



TOWN OF HOPEDALE

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Board of Water & Sewer Commissioners

Ed Burt, Chr
James Morin
Adam Anderson

Hopedale Board of Water & Sewer Commissioners Minutes of February 8, 2024

The Hopedale Board of Water & Sewer Commissioners met February 8, 2024, at 6:00 P.M. in the Draper Room of Town Hall. Members present were Chairperson Burt, Commissioner Morin and Commissioner Anderson.

Consent Items

Minutes of the January 11th meeting— Commissioner Morin made a motion to approve the minutes of January 11th, 2024, seconded by Commissioner Anderson and made unanimous by Chairperson Burt.

All in favor, Anderson – Aye, Morin – Aye, Burt – Aye

Correspondence - None

New Business

- A. Open public hearing to discuss changes to Water Department Rules and Regulations – Commissioner Morin made a motion to open the public hearing to discuss changes to the Water Department Rules and Regulations, seconded by Commissioner Anderson and made unanimous by Chairperson Burt

All in favor, Anderson – Aye, Morin – Aye, Burt – Aye

It was explained that this was housekeeping and being done to bring some of the items current. On pages 5 and 12 changed wording from Sensus readers to Kamstrup readers. Kamstrup meters are not located on the outside of the houses just inside. Chairperson Burt asked Dave Butler to read new verbiage from page 19, section 7. Discussed that new curb stops will be brass since bronze is no longer allowed due to the lead content. On page 30, section 9, updated current rates. Discussed hydrant rental fees and will discuss further after negotiations. Material costs will be updated to reflect current costs.

The Board then asked for public comments but there were none.

- B. Close public hearing (vote on changes will be held) - Commissioner Anderson made a motion to close the public hearing, seconded by Commissioner Morin and made unanimous by Chairperson Burt.

All in favor, Anderson – Aye, Morin – Aye, Burt – Aye

Commissioner Morin made a motion to approve changes to the Water Department Rules and Regulations, seconded by Commissioner Anderson and made unanimous by Chairperson Burt.

All in favor, Morin – Aye, Anderson – Aye, Burt – Aye

Old Business

- A. Weston & Sampson proposal for sludge thickener upgrades – it seems likely that the equipment will fail prior to being paid off so for that reason it was decided to pay off the loan early. There were issues getting rid of the sludge which has caused other issues. Synagro has now offered us another contract. Finding ways to thicken the sludge would be a future cost savings. To provide this service would cost approximately \$22,000. Commissioner Morin feels if all the loan money is not used on a project it should be returned as soon as possible. Tim mentioned that the removal of sludge is getting harder and harder.

Commissioner Anderson made a motion to approve Weston & Sampson contract for sludge thickener upgrades, seconded by Commissioner Morin and made unanimous by Chairperson Burt.

All in favor, Morin – Aye, Anderson – Aye, Burt – Aye

- B. Asset Management Grant Funding – the reimbursement process has changed. We will be reimbursed at 50% completion then at 100% completion. Discussion was made to take the money out of Sewer Retained Earnings then pay ourselves back. The project won't start until October. We may see at least half of the return in FY26. Tim stated the grant is definitely worth it but as Chairperson Burt stated, we just have to put the money up front. We will have to get the use of Retained Earnings approved at town meeting.
- C. Capital Request for Water and Sewer – Water Department is looking to replace a 2011 pickup truck. The new truck will cost approximately \$84,000. Also looking at a \$50,000 gravel packed well since the screen is failing on the existing one. Commissioner Anderson asked if Tim thought we would get the same output in the new well. Tim stated the one that was just repaired lasted approximately 40 years. Tim currently has all projects coming out of Retained Earnings but Chairperson Burt mentioned possibly having the trucks for water and sewer come out of capital projects. The truck for the Sewer Department will not be as expensive as the one for the Water Department. Tim stated for this reason he can possibly see that truck going through capital projects.
- D. Budgets/Rates – Chairperson Burt stated he was concerned since our revenue was less than expected. The \$20,000 in tie in fees have yet to be received since the lot owners have not done the work yet. Felt we should have seen an increase of approximately

\$130,000 but we are about \$18,000 short of that. Looking at the budget spreadsheets, Chairperson Burt asked that months be put on the commitment spreadsheet to show the usage months. The budgets are basically level funding for the new fiscal year. There are increases in lines we have no control over. It was stated that we should plan on a rate increase to cut our deficit in half. Chairperson Burt doesn't feel increase has to be as steep as last year. Tim stated he would prefer that the increase start in quarter four of this fiscal year, stating that the restrictions are going to hurt us. Our usage will start to stabilize.

Plan is to have a public hearing in March prior to the April billing. Tim asked the Board what amount they would like to make up. Chairperson Burt stated it should be around \$75,000. The majority of our users fall between 1,000 – 2,000 cubic feet per quarter. Commissioner Morin would like to see us make up between \$100,000 and \$150,000.

The sewer increase is 3% on the operating side. With the grant it will be an 11% increase since we have to allocate the \$150,000 that we have to pay the state for them to reimburse us. Increases in health insurance are not included in the budget since we do not have those numbers as of yet.

Sewer rates are one flat rate and not tiered like water. The sewer shortage is approximately \$200,000. Tim asked what amount the Board would like to make up which Chairperson Burt stated \$100,000.

The Board will decide on the amounts at the next meeting. Will open the public meeting at 6:00 P.M. then open the public hearing.

- E. Discuss Public hearing for rate increase at next meeting – the suggestion was to have the public hearing at our March meeting. Open our normal meeting at 6:00 P.M., then open public hearing at 6:30 P.M. or can go right into the public hearing.
- F. Zone II Updates – regarding Plain Street, it has been approved by the Planning Board. The force main is almost complete. Tim stated he has been there the whole time and informed the board that they were given paperwork for the tie in fees. All is moving along nicely and the old building is to come down in April.

Manager's Report – EPA and DEP have given updates regarding stormwater. The stormwater enterprise account leads towards a DPW structure. If the stormwater management enterprise fund does change to a DPW that may cause Water, Sewer and Road Commissioners to combine into one board.

We will be going out to bid shortly regarding PFAS and construction may start this summer. The water tank is coming along nicely with no overages on the project.

December storm costs are approximately \$7,000, no state of emergency was called so there will be no money being reimbursed for these costs.


Commissioner Anderson made a motion to adjourn at 7:38 P.M. seconded by Commissioner Morin and made unanimous by Chairperson Burt.

Anderson – Aye, Morin – Aye, Burt - Aye


I attest to the best of my knowledge that this is a true and accurate recording of the minutes of February 8th, 2024.



Ed Burt – Chairperson



James Morin



Adam Anderson