheduled for February 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Joe made a motion to adjourn at 9:51. Mitch seconded, vote was unanimous.**

Respectfully submitted,

Sudiek Lester