

**DRAFT MINUTES**  
**SHEPHERDSTOWN, WEST VIRGINIA**  
**WATER & SANITARY BOARDS**

March 18, 2021

**Attendees:** **Water Board** – J. Auxer (Mayor), J. Bresland, J. Ford, M. Godfrey, S. Kemnitzer (Chair) joined at 1:00PM, A. Slater  
**Sanitary Board** – J. Auxer (Chair), H. Heyser joined at 1:20PM, R. Keller  
**Town Staff** –C. Coe, C. Painter, D. Nickerson, K. Shipley, F. Welch,  
**Engineer** – J. Ekstrom, Ghosh Engineering  
**Town Council**- J. Haynes

**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 February 25, 2021 regular meeting were reviewed. H. Heyser noted a correction. Upon motion duly made and seconded, the minutes were approved as corrected.

The proposed minutes of the March 1, 2021 special 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. J. Bresland inquired why on schedule W-7, line 401.4, Water Plant Expense as compared to actual expenditures being so far below budget. F. Welch responded that maintenance expenditures have been exceptionally low this year. Similarly, J. Bresland questioned line 635, Testing Expense noting it too was under budget. C. Coe responded that the frequency of testing is now less than anticipated when the budget was prepared. J. Auxer asserted that these variances will be considered when the FY 2022 budget is prepared.

J. Bresland also inquired as to why interest expense on line 427 is zero. D. Nickerson responded that the auditors had not supplied her with the journal entry for this line-item in time for the February closing.

**5. FLOW AND QUALITY REPORTS.**

**5.a WATER - NO VIOLATIONS.**

C. Coe stated that all the water-related reports were negative, therefore no violations. He also pointed out that the disinfectant biproducts samples came back favorable.

C. Coe advised of discussions with the State regarding a typographical error in mislabeling Nitrates as Nitrites on the August 2020 water quality report. C. Coe advised we have results for both, so he expects the State will accept a corrected report.

J. Bresland inquired about the turbidity reporting. C. Coe responded that the difference between turbidity in the system and raw turbidity is that raw turbidity is measured from the source.

**5.b INTAKE REPORT.**

C. Coe reported that due to heavy flows in the Potomac River the source intake became fouled with grass, muck and debris which necessitated using the auxiliary portable pump and intake piping. Divers were scheduled and cleared the debris returning the intake to normal operations, and no damage was reported. In response to a question C. Coe advised that the divers typically cost the department about \$6,000 per year. R. Keller inquired if the intake is periodically back flowed with air pressure; C. Coe responded that this is conducted periodically but will not always solve a serious clogging problem.

**5.c. SEWER REPORTS**

Results were not received in time and will be reported at the next regular meeting.

**6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS.**

**6.a WATER PLANT IMPROVEMENT PROJECT.**

J. Ekstrom reported that we are currently waiting on the Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) from the West Virginia Public Service Commission, upon which we may issue bids for the project.

J. Auxer broached S. Kemnitzer's email suggesting we pursue Federal/State infrastructure funding for this project and thereby eliminate the pending 5% rate increase. J. Ekstrom advised that taking this step would subject the project to unacceptable schedule risk as we have no certainty on such funding, do not know how long the application process will take, and we are fortunate to have a very attractive debt financing commitment from Jefferson Security Bank at 2.15%.

**6.b. WATER DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT PROJECT.**

J. Ekstrom suggested that seeking Federal/State infrastructure funding for the water distribution project would be a wise step as we are still in the design stage and can move this project along to "shovel ready" status quickly.

J. Ekstrom also reported that during a field visit to the town he inspected the water leak issue at the water towers and will likely be recommending the installation of a French-drain to get the water off the road. He advised that the chlorine analyzer is the source and will continue to run throughout the day.

A. Slater inquired if we were maintaining communications with the Mecklenburg Heights community leadership so that they have a realistic understanding of the schedule for this project. J. Auxer agreed this was a good idea and requested F. Welch to so communicate with them and to add the proviso that we will be seeking special Federal/State infrastructure funding.

**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. He expected this to be happening in the few months.

**7. NEW BUSINESS.**

**7.a RANKIN PROPERTY LLC STEP 2 APPLICATION.**

F. Welch reported that he spoke to the applicant's engineer and requested four copies of the blueprints, which have yet to be received, for review and analysis. The plans are essential to identify any special needs so the application may proceed.

**7.b COMMUNICATION WITH THE PUBLIC/CUSTOMERS.**

A. Slater reported for S. Kemnitzer that they met with C. Stroecht on March 12, and the following was discussed. A. Slater will be meeting with the staff to learn more about the possibility of using monthly billing by envelope so we can include pertinent information. He is also gathering suggestions for water conservation tips. C. Stroecht is drafting a resolution which we can vote on at our next Water Board meeting to seek approval for our plans, M. Godfrey is addressing water quality standards and drafting FAQs. S. Kemnitzer is pulling together the annual report based on the work of everyone which be about three to four pages long; the outline was also reviewed.

**7.c MEETING SCHEDULE.**

J. Auxer advised that he would like to set the third Thursday of each month for the regular Water and Sanitary board meetings. One exception would be the April board meeting which will be held on April 22. There was no objection voiced to this schedule change.

**7.d MUNICIPAL LEAGUE- SERVICE LINE WARRANTY PROGRAM**

J. Auxer discussed a letter included in the board packet from the West Virginia Municipal League regarding a service line (meter to the home) warranty program. He reported that several towns and cities in the State offer this program to their customers, which is priced at about \$6 for water and sewer line coverage. Some members expressed apprehension regarding offering and endorsing the program, asking for more information before further consideration. J. Auxer will send the plan details and list of West Virginia towns and cities that are currently offering this to their constituents. H. Heyser suggested contacting the participating towns to get greater insight into how it has been received and is working.

**8. MAYOR'S REPORT.**

**8.a 5% WATER RATE INCREASE.**

Mayor Auxer reported that no protests were lodged with the WVPSC regarding our requested 5% rate increase application.

**8.b CONSENT ORDER.**

F. Welch reported that the negotiated penalty of \$7,178 was paid to the State and they will hold in abeyance the balance of the initial penalty (\$28,000) for 28-months pending any subsequent violations.

**8.c OTHER DISCUSSION.**

A. Slater inquired of the status of the wage study recently completed by J. Bresland and himself. J. Auxer responded that the recommendation will be considered while developing the FY2022 budget. He also requested that J. Bresland email him the study which J. Auxer will distribute to the board.

9. **ADJOURNMENT.** J. Auxer adjourned the meeting at 1:27 pm. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Thursday April 22, 2021 at 12:30 pm and will be conducted on the Zoom virtual platform.

Respectfully Submitted: A. Slater