

DRAFT MINUTES  
CORPORATION OF SHEPHERDSTOWN, WEST VIRGINIA  
WATER & SANITARY BOARDS

August 27, 2020

**ATTENDEES:**

**Water Board** – J. Auxer (Mayor), J. Bresland, J. Ford, S. Kemnitzer (Chair), A. Slater  
**Sanitary Board** – J. Auxer (Chair), H. Heyser, R. Keller **Town Staff** – A. Boyd, C. Coe, D. Nickerson, K. Shipley, F. Welch  
**Engineer** – J. Ekstrom, Ghosh Engineering  
**Visitors:** none

**1. CALL TO ORDER.**

The regular meeting of the Water and Sanitary Boards meeting was called to order by J. Auxer at 12:30pm.; all participants attended through the Zoom virtual meeting platform.

**2. MINUTES FROM PRIOR MEETING.**

The draft minutes of the July 30, 2020 regular meeting were reviewed. H. Heyser requested that item #8 be corrected to state that blockage was discovered in the sewer line. The Water and Sanitary Boards approved the minutes as revised.

**3. VISITORS.**

There were no visitors.

**4. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS.**

D. Nickerson advised that schedule S-17 misstated revenue and expenses, noting that the correct revenue number is \$103,110.81 and expenses are \$73,176.31. She then asked for questions.

H. Heyser asked if the water expense under-budget variance of (\$96,000) has adversely affected water operations. C. Coe responded that it has not. H. Heyser also inquired why monthly depreciation expenses were zero and when depreciation is booked; D. Nickerson responded depreciation is booked monthly and the zero value was an error. H. Heyser then asked if the sewer expense under-budget variance of (\$78,000) has adversely affected operations, F. Welch responded it has not.

C. Coe stated that the large positive variance on schedule W-11, line 401.23, is due to the one-time fee payment as opposed to the budget being spread over 12-months, which will self-correct in time. J. Auxer suggested a parenthetical comment be inserted.

R. Keller inquired on the monthly funding of the membrane fund as there was no line item expense for this purpose. D. Nickerson responded that she does make a monthly entry of \$24,000, which is reflected on the balance sheet, but the transaction is not reporting on the income statement, acknowledging that a resolution is needed.

## **5. FLOW AND QUALITY REPORTS.**

J. Auxer moved to this item on the agenda and asked for discussion.

C. Coe reported that the meter was installed and the line tested for the new WVU Medical Center on Martinsburg Pike, noting all bacterial tests came back favorable.

H. Heyser asked for clarification on the months represented in the July 2020 Monthly Report, as represented by the Total Nitrogen and Phosphorus levels. F. Welch replied this is a nine-month total, the fiscal or "Yearly" period followed for these columns is November through October.

J. Auxer directed attention to the Water/Sewer Flows report labeled June 2020. J. Bresland stated that the report should be corrected to show July 2020. J. Auxer noted that the monthly sewage flow of 220,935 gallons is down sharply, owing primarily to the University, Clarion Hotel, and Quality Inn all being effectively shut down.

## **6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS.**

J. Auxer then called for discussion on the Water Plant Improvement projects and invited engineer J. Eckstrom to provide an update.

J. Eckstrom advised that he has had preliminary discussions with bond counsel Cam Secret; they are examining refi-bonds and private financing. He has also talked to Sammy Gee with the Water Development Authority (WDA). Eckstrom advised that there are \$488,000 in funding immediately available from accrued bond payments. He also advised that he would be engaging David Decker for water rate analysis. The Boards then discussed funding options for the projects, capital cost fees, capacity funding, and the impact on water and sewer rates to end users.

In his discussion on funding J. Eckstrom also noted that the West Virginia State Health Department is offering a grant up to \$50,000 for an early warning raw water detection monitoring system, which application will be made once manufacturer's specifications are selected.

H. Heyer inquired if the water plant improvement project is still estimated at \$1.6 million? J. Eckstrom advised yes with some minor additions likely. J. Auxer noted that the water plant and Mecklenburg Heights (MH) projects combined total approximately \$2.6 million. H. Heyser inquired on the proposed size of the MH lines and J. Eckstrom advised they will be 6" lines which is adequate for the fire protection system. The boards discussed designing the system with the flexibility to interconnect with other adjacent subdivisions.

A lengthy discussion was held concerning the condition of the MH water system, the cost impact of improvements to all existing water and sewer customers, and the history of the MH system. C. Coe advised the boards that the project only entails replacement of approximately 40% of the existing system and will provide adequate fire protection when completed. S. Kemnitzer then inquired if there were other subdivisions in a similar inadequate condition as MH. C. Coe identified three very small pockets of services representing only several homes. S. Kemnitzer then recommended that we address all under-served areas at the same time rather than the present piecemeal approach. Although in general agreement with Kemnitzer, members expressed concerns regarding losing focus and momentum on the MH project and related representations made to the MH HOA and community. After further discussion, the following action was taken:

**ACTION ITEM: S. KEMNITZER MOVED AND J. FORD SECONDED THAT THE WATER BOARD APPROVES DEVELOPING PLANS TO ADDRESS ALL EXISTING UNDERSERVED FACILITIES ON THE SYSTEM, AND TO CONTINUE TO MOVE FORWARD WITH THE MECKLENBURG HEIGHTS AS ORIGINALLY DESIGNED AND SCHEDULED. THE MOTION WAS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.**

C. Coe asked for clarification if the water plant project was included in the motion, to which the boards replied yes, the water plant is included in this motion along with MH. J. Bresland inquired as to approving the project funding and potential water/sewer rate changes, to which J. Eckstrom replied these actions would be requested of the board once the final cost estimates are completed, funding identified and rate analysis is complete; he advised the board will have another opportunity to review the entire project, funding, cost and rate implications.

## **7. NEW BUSINESS.**

### **7.a Explanation of Sewer Blockage**

F. Welch reported on progress with sewage blockage on the lines on the south side of German Street. Snyder Environmental used their equipment to clear 400' of line and no problems have been experienced for a month. F. Welch also advised that the Town staff was jetting the line weekly as well. The boards were advised that Snyder will return to attempt further clearing of the line beyond 400' and also clear the north side street line.

### **7.b. Chlorine Leak**

C. Coe reported on a chlorine leak that occurred at the water plant on August 4, 2020. The plant was shut-down for hydrant-flushing on that date. When the plant was returned to normal operations C. Coe entered the plant and noticed the faint smell of chlorine in the air, and found it dangerously high in the lower part of the plant. The air-packs could not be readily retrieved due to the chlorine gas so the plant was evacuated. The Shepherdstown VFD responded but their safety protocol would not allow them to respond to a Haz-Mat emergency. The

Washington County Haz-Mat unit was dispatched with a 40-minute ETA. C. Coe decided they should not wait that long and managed to get air packs on and contained the leak which was caused by a faulty valve on top of the tank. There were no injuries sustained, disclosures were made to applicable governmental regulatory authorities, general and workers compensation insurance carriers were notified, expenses of \$17,000 were incurred, and in total the event lasted approximately 20-minutes.

The boards then discussed the absence of a Haz-Mat response team in our county, the closest being in Washington County Maryland and Loudoun County Virginia. J. Auxer updated the boards on his efforts as Mayor to raise awareness of Haz-Mat threats with Jefferson County which does not currently sponsor a Haz-Mat response unit. J. Auxer noted in particular long railroad trains containing Haz-Mat cars.

#### **8. MAYOR'S REPORT.**



J. Auxer asked the boards to separately provide him feedback on restoring the in-person option to the Water and Sewer board meetings. He also asked if the 12:30PM start time was acceptable, and no objections were noted.

**9. ADJOURNMENT.** J. Auxer adjourned the meeting at 2:10PM. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 24, 2020 at 12:30pm. The boards will be advised of the in-person option at the Town Hall. Remote participation will also be available.

Respectfully submitted, A. Slater