

**Village District of Eastman
Commissioners' Meeting–Village District of Eastman Office
Minutes of April 20, 2011**

In attendance: Commissioners Bill Sullivan, Bob Fairweather and Duncan Wood; District Manager Bill Weber; Treasurer Dave Wright; Assistant Treasurer Ben Conroy; Clerk Lorie McClory; Operator Neil Perez.

SWEARING IN OF OFFICIALS

Commissioner Wood made a motion to appoint Ben Conroy as assistant treasurer. Commissioner Fairweather seconded. Unanimous approval.

Commissioner Sullivan administered the oath to Commissioner Wood, Treasurer Wright, Assistant Treasurer Conroy and Clerk McClory.

MINUTES: Commissioner's reviewed the Feb. 9 hearing minutes, March 16 regular meeting minutes and March 23 Annual Meeting minutes.

Commissioner Wood made a motion to accept the packet of minutes with typographical corrections. Commissioner Sullivan seconded. Unanimous approval.

FIELD:

The field operators found a leak in the Anderson Pond area that had been getting progressively worse. When found on Forest Road, the leak between the main and the curb stop was five gallons per minute (210,000/month). The pipe was replaced. They are now looking for a leak in the Snow Hill area that is approximately 8,000 gallons/day.

Half of the winter bleeds have been turned off. Last year all were off in mid-April. This year's temperatures have been too harsh.

FINANCIAL REPORT:

1. The annual audit is 60% complete. Due to issues with the trustees of trust funds in 2010, the auditors will spend extra time verifying trust balances. During the audit Grantham Trustee of Trust Funds Bob Fogg provided some information and he will forward directly to the auditors any other missing items. The trustees will split up their responsibilities, and Trustee Fogg will be in charge of VDE.
2. The P and L to date is, as expected this time of year, the highest "loss" amount we see on an annual basis, May will bring in the billing money and late June/early July will bring in tax revenue. VDE's financial situation has been similar over the last five years
3. Current receivables are at \$2,800, which is down again from the previous month. Office Manager Pat Conroy has been commended for her persistence.
4. There are 65 "water turn-ons" anticipated for the spring, which will result in approximately \$4,875.00 of revenue.
5. In providing data to the auditors DM Weber discovered the Anderson Pond Pump Station was not being carried as a capital asset and could not be found elsewhere. Adjustments will be made to capital assets.

6. Two 80-gallon pneumatic tanks were added at Anderson Pond. Pumps cycle less often: 10 hours/day now rather than nearly 24 hours before the leak was found.

BADGER METER REPRESENTATIVE: With the state encouraging water districts to bill at least four times per year within the next three years, VDE is beginning to look at new water meter technology to make it more feasible to read meters more often. It currently takes the two field operators four days to read all meters in the district, and snow depts. Make winter readings very challenging.

Scott Fitzgerald and Ian Kasowitz of The Stiles Co. Inc. showed the commissioners the radio-read equipment that can be purchased to retrofit the existing meter units currently in homes today. They can be read remotely, which means the operators can capture the information on a handheld unit as they drive by properties and meter reading can be completed in one day. The district currently uses the Badger equipment that is sold by The Stiles Co., and Mr. Fitzgerald is currently working on quotes based on customer loyalty rewards.

The units still give property owners visual leak detection, allow for manual reads and raise red flags indicating higher than normal usage, which could mean a leak. In response to a question about reading distance and interference, Mr. Fitzgerald said it varies by weather, topography and environment. There are two packages available: one that puts the transmitter up in the floor joists with brackets, which increases reading distance; and one that puts it at the level of the water intake, which cuts down on reading distance. Mr. Fitzgerald said it would take approximately 90 days to install the units and complete the required interface with the billing software.

The water intake units do not need to be replaced; merely a top piece is installed. Commissioners asked how technology might change if the district was to install the new units in the 1,330 homes over a period of years, as opposed to all at once. Mr. Fitzgerald said the technology may change but the units will all remain compatible. While the units can be phased-in based on the district's finances, the district will not see the full benefit of the new technology until all homes have the new units. District officials will have to discuss whether and how they want to proceed with the project and its payment. It was noted that the district's waiver from the state to continue reading meters only two times a year expires in 2013, and the district may want to have the new technology ready to go before that.

This issue will continue to be on the VDE agenda.

MANAGER'S REPORT:

1. The 2011 Annual Report was sent within the deadline to all required parties inclusive of the budget, warrant, MS 36, MS 32 and the minutes.
2. The new wells have been drilled, and the pump test is scheduled for May 2 and 3. The wells produced better than expected preliminary yields: #1=60 gpm @ 27'; #2=80 gpm @ 29'; and #3=85 @ gpm @ 29'. The state requires a licensed well driller to fill in the old wells.
3. Overall water pumped for March is 1.5 million gallons higher than the same time frame a year ago and the past few months. However, after adjusting for a main break in West Shore and the leaks in the Anderson Pond area and Greensward, it is considered reasonable.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Discuss SRF progress. Spent \$116,000 so far; wells cost \$90,000 including the pump test. The district is not likely to spend the full \$484,500 that was budgeted.
2. Commissioners again discussed changing the billing structure. The current break point is 60,000 gallons residential or commercial. The last rate increase was February 2009 and was effective on the November 2009 bill. The current rate is 70 cents/100 up to 60,000 gallons, then \$1/hundred over that for residential and \$1.10 over that for commercial. The district software can do 16 break points. DM Weber will forward the Excel workbook to commissioners to review. Commissioner Wood cautioned against too many rates. It was noted that the district has to weigh the need to conserve water with the need for revenue.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Commissioners discussed in general terms the overall long-range plan for a new VDE office space. VDE currently rents space from ECA adjacent to ECA's main office. This makes it convenient for residents to pay their bills and for staff to interact between offices. Expansion at the water maintenance building may provide space for the VDE office and would save time and costs for the field operators to drive to the office. Estimates for a new water department building are between \$130,000 and \$200,000.
2. Commissioners reviewed a proposed schedule to replace the remaining 23 valves: begin first or second week in May and be done by Memorial Day. May get delayed a week because of SRF project and use of staff.

NON-PUBLIC:

Commissioner Fairweather made a motion to go into non-public session at 9:49 a.m. Commissioner Wood seconded. Unanimous approval.

Commissioners returned to public session at 9:53 a.m.

Commissioner Wood made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Fairweather seconded.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:53 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Lorie McClory