

JOINT MONTHLY MEETING OF THE  
NEW SHOREHAM SEWER COMMISSION and BOARD OF WATER COMMISSIONERS

March 11, 2008 Minutes

Present were members Ann Cunningham, Steve McQueeny, Rally Migliaccio, Howie Rice and District Clerk Janet Ziegler.

Absent were members Frank Leslie, Cliff McGinnes, Don Thimble

Also present were Public Works Director Nancy Dodge, Finance Director Amy Lewis, Superintendents Dave Simmons and Ray Boucher and Counsel Elliot Taubman.

R. Migliaccio called the meeting to order at 4:30 P.M.

1. Request for Clarifications from Tom and Pat Doyle regarding metering.

The Doyle's property on High Street was once part of a large family lot with various buildings served by a single well. The property was subsequently subdivided into what are now seven lots of record. The Doyle's property was once the main house. Water is measured at the well head to determine sewer usage. Meters were installed in the marina building to measure water services in three inhabited buildings. Reacting to a request from the well's owner to seek another source of water, the Doyles chose to install a well on their property. During this process, the Doyle's discovered that the original metered water to their house also included a service leg feeding a small cottage. The questions they posed at the meeting regarded the Commission's responsibility to measure what is a customer's usage.

There was a lengthy discussion of the history of the property and that how homeowners chose to run plumbing is the owner's prerogative within codes. The water company is responsible for water distribution lines up to the property line and sewer's responsibility ends at the collection main line with laterals being owner's responsibility. Meters are installed to measure flow; as long as plumbing does not illegally bypass a meter, how the original plumbing was installed is not in the purview of the Commission's authority. It was suggested that they speak with their neighbor about collecting for past services they feel due. Although sympathetic with the Doyle's situation, neither the Board nor Commission can provide oversight or act as a policing agency when properties are divided; the Commission's Counsel concurred.

2. Request by Kim Gaffett on behalf of Ocean View for Exhibition Space.

The Ocean View Foundation will be creating plywood silhouettes of Block Island's fauna and endangered species and would like to exhibit some of them on the south side of the Old Harbor Pump Station which abuts the entrance to their pavilion. The building is of board and batten construction with no structures on the south side except for two blowers near the roof line. The silhouettes would be screwed on and could easily be detached for work on the building. E. Taubman suggested that a simple license could be drawn up to 'hold-harmless' either party.

**MOTION:** by S. McQueeny to grant the Ocean View's request for display space, that a mutual agreement be signed by both parties and that all Town permits and licenses be obtained by the Ocean View. The motion was seconded, a quorum was present and the vote to grant was:

AYE: 4 (Cunningham, McQueeny, Migliaccio, Rice). NAY: Ø. ABSTAIN: Ø.

The motion carried.

3. Reports from Officials.

DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS AND ENGINEERING.

- TNS Rescue Building: Request for Public Facility Status, Waiver of Sewer and Water Fees; Connection. A memo from Town Manager N. Dodge was received asking for "Public Facility" status for the Rescue Building in order to install sewer and water utilities at a reduced rate. The new building, which will house Rescue

ambulances and supplies, was constructed largely with volunteer community labor and donated materials.

**MOTION:** by A. Cunningham to bestow Public Facility status for the building as it applies to the purchase of allocation and to additionally waive the sewer and water permit applications fee (\$35 each) and inspections fees (\$35 each); the new account fee of \$35 will need to be paid. The motion was seconded, a quorum was present and the vote to bestow and waive was:

AYE: 4 (Cunningham, McQueeney, Migliaccio, Rice). NAY: Ø. ABSTAIN: Ø.

The motion carried.

**MOTION:** by A. Cunningham to waive the water allocation fee of \$829.57 for 24,000 gallons (260.87 gallons per day) and to waive the sewer allocation fee of \$466.96 for 24,000 gallons (260.87 gallons per day). The motion was seconded, a quorum was present and the motion to waive was:

AYE: 4 (Cunningham, McQueeney, Migliaccio, Rice). NAY: Ø. ABSTAIN: Ø.

The motion carried.

- Mowing Bid Award for Town Properties.

N. Dodge reported that the winning bid for mowing Town properties was Michael Kiley; the RFB (request for bid) included both sewer and water plant properties.

- RI Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Priority List.

N. Dodge said that four projects were submitted for the State's Project Priority List funding. Projects included for Block Island Water were to redevelop well #4 and to refinance the purchase of an Emergency Generator, the water main upgrades and the new concentrate line. The rehab of well #4 is a future project of undetermined costs.

Other reports.

N. Dodge reported that Geremia has reached an agreement with Cardi Corporation, the contractor installing storm drains at Bridgegate Square, to install 120 feet of Govern's sewer lateral on a "time and material" basis; Sewer Commissioner H. Rice will oversee that part of the project. USDA may have some money which could be applied against the lateral's cost. The original quote of \$34K included unforeseen problems in the area in which Cardi has been working; they have already uncovered uncharted utilities and a very high water table.

H. Rice added that Cardi will camera the sewer lines in the vicinity for breaks/leaks. A. Cunningham asked that any information that could add to the clarification about the two tributaries leading to Harbor Pond should be documented since this point seems to be the contributing source of high coliform counts in the summer.

The State of RI has adopted regulations regarding a Uniform Septage Disposal Fee to become effective April 1, 2008. The fee shall be assessed by sewer plants on all septage disposed of in RI and paid quarterly to the state. Money collected will fund the new "Bays, Rivers and Watersheds Fund" committee.

FINANCE.

- Financial Reports January & February 2008, Aging Report.

No aging Report.

Sewer. Of noted concern was that electrical costs could be over budget by \$35K. R. Boucher said that he is in process of preparing an energy report on 'cost of kWh'; the sewer plant could switch from the grid to generators earlier than usual and save several thousand dollars. Details should be ready by the next meeting. Cash and investments were ~ \$355K.

Water. Revenues from user fees are down, but expenses are also down which offsets the financial situation. Electricity charges are expected to be close to budget. Cash and investments were ~\$531K.

E. Taubman affirmed that fuel surcharges could be incorporated into both the water and sewer bills; he will prepare a memorandum for the next meeting on the tactics of how those numbers are computed and how this could be implemented.

- Rate Design: Status, Draft "Survey Water Customers".

D. Simmons reported that although the design group has devised a feasible rate design, its implementation has come up against a stumbling block in the software being used. Two versions of the financial software, Fundware, are used by the Finance office and the utility billing is still in the old DOS operating version. Until Simmons receives feedback from Fundware's technical support on what performance parameters are possible, the group's progress has been suspended.

- Special Financial Meeting of the Sewer and Water Districts, March 25.

A notice of the Special Financial meeting and voter eligibility was mailed out to all customers with the March billings in the hopes of drawing attendance.

- Annual Financial Meeting – Evaluation Committee, Timeline for Budget Hearings.

Timing of the budget preparations was unacceptable last year; as three extra meetings had to be held in order to meet deadlines set in the enabling legislation. A. Lewis stated that until the wage line is determined, drafts could not be started. After studying the calendar for this June's Annual Financial Meeting, the Commission agreed that if all staff evaluation could be completed by Monday, March 24, budget preparations could start April 1 and a rough draft could be considered at the April monthly meeting. A. Lewis agreed to the tight schedule.

Last year the Commission agreed to oversee all staff evaluations. By general agreement, appointments to an Evaluation Committee were C. McGinnes, S. McQueeny and N. Dodge. The Committee would meet between March 24 through April 1 to review (operators' evaluations) and perform staff evaluations (superintendents and clerk); budgets preparations would begin April 1.

The FY 2009 Budgets must be adopted and posted before the end of May.

#### WATER/SEWER PLANTS OPERATIONS.

##### WATER.

D. Simmons reported that in correspondences with RI Department of Environmental Management (DEM), the goal to switch concentrate discharges now going to the sewer plant, to the outfall directly, is still reasonably for May 1. Installation of the plant's sprinkler system should be finished by May. Early in April, an engineer from Avista Technologies will be on-island to provide recommendations for the reverse osmosis membranes; the goal is to extend operating life up to five years from the current one year.

- Legal. Consider Changes to the Water District's Regulations Regarding Mandatory Water Hookup.

E. Taubman distributed a memorandum regarding the legal ramifications of the rule for 'mandatory connections' to the municipal water system. Although the Rule regarding mandatory water connection for new construction and renovations in the Water District was adopted April 18 2005, it has not been enforced, nor has the mandatory connection for those adding sprinkler systems. The memo will be discussed at the next meeting.

##### SEWER.

R. Boucher said that final installation and testing of the heat exchangers were performed by Lydon Mechanical Services. Shoreline Diving Services dye tested the outfall for leaks and found its integrity intact; the end diffuser needs to be replaced and some riprap needs to be replaced. Geremia is in possession of the diver's video.

- Authorize work to install a new lateral to S. Gubern's property line. Covered earlier in Public Works.

## WASTEWATER INSPECTOR'S REPORT.

A. Cunningham reported that Inspector D. Thimble added half a dozen lines to the Maintenance Inspection report to further clarify the standing of OWTS (onsite wastewater treatment systems). He was praised for staying up-to-date with regulations and attending the educational programs offered.

4. Committee to Develop Mission Statement for The Sewer District and for The Water District. n/a.

5. Parking Lot Project. Progress Report, Budget, 2008 Permit Sales Strategy.

J. Ziegler said the sale of parking Permits for the upcoming season should begin this month. It was agreed that the Parking Committee, S. McQueeney and R. Migliaccio, would meet with her to discuss promotions/sales for the upcoming season. Several inquiries for the season have already been received.

- Request by H. Rice for Consent to Store BI Chamber of Commerce Truck and Request for Reduced Parking Permit Cost.

H. Rice, President of the Block Island Chamber of Commerce, recused himself as a Commissioner in order to address his requests. The Chamber has a storage van for their pamphlets/ literatures and is in need of a place to park it which would also be close to their location by the ferry. The truck would remain stationary in the lot during the season and would not pose a danger to the automobiles in the lot.

**MOTION:** by S. McQueeney to waive the Parking Permit fee this year as long as there are available spaces that are not producing revenue. The motion was seconded, a quorum was present and the vote to waive was:

AYE: 3 (Cunningham, McQueeney, Migliaccio). NAY: Ø. ABSTAIN: Ø.

The motion carried.

6. Approve Minutes of January 8, February 12.

**MOTION:** by R. Migliaccio to approve the January 8 and February 12 minutes as submitted. The motion was seconded, a quorum was present and the vote for approval was:

AYE: 4 (Cunningham, McQueeney, Migliaccio, Rice). NAY: Ø. ABSTAIN: Ø.

The motion carried.

7. Correspondence and Public Comment.

- February 20. Submission by Town Manager for RI Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Priority List. Covered in reports, item #3.
- February 21. Award of Bid for Mowing of Town Properties to R. Michael Kiley. Covered in reports, item #3.
- February 29. Correspondence from Geremia regarding construction concerns with sewer/water in the new Rescue Building. There were no comments.

Adjourn.

**MOTION:** by H. Rice to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded, a quorum was present and the vote to adjourn was approved unanimously by all members present.

The meeting adjourned at 6: 23 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet Ziegler

District Clerk

Approved: May 13, 2008

The New Shoreham Sewer Commission and Water Board are an equal opportunity providers and employers.