

DRAFT MINUTES
SHEPHERDSTOWN, WEST VIRGINIA
WATER & SANITARY BOARDS

February 25, 2021

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

Visitors: None

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 12:30 pm.

2. MINUTES FROM PRIOR MEETING.

The proposed minutes of the January 28, 2021 regular meeting were reviewed. Upon motion duly made and seconded, the minutes were approved as submitted.

3. VISITORS.

There were no visitors.

4. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS.

The financial statements were reviewed without significant comment.

5. FLOW AND QUALITY REPORTS.

5.a WATER - NO VIOLATIONS.

W. Coe stated that all the water-related reports showed no violations.

J. Auxer stated that the water usage was lower than normal due to various COVID-related issues.

5.b SEWER - NO VIOLATIONS.

K. Shipley stated that all the sewer-related reports showed no violations.

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS.

6.a WATER PLANT IMPROVEMENT PROJECT.

J. Ekstrom reported on the project status:

- Received proposals on project funding from 7 banks.
- Selected Jefferson Security Bank to provide \$1M funding with an interest rate of 2.1% and a term of 15 years.
- Submission to the Public Service Commission should be done within a week.

- If things go as expected we should be ready to award a contract by the end of May.

J. Auxer commented that JSB had guaranteed their funding proposal for 30 days, as is their normal custom. However, since we will not be ready to borrow the money for several months we will need to have the proposal guaranteed for up to 6 months. He did not anticipate any issues in getting JSB to agree to that.

6.b. WATER SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT

J. Ekstrom stated that he expected to do the field work necessary to finalize the line distribution drawings next week. The project will then be submitted to the Bureau of Public Health for a permit. When the permit is issued the project will be shovel-ready so that we will be able to take advantage of any grants that become available.

R. Keller asked if any work had been done regarding the water tower leak discussed at last month's meeting. J. Ekstrom replied that he planned to work on that next week also.

It was agreed that the issue of the water tower leaks should be included as an Unfinished Business item in future agendas until the issue is resolved.

6.c SEWER USE ORDINANCE – REVISION AND COMMENTS.

R. Keller stated that no significant progress had been made on this project and that would continue to be the case until all the parties involved (J. Auxer, H. Heyser, R. Keller) have received COVID vaccines so that they could meet face-to-face without significant health risk.

6.d MAIN PUMP STATION.

F. Welch stated that the Rotary Lobe Pump is waiting on installation and that the Stairway has been ordered and is expected to be received in 2 pieces which will aid in the ease of installation. He explained however that there might be difficulty removing the current stairway. Due to very tight access space it will likely have to be cut into pieces and the possible presence of gas fumes makes this problematic. The installation might have to be outsourced to a company having the necessary expertise. It was generally agreed that outsourcing was a good idea if any safety issues are encountered.

7. NEW BUSINESS.

7.a RANKIN PROPERTY LLC STEP 2 APPLICATION

F. Welch stated that he included this in the agenda because he expected to have the Step 2 application but it was not received.

7.b COMMUNICATION WITH THE PUBLIC/CUSTOMERS DISCUSSION

S. Kemnitzer stated that she, A. Slater, M. Godfrey and C. Stroech have developed some initial topics to consider in order to address this issue:

- Taking advantage of the monthly billing mailing to include additional communications.
- Using social media effectively.
- Have the knowledgeable staff host occasional talks and/or open houses. Perhaps do this by video while COVID concerns persist.
- Include water conservation strategies as a possible presentation topic.
- Establish focus groups to aid in two-way communication.
- Have a public annual meeting, similar to what corporations do, in order to present accomplishments of the past year and plans for the coming year.
- Establish an FAQ page on the website.

- Utilize press releases. Specifically, do a press release to let the public know of the recent comment from a WV official that Shepherdstown was a “cornerstone” in WV water treatment. C. Coe is to forward the necessary information to the Communication committee.

C. Stroeck stated that we should prepare a specific communication to our customers regarding the upcoming water rate increase. Perhaps a mailer?

J. Bresland stated that he thought the 3 most important things to most customers were the rates, the taste and chemical quality issues. He asked if there was any aspect of the Water Plant Improvement Project that would address the taste issue. J. Ekstrom replied that there was not anything currently planned. He said that we could address that in the future but that the known ways to do that are generally fairly expensive.

7.c SUE KEMNITZER - CONCERNS ON COMMUNICATION

Overlapping agenda items. See previous item.

7.d RISK AND RESILIENCE ASSESSMENT FOR WATER SYSTEM

C. Coe stated that this agenda item was included because of concerns stemming from the recent hacking of a water system in Florida. In that instance the perpetrators were able to gain access to the water system’s controls remotely over the Internet.

C. Coe and J. Ekstrom explained that that particular scenario is not an issue for us since all of our controls are done manually. The online system that we do have can be used to monitor the system but not to control it.

They also stated that C. Coe is working on a Risk and Resilience Assessment document which will be submitted for certification before 30 June. That will be followed by an Emergency Response Plan before the end of the year.

7.e SALARY STUDY COMPLETE

J. Auxer suggested that we include discussion of this item as part of our annual budget discussions which will be done in April or May.

J. Bresland was asked to re-distribute the salary survey information to the board members.

7.f PRESS RELEASE

This was discussed previously (see item 7.b above).

8. MAYOR’S REPORT.

8.a 5% WATER RATE INCREASE.

Mayor Auxer had no new information to report other than that regarding the funding RFP (see item 6.a above).

8.b RFP INFORMATION.

Previously discussed by J. Ekstrom (see 6.a above).

8.c MEMBERS OF WATER/SANITARY BOARDS TERM RENEWALS.

Mayor Auxer reported that the 4 board members whose terms have already expired or are due to expire shortly have all volunteered to server another term. They are S. Kemnitzer, J. Bresland, M. Godfrey and R. Keller.

ACTION ITEMS:

M. GODFREY MOVED AND J. FORD SECONDED THAT THE WATER BOARD RECOMMEND TO TOWN COUNCIL THE APPOINTMENT OF SUE KEMNITZER TO AN ADDITIONAL 3-YEAR TERM AS A MEMBER OF THE WATER BOARD. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED WITHOUT OBJECTION.

M. GODFREY MOVED AND J. FORD SECONDED THAT THE WATER BOARD RECOMMEND TO TOWN COUNCIL THE APPOINTMENT OF JOHN BRESLAND TO AN ADDITIONAL 3-YEAR TERM AS A MEMBER OF THE WATER BOARD. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED WITHOUT OBJECTION.

S. KEMNITZER MOVED AND J. FORD SECONDED THAT THE WATER BOARD RECOMMEND TO TOWN COUNCIL THE APPOINTMENT OF MICHAEL GODFREY TO AN ADDITIONAL 3-YEAR TERM AS A MEMBER OF THE WATER BOARD. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED WITHOUT OBJECTION.

H. HEYSER MOVED AND J. AUXER SECONDED THAT THE SANITARY BOARD RECOMMEND TO TOWN COUNCIL THE APPOINTMENT OF ROBERT KELLER TO AN ADDITIONAL 3-YEAR TERM AS A MEMBER OF THE WATER BOARD. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED WITHOUT OBJECTION.

9. CONSENT ORDER REPORT.

F. Welch reported on the state of the WV DEP consent order. The order was issued by WV DEP in September 2019 due to several violations. It called for a fine of \$35,890.

We successfully addressed all the issues and have not had a subsequent violation. We sent a request to the DEP suggesting that they suspend the original fine for a probationary period during which we will continue to monitor the effect of our new solution. We only recently got a response to that request which rejected our suggestion and demanded payment of the full fine.

We subsequently entered into negotiations with the DEP and, in light of our success in addressing the issues, the DEP agreed to the following:

- \$7,178 will be paid to the DEP.
- The remainder of the original fine (\$28,712) will be held in abeyance pending any further violations of PH or copper. If there are any such violations in the next 18 months this sum will be paid to the DEP. Otherwise, the sum will be forgiven.

We have agreed to these terms.

10. GENERAL COMMENTS.

S. Kemnitzer thanked the staff for whatever role they might have played in constructing the entrance to the new WVU Medical Center / ROCS complex. She stated that it seems to have been very well done.

J. Bresland stated that he had recently been told by a consultant to the Charles Town Water System that they are investigating the possibility of using well water in place of or to augment the water that they now draw from the Shenandoah river.

11. ADJOURNMENT. J. Auxer adjourned the meeting at 1:31 pm. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Thursday March 25, 2021 at 12:30 pm and will be conducted on the Zoom virtual platform.

Respectfully Submitted: J. Ford