

Village District of Eastman
Commissioners' Meeting, April 18, 2012
Public Session, Final Minutes

In attendance: Commissioner Duncan Wood, Commissioner Bill Sullivan, Commissioner Bob Fairweather, Treasurer David Wright, District Manager Bill Weber, Office Manager Amy Lewis and Field Operator Josh Worthen.

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Sullivan at 8:03.

Minutes:

The Annual Meeting minutes were reviewed. Commissioner Wood would like minor changes made, including the capitalization of Annual Meeting throughout the document. Commissioner Fairweather suggested a few changes as well. The commissioners also reviewed the MS32 (warrant article) and signed where appropriate; this will be forwarded to the DRA to replace the unsigned copy originally sent. The minutes from March 21 were reviewed as well. Commissioner Fairweather requested several changes which were incorporated into the document. Commissioner Wood moved to accept the minutes as edited; the motion was seconded by Commissioner Sullivan.

Field:

DM Weber asked for static levels from the operators to compare against last year's numbers, although Source 1 will be off from previous. There is concern about water levels vs. demand projected for the summer season, due to the lack of precipitation. High demand usually kicks in Memorial Day weekend. Commissioner Wood would like data from last year to compare against aquifer levels for this year/current period to back up any possible usage restrictions. Operator Worthen inquired about the spring flushing schedule; no flushing was done last fall, and if none is done this spring, water odor/color could be cause for customer complaint. Flushing this spring would also dump approximately 500,000 gallons of useable water into the woods during a restriction. Commissioner Wood would like flushing to be dependent on any complaints received, although Operator Worthen would like to have the flushing completed prior to the start of the summer season. The operators generally plan on 3 weeks to complete the process. It is not feasible to perform a selective flush; debris from flushed sections could negatively impact other areas of the system. It is possible to flush at night, although that option is not cost-efficient. Commissioner Fairweather suggested waiting to see what happens with precipitation for the next couple of weeks before deciding on a flushing schedule. If needed, the community can be alerted to possible odor and discoloration should the decision not to flush the system be made. Data needs to be available to back up the decision not to flush in anticipation of any complaint/concern brought by the community. DM Weber offered his help to the operators to compile the requested information. There are no guidelines offered by the state regarding the flushing – it is discretionary to each PWS.

Operator Worthen explained that the leak around the treatment plant had been located, and it was actually five leaks rather than one. The operators tightened the five forty-five degree bends in the water line and added thrust blocks to counter the water pressure. This line was feeding un-metered into the plant; there are now three meters on this line. Regarding the pump breakage in Source 5, a spot-weld on the shaft let go and sheared a portion of the shaft off. Barrie Miller is replacing this; Source 5 should be back on-line by the end of next week. The engineers had no issue with the VDE

running Source 1 to make up for Source 5 being off-line. Commissioner Wood asked if running 2 of the 3 sources will meet the community demand; Operator Worthen said it would, although the Source 5 pump failed prior to being run with Source 1 to test the pressure. The pumps in Source 1 ended up being 12-stage instead of 10-stage, which will help with the head.

Financial Report:

Commissioner Fairweather was pleased with the low Accounts Receivable, and thanked the office staff for keeping up with it. DM Weber introduced the new format for the financial review and asked for opinions. With a few minor changes, the new format is acceptable. The VDE is over budget for filter maintenance due to greensand being purchased and having to replace the hatches on the filter tanks. Expenditures will be minimized elsewhere to offset, although some of the expense is reimbursable through the CIP. Payroll/overtime is also being kept in check.

Manager's Report:

1. The total number of liens is coming down, and accounts that had been put on hold for non-payment are starting to get paid. This is due to the real estate market moving the foreclosures as well as the regular sales.
2. The water usage report is now done online. OM Lewis will learn how to compile and complete the reports so DM Weber has a back-up person able to do the reporting.
3. The usage at the Anderson Pond and Snow Hill booster stations is down, which could be a compilation of conservation and fewer leaks. This will be verified by the meter reads. The Venturi meter at the treatment plant will be turned off because it is out of calibration, and is no longer necessary. Parts of the meter can be salvaged and used in other operations.
4. A "dummy" billing was created using the new rate schedule, showing a 1.9% to 2.3% in revenues which is in line with the projections.
5. DM Weber is working with the state to get the necessary permits for the Bog Brook repair.

SRF update:

DM Weber will be meeting with Jenna Rzasa and Bruce St. Peter to go over punch-list items for the contract wrap-up. Commissioner Wood asked about any paperwork owed to the state regarding the project; DM Weber has been working closely with Dan Dudley of the DES to ensure prompt filing of necessary paperwork, and the VDE is up-to-date. The decommissioning of the original 18 wells will begin after the project is completed. The cost of replacing the specified pumps with pumps of the correct size will be absorbed by the engineer, with the same warranty/guarantee that would have been given with the first set of pumps installed. Any questions or concerns the contractor and/or subs have regarding the additional work must be presented to Tata & Howard rather than the VDE.

Old Business:

The letter drafted by Commissioner Wood in response to the DES was a draft open to comments. There was discussion over the pros and cons of increasing the number of meter reads per year – notice would have to be given to the community but no dates would have to be set in stone. DM Weber did share that the state is very happy with what the VDE has completed to date, and it would be an option to let things stand as-is until formally requested by the state to implement a more-frequent billing procedure.

The response to the state is due May 24; the consensus was to re-edit the response letter to show only two billing cycles per year.

The educational letter(s) for the May billing were reviewed. The tri-fold brochure prepared by Sustainable Eastman was looked upon favorably, and the state-issued report regarding domestic indoor water use was suggested as the second piece of information

Treasurer Wright had begun a conversation with DM Weber regarding access to the office, safe and computers in the absence of both the district and office managers. There is still a contract in place for the on-call water operator to access the plant in case of an off-hour emergency; the VDE officials would like such a plan/procedure in place for the office. The treasurer and two commissioners will be provided the necessary information to access the office materials; this will be implemented as soon as possible.

DM Weber shared that the audit performed April 16-17 went very well. The auditors left a questionnaire for the commissioners to fill out and sign. DM Weber also explained the note attached with last year's audit regarding the retirement program; there is no way to separately track the retired individuals on the plan, and there is no ongoing financial liability to the district. Commissioner Wood suggested that DM Weber formulate a letter explaining the retirement program to the auditors, which would then become part of the audited statement.

New Business:


Commissioner Fairweather said that he had spoken to Maynard Goldman, President of the ECA Board, and discussed concerns regarding the possible political issues with a potential merger of the Eastman Sewer Company (ESC) into the VDE. Treasurer Wright had also spoken to Mr. Goldman, who said that the issue would be brought up at a council meeting to begin the discussion. The general consensus is that the sewer company must get out from under the Public Utilities Commission if it is going to continue as a viable operation. A letter prepared by Brian Harding of the ESC outlines that options have been researched and the best viable option is to go with a merger. Commissioner Wood and Treasurer Wright expressed concern that the letter did not provide overwhelming evidence that the pros outweighed the cons for merging with the VDE. The officials will take part in the tour of the sewer facility to get a broader idea of what would be involved with a merger. DM Weber was asked to draft a letter to Mr. Harding in response, and to ask that the ESC contact the Grantham Selectmen to set up an informal meeting to discuss the issue.




At this time, Commissioner Fairweather moved to go into non-public session, which was seconded by Commissioner Sullivan. Non-public session was begun at 10:30.

The commissioners ended the non-public session at 10:45 and recessed the remainder of the meeting until after the briefing and walk-through of the ESC facility.

Commissioner Fairweather moved to adjourn the meeting at 12:05, which was seconded by Commissioner Sullivan and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,


Amy Lewis
Office Manager

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