

WATER AND SEWER BOARD MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 15, 2024

In-Person: Noah Bond, Heather McElroy, Bruce Webster, Mark Vaillancourt, Jeanette Pelkey, Lester Pelkey

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Attending Virtually: Michael Strait

Call Meeting to Order: Heather McElroy called the meeting to order at 5:31pm.

Updates to the Agenda: Mark Vaillancourt requested that the South Branch generator be added to the agenda for discussion.

Public Comment: Lester Pelkey had a question regarding his water bills for three properties on Railroad Street (one with unused structure, one with no structure, and a warehouse). He only uses water at the warehouse but was charged the minimum usage fee instead of the debt service fee in the last billing cycle. Heather McElroy said the Board would take this information to their billing partner, MuniBilling. As a new system, she indicated that "hiccups" were expected. Heather said she would contact Zack Letourneau (a subcontracted employee of H2O Innovations) to ensure the meters were disconnected and removed at the requested properties.

Mark Vaillancourt informed the Board that the generator at the South Branch facility (Pleasant Street) had failed, leaving no operational generators at either facility. Zack inquired about repair, and the recommendation was installing an electronic governor (at an estimated cost of \$20,000) as the engine itself is in good condition. In addition, Mark also suggested a temporary standby generator be placed at the South Branch facility in the event of an outage. Heather will follow up with Zack about the projected timeline and cost of repair. The Board will authorize a special meeting to approve generator repairs and the installation of a temporary generator.

Automatic Composite Sampler (ACS): Michael Strait told the Board that the original bid for the ACS was \$18,195, which would be 100% grant-funded. The bid, however, did not include installation. A revised bid of \$42,000 was received by the Town. Rodger (H2O Innovations) solicited another bid, which came to approximately \$18,900 - \$19,900, including installation. Mark Vaillant made a motion to authorize Noah Bond to purchase the ACS units as specified by the engineer. The motion was seconded by Bruce Webster, all in favor, so carried.

Wastewater Treatment Facility Project Update: Michael Strait told the Board that the Town received the sludge removal bid and is still waiting on the general contractor bids. The deadline is October 22, 2024. Also, the Town is getting ready to submit the first reimbursement request through the ARPA Grant to cover invoices that have been paid (approximately \$70,000). Joel Cope submitted another request under the CWSRF loan for approximately \$22,000 (engineering fees). This will be returned to the sewer account. The CWSRF loan of \$288,495 comes due in 2028, and the state will forgive \$140,095. The Town has five years to pay this off at 0% interest.

Water Treatment Project Update: Noah Bond spoke about the issue of cracks in the reservoir; according to H2O Innovations, the Town is losing 30,000 - 50,000 gallons per day. However, there is no increase in chemical use/cost. After speaking with Rodger, Noah believes that the meters are not calibrated correctly. Noah will investigate this and consult with Rodger. The cracks do need to be repaired, and new meters might be more cost-effective than repairing the old models.

MuniBilling: The Town received multiple complaints about erroneous charges in the most recent billing cycle. Noah has communicated with MuniBilling and will compare data from previous cycles to evaluate its accuracy. He will then follow up with MuniBilling to correct any issues going forward.

Budget Report: Michael Strait prepared a draft budget for the sewer department, looking ahead to 2024 through 2029. The budget reflects the CWSRF WWTF and USDA WWTF loan payments, as well as other line items (e.g. equipment, labor, insurance, etc.). The draft budget reflects a projected rate structure to account for the loans. The Board must approve a budget by next month.

Approve Minutes of Previous Meeting: Bruce Webster moved to approve the minutes of the September 17, 2024 meeting. Seconded by Mark Vaillancourt, all in favor, so carried.

Other Business: N/A

Adjourn: Bruce Webster moved to adjourn at 6:35pm. Seconded by Mark Vaillancourt, all in favor, so carried.