



TOWN OF HOPEDALE

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Board of Water & Sewer Commissioners

Ed Burt, Chr
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Hopedale Board of Water & Sewer Commissioners

Minutes of February 25, 2021

The Hopedale Board of Water & Sewer Commissioners met on February 25, 2021 at 7:00 P.M. in the Draper Room of the Town Hall. Members present were Chairperson Burt (via Zoom) and Commissioner Morin.

Consent Items

Minutes of the January 14th meeting – Commissioner Morin made a motion to approve the minutes of January 14th and made unanimous by Chairperson Burt.

Minutes of the February 4, 2021 joint meeting minutes – Chairperson Burt stated there were 2 parts of these minutes. The minutes and a draft of our concerns regarding the settlement letter. Commissioner Morin made a motion to accept both with the addition of a notation and made unanimous by Chairperson Burt.

Acknowledgements – Welcome Mr. Donald Cooper to the Board – the Board welcomed Mr. Cooper to the Board and his first official meeting. Tim stated he feels this will be a nice balance to the Board. Commissioner Cooper has extensive knowledge in the sewer area, Tim will forward a copy of the I & I report to him to review.

Correspondents – Cost Sharing Agreement – this was discussed after appointment of David Vickery as the new wastewater laborer. Since the agreement is already signed Chairperson Burt assumes it cannot be changed but stated he has a lot of questions/concerns. He would like to highlight our high level concerns, organize our next steps and come back at our next meeting with our questions. Commissioner Morin stated he doesn't see the advantage to us and since we were not part of the negotiations, he doesn't feel comfortable signing the agreement. Chairperson Burt asked why are we being asked to sign? What happens if we sign or if we don't sign? When does it start? Questions on location. The Board would prefer to do some research without rushing through the agreement. Commissioner Cooper stated he doesn't know where he stands since he was not on the Board but does feel it is being rushed. Town Administration Diana Schindler stated that there is no deadline to sign. She stated she would be happy to have Attorney Durning answer our questions. Chairperson Burt asked Town Administrator Diana Schindler what would happen if we didn't sign. She stated she thinks it has to do with cost sharing. The railroad did state they want to find a water source as well. Chairperson Burt asked if it was the initial cost and not the development costs? She stated she would need to verify. Chairperson Burt stated he would really like to focus on the wording of the document. Tim stated he feels we should seek clarification. Tim does not feel it is within our budget to look for water in that area. There was discussion of holding off on development on a part of lot E for 5 years. We will need the lot surveyed. Still waiting to hear back from DEP regarding activity in

zone 2. There were questions regarding buffers and eminent domain that were brought up that we would like answered. Want to see if we can get DEP to answer questions before we sign the agreement. Commissioner Morin stated that his concern is it may be at a faster pace and if we don't have the funds in time.

The Board mentioned that we do have some free cash and water sourcing is very important so if additional funds are needed we should ask the Town to assist.

Commissioner Cooper made a motion to take the Cost Sharing Agreement under advisement, seconded by Commissioner Morin and made unanimous by Chairperson Burt.

New Business

- A. Consider and appoint Mr. David Vickery to the position of Wastewater treatment operator/laborer** – Tim stated copies of all the applicants were also given to Mike Brown, Sewer Supervisor to review and pick his top three. Both Tim and Mike picked the same three applicants and stated all 3 interviewed very well. Mr. Vickery needs 20 hours of training to regain his grade 4 license. Tim explained the current operator makes a little over \$24/hr, and Mr. Vickery would come in at \$20/hr and after 6 months would increase to \$21/hr. If/when he gets his grade 4 license he would increase to \$24. Commissioner Cooper asked if he had any experience in the wastewater field and he stated he did. Mike Brown feels David will be a great fit at the plant and has the experience needed.

Commissioner Morin made a motion to appoint David Vickery as the new wastewater laborer, seconded by Commissioner Cooper and made unanimous by Chairperson Burt.

- B. WWTP influent VFD** – the influent pump was tripping. Contractors came in and found it was the VFD so 2 new ones were ordered. This is a critical piece of equipment.
- C. WWTP test results (Mike Brown to discuss)** – Mike informed the Board that as part of our permit a quarterly toxicity test is done. One part of the test failed which could have been caused by a multitude of things. Mike spoke with the lab and found the ammonia values were a little higher. Mid December through mid March we do see a rise in ammonia due to decrease in temperatures at the plant. Nitrate went below zero, first time ever. This number is normally between 8 and 17. Mike explained that we will be doing another toxicity test this week but will not get the results for a while. Tim asked if this happened last year in which Mike stated it had, last April but no definitive reason why. Tim asked if there were any ramifications for failing. Mike stated they may call and ask why and it does affect our permit. Commissioner Cooper asked if the retest was mandated in which Mike stated it was not. Hoping to get different results this time.
- D. Sewer Relining Bid Results and Awarding** – Town Administrator had the contract signed and work to possibly start next week.

Old Business

- A. Draper Building Demolition – water – sewer lines – anticipate the entire building to be down by end of June. Water lines on Hopedale and Freedom street were severed and rerouted. Will test water lines for leaks then cut and cap.
- B. Well Exploration – Tim reached out to engineers and they will be back onsite next week.
- C. Budget Review – water budget will have a total increase of 8% while sewer budget will have an even smaller increase. Commissioner Cooper asked about transfers to the general fund. Tim explained it was for the Treasurer/Collector, Accountants, health insurance, pension, workers comp, liability and lockbox, stating he found that some other towns handle the same way.

Pension – if we pay at the beginning of the fiscal year, we get a discount which the Town Administrator cannot guarantee we will take. So, if the town ends up taking the discount we would get the benefit the following year.

Commissioner Cooper asked about the timeframe on the budgets? Tim informed him that the Town Administrator sent out the schedule so he is thinking it's in May.

Chairperson Burt stated he will be working on a rate analysis. What he has right now shows estimated numbers for the third and fourth quarters.

Commissioner Morin made a motion to adjourn at 8:41 P.M. seconded by Commissioner Cooper and made unanimous by Chairperson Burt.

I attest to the best of my knowledge that this is a true and accurate recording of the minutes of February 25, 2021.



Ed Burt – Chairperson



James Morin



Donald Cooper