

DRAFT MINUTES

SHEPHERDSTOWN, WEST VIRGINIA WATER & SANITARY BOARDS

September 24, 2020

Attendees: **Water Board** – J. Auxer (Mayor), J. Bresland, J. Ford, M. Godfrey, S. Kemnitzer (Chair), A. Slater
 Sanitary Board – J. Auxer (Chair), H. Heyser, R. Keller
 Town Staff –C. Coe, D. Nickerson, K. Shipley, F. Welch
 Engineer – J. Ekstrom, Ghosh Engineering

Visitors:

Note this was a virtual meeting held on the Zoom platform as a health precaution due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

1. **CALL TO ORDER.**

The Water and Sanitary Boards meeting was called to order by J. Auxer at 12:30pm.

2. **MINUTES FROM PRIOR MEETING.**

The proposed minutes of the August 27, 2020 regular meeting were reviewed. H. Heyser objected to the section pertaining to the chlorine gas leak, in particular the described actions of the Staff. C. Coe noted that he failed to mention that he used an air-pack borrowed from the Shepherdstown Volunteer Fire Department to access the facility and retrieve a town air-pack. The general consensus of the board was that the staff acted professionally, resourcefully, and decisively during this emergency. With this clarification the minutes were unanimously approved.

3. **VISITORS.**

R. Kelly, representing the Mecklenburg Maintenance Association, inquired as to the status of the upgrade of the Mecklenburg Heights water system. See 6.b below for details.

4. **FINANCIAL STATEMENTS.**

D. Nickerson asked for questions.

H. Heyser made reference to pages S15 and W16, questioning the significant excess of revenue over expenses. D. Nickerson responded that the report is accurate and contains actual expenses.

R. Keller inquired again regarding the accounting for the membrane replacement and related reserve funding. D. Nickerson directed the Board to S9, Account 401.61. H. Heyser sought assurance that the required reserve fund was being accrued as agreed and asked J. Auxer to intercede to ensure this future expenditure is being accounted and funded for properly. J. Auxer made reference to S-4, account 132.11, where funding is being reserved. J. Auxer agreed to have the independent auditor exam the accounting treatment to ensure accuracy and compliance.

J. Bresland made reference to the column titles on W-7 asking if the “Aug 20” are YTD values. D. Nickerson responded affirmatively it does represent YTD August 2020, further clarifying that this column represents July and August 2020. D. Nickerson will determine if the column title may be edited to aid in clarity.

5. **FLOW AND QUALITY REPORTS.**

F. Welch stated that everything was relatively normal and asked for questions.

C. Coe commented on the fire hydrant report noting that all tests are complete, and nine hydrants are out of service; proposals are being pursued to have these hydrants replaced by a contractor.

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS.

6.a & 6.b WATER PLANT IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS.

J. Ekstrom (Engineer) updated the boards on the progress of the water treatment plant improvement and Mecklenburg Heights infrastructure retrofitting projects. J. Eckstrom has communicated with D. Decker regarding rate studies related to financial impact of these projects, noting results are expected in early October.

J. Eckstrom reported on the article circulated regarding Senators Capito and Manchin announcement of low cost water funding appropriated to West Virginia. He advised that to secure this 1% loan funding, which is qualified based on existing sewer/water rates and income levels, would involve four to six additional months of application time. This is a concern given the need to address the water treatment plant upgrades in a timely manner. Private funding is available at 2.25% for a 20-year term. J. Auxer agreed with the assessment to move as planned on the water treatment plant but asked that the optional funding resources be modeled to determine the cost of each so an informed decision may be made. J. Auxer stated we may want to move forward with private funding on the water treatment plant to keep that project on schedule, while considering the low-cost government financing for the Mecklenburg Heights project; he concluded that additional analysis will aid in making this decision.

6.c SEWER USE ORDINANCE – REVISION AND COMMENTS.

F. Welch advised that he has requested and has received sewer use ordinances from other regional utilities that will be helpful in the rewrite, noting some are quite complex. B. Keller noted his time is currently devoted to the new library project but would be able to begin working on the ordinance with staff next month.

S. Kemnitzer asked for an update on major construction projects. F. Welch advised that the UWV Medical Building has been completed, inspected and put into service. He also noted that the planned Rocs gas and convenience center is in process, ready to begin construction, with paving and building footers underway. Finally, the Kinsley subdivision project near Morgan Grove park has completed the entrance work to meet the permitting deadline but is now suspending further construction for a period of time, possibly several years.

S. Kemnitzer requested that the boards review the 2020/2021 budget assumptions for salaries, repairs and revenues at an upcoming meeting; noting it is important to refresh assumptions periodically based on changing conditions and uncertainties, perhaps following the general election in November.

R. Keller updated the board on the new library project advising that the site work contract would be awarded soon and expects this to be completed next spring. He also advised that Kinsley Construction was handling the water and sewer connection on the library side.

7. NEW BUSINESS.

7.a Main Pump Station Repairs

The meeting packet included a report prepared by F. Welch detailing the need for the following repairs:

1. New Variable Frequency Drive (VFD) needed plus installation and programming to put the main pump back on-line. Expected Cost: \$25,000.
2. New Hoist. Expected Cost: not yet determined

3. Replace metal steps with fiberglass steps from second level to third level, including shipping and installation. Expected Cost: \$11,356
4. Lights in Wet Well. Expected Cost: not yet determined.

F. Welch and staff described in detail the critical need of each recommendation. R. Keller and H. Heyser emphasized that these were needed repairs and all efforts to move this work along was appropriate, however, empowering staff to proceed as they judged most appropriate. Funding resources were discussed and accessing the debt service fund replacement and improvement reserve will be pursued.

After discussion the following action item was taken.

ACTION ITEM: H. HEYSER MOVED AND R. KELLER SECONDED THAT THE SANITARY BOARD APPROVE THE FOUR PROJECT EXPENDITURES AS DETAILED AND RECOMMENDED BY STAFF. UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED. STAFF IS TO REPORT BACK ON PROGRESS OF THESE REPAIRS.

8. MAYOR'S REPORT.

J. Auxer discussed continuing virtual meetings or returning to in-person meetings. Members of the boards shared their opinions, which were diverse. The consensus opinion was to continue to meet virtually as there is the expectation that an end to the current threat may not be too many months ahead when we may return to in-person meetings.

- 9. ADJOURNMENT.** J. Auxer adjourned the meeting at 1:46pm. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Thursday October 29, 2020, which will be conducted on the Zoom virtual platform.

Respectfully Submitted: Austin J. Slater, Jr.