

Town of Rockland SEWER COMMISSION



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Charles Heshion, *Commissioner*
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Douglas Cope, *Commissioner*
David P. Taylor, *Interim Superintendent*

**Remote Teleconference
Recorded for Public Playback on WRPS
(local cable access tv)
www.wrpsrockland.com**

**Rockland Sewer Commissioners Meeting
January 20, 2022**

In Attendance: Chuck Heshion, Dan Duross, David Taylor, Robyn Day, Rick Kotouch, Caitlyn Morey of Clifford & Kenny.

Introductory Remarks

Chuck Heshion.

Motion made by Chuck Heshion, 2nd by Dan Duross, to begin the meeting at 7:00 pm, January 20, 2022. All in favor 2-0.

Motion made by Dan Duross, 2nd by Chuck Heshion, to approve minutes of December 8, 2021 and December 16, 2021. All in favor 2-0.

Abatements

245 Hingham Street – abate interest accrued when his payment was applied to water in error.

Motion made by Chuck Heshion, 2nd by Dan Duross to approve the abatement. All in favor 3-0.

116 Durbeck final payment manually calculated was off by \$1.32.

Motion made by Chuck Heshion, 2nd by Dan Duross to approve the abatement. All in favor 2.0.

Drainlayer License Renewals

ATL Construction, Inc.; C. Spirito, Inc.; DS Benoit Corporation; Dandel Construction: Glenn R. LaPointe, Inc.; IARIA Bros, Inc.; McDougal Brothers Enterprise, LLC.; Robert B. Our Co.; Sandstone Construction, Inc.; Sean Farrell Excavation, Inc.; Tascon Corporation; Warner Bros. Excavation

Motion made by Chuck Heshion, 2nd by Dan Duross to approve all 12 Drainlayer license renewals, as listed. All in favor 2.0.

New Connection Request(s)

No hearings.

Continuation of Old Business

– **Advertisement for Sewer Superintendent position**

Motion made by Chuck Heshion, 2nd by Dan Duross, to approve the placement of advertisements for the Sewer Superintendent position. All in favor 2-0.

– **CWMP (Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan) Update**

The contract has been signed with Wright-Pierce. There was a brief discussion regarding a kick-off meeting on Zoom with the public invited.

Chuck Heshion will schedule a 2nd follow-up meeting on the scope/technical details with Wright-Pierce. He will be the only Commissioner in attendance.

– **NPDES Permit**

Chuck Heshion provided a handout of compliance cost impacts for FY 22-23.

There was a discussion involving compliance with the demands of the new NPDES permit . Rick Kotouch will contact the EPA for clarification on the reporting requirements.

To meet the lower phosphorous limits, Suez will treat with more chemicals, which will create more sludge. We will need to keep the EPA informed of our efforts to address phosphorous levels during year one (1). In this scenario, Suez will be responsible for the compliance. We should decide by April of 2022 if we keep it in-house with Suez or out-source. Chuck has concerns that we may not be able to address the phosphorous levels with chemicals alone. Will we need a secondary system or approach? Rick Kotouch will provide the town with a scope of services, by April, to address the phosphorous issue with chemicals. If the chemical approach does not work, we will have to look at tertiary systems to address the phosphorous. By November of 2022, we should know which of these processes will work.

We need to look at I&I and future funding to meet the terms of the permit.

We have (1) year to install an effluent flow meter. Rick has been working with engineers and salesmen to investigate the equipment and costs. According to the EPA, installing an effluent flow meter could save approximately 200,000 GPD.

Superintendent Update

– Capital Planning Meeting

David is comfortable allowing Suez to address the phosphorous issue. If successful, we can write a change order to the Suez contract.

We had to prioritize our needs:

#1 we are currently working on the digester boiler; the next phase is to update the gas piping in the building.

#2 is the effluent meter. We have a few options to investigate on how to design and install a permanent structure going forward.

#3 is the Spruce Street injector pump station, converting to a wet well system.

#4 is pump repair and maintenance for the plant and pumping stations.

All of these projects depend on funding. We have the academy development funds pending; we also raised the sewer user rate, which should result in about \$20k positive cash flow; we have on-going applications for ARPA (federal) funding to help pay for the digester boiler repairs and upgrades to the gas piping in the digester boiler building. If we are successful in gaining ARPA funds, we could free-up some of the funds we have dedicated to the digester boiler to address some of our other priorities.

Chuck Heshion mentioned that he'd like to attend the Capital Planning meetings to gain a better understanding of how we acquire capital funding. David Taylor advised him to reach out directly to Capital Planning. Chuck Heshion has concerns about the development and I&I Fees that we did not receive from the Lydia Square project. Even though we did not receive the funds, we are still accountable for processing those additional flows.

– Flow Meters

There was a brief discussion about portable flow meters. We have a vendor coming in to provide a demo in a few weeks.

Most of the I&I was identified in the SSES (*System Sewer Evaluation System*) that we conducted recently. The flow meters will become beneficial a year or so down the road from now.

– On-going Projects

There was a brief recap of approved, completed and pending projects. It was mentioned that projects over \$50k have to go in front of Capital Planning.

Chuck Heshion would like to revise the sewer ordinance regarding future approved projects; (1) any changes to plans that affect the flow would require new approval of the project from the Sewer Commission, (2) impose a one year limit to start an approved project. David Taylor will write something up for legal to review.

On-going projects include the rate study; digester boiler; butternut pump station (*working with abutters*), manholes/structures (*averaging 3 per week*).

– **Development Projects**

Each 5-10,000 gallons that we free up would be a blip down at the plant. With a partial lift of the moratorium, any amount that we give out would have to be offset by removing 11 times that amount in I&I. We would be able to demonstrate to the EPA that we can stay below capacity while approving some smaller projects.

We need to be careful when we pass people on the list; although it would benefit the larger developments if we are successful in recouping I&I on the 11:1 ratio with smaller developments. Any changes that we consider would have to be reviewed by Legal before we proceed. This discussion will be revisited in the future (*September*) after allowing some time for careful consideration.

Primrose School would like to come in front of the Sewer Commission. Primrose School and 365 Concord should be scheduled for April or May.

The Spence Property previously had installed 600' of main line sewer from Weymouth Street to Delahunt. The Monahan Rink Academy might be able to tie-in through that sewer line.

The Monahan Rink is looking into septic but residents in the area of Forest Street are concerned about a septic system near their properties.

320 Concord and the Monahan Academy should be scheduled for June or July.

Mary Parsons reminded everyone that Kevin Grady (Lovell Academy) came before the board in June at an in-person Commissioner meeting at the Sewer Department and was denied a connection for the Academy.

Suez Update

With the new NPDES permit, our phosphorous levels need to be at 0.1 by April 1, 2025.

Chemicals have increased by \$43,170. (16.5%) this calendar year. We have enough in the O&M budget to cover the expense for this fiscal year. Suez will forward an agreement to David Taylor to be reviewed by Legal and then signed by the Commissioners.

Sludge disposal and phosphorous compliance expenses are also up.

Our average for December was 2.5; our current average for January is 2.7

We've prioritized Butternut Pump Station over Spruce Street because the Lydia Square development contributes to more water flowing to Butternut. Weston & Sampson is the developer on these 2 stations.

Currently short staffed by one person. One employee is coming back from fmla next week and Suez has one pending hire.

Public Forum

There was a brief discussion clarifying the role of the State vs. the Town for approval on 40B projects where the State supersedes the authority of the local municipality. David Taylor has concerns that we need to quantify our I&I before we can approve new developments.

We need to be cognizant of our compliance to all EPA/DEP requirements.

Chuck Heshion explained the (3) phases of revamping our current sewer plant. (1) CWMP (*Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan*); (2) plant / facility study; (3) design/ bid /scope. It will probably be five years before we start an actual build, and then another 5-10 years to complete. Expansion for future growth is addressed in the design phase so that we can meet future demands. Our permit is built around the discharge that we can put into French's Stream. We may need a sub-station for pre-treatment in the future.

An important facet of the CWMP is that it enables us to qualify for a better finance rate if we should apply for financing in the future.

The current plant is up to code, the re-build will ensure that we remain in compliance for all future NPDES requirements.

The cost for upgrading the plant in today's dollars is roughly \$50 million. The data from Wright-Pierce was presented to the Board of Selectmen on June 15, 2021.

We implemented a 20% increase to the sewer user rate as of January 1, 2022. The rate per 100 cubic feet was raised from \$4.94 to \$5.93. We also added a basic user rate of \$10.00 per quarter. We are awaiting results of the independent rate study that will recommend a rate based on future buildout and other expenses.

Next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 17 @ 7:00 PM on Zoom.

Motion made by Chuck Heshion, 2nd by Dan Duross, to adjourn at 8:35 pm and go into Executive Session. All in favor 2-0.