

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

November 13, 2007 Minutes

Present were members Ann Cunningham, Frank Leslie, Steve McQueeny, Cliff McGinnes, Howie Rice, Don Thimble and District Clerk Janet Ziegler.

Absent were members Rally Migliaccio,

Present were Public Works Director Nancy Dodge, Finance Director Amy Lewis, Water Superintendent Dave Simmons, Counsel Elliot Taubman and Spring House Manager Barbara Hirsch.

Absent was Ray Boucher.

C. McGinnes called the meeting to order at 4:26 P.M. F. Leslie will be non-voting.

1. Request from Spring Houses for Relief of Sewer Overusage Penalty, by David Houseman.

C. McGinnes read the Spring House's letter requesting relief from the 3rd quarter sewer penalty charge they received for usage over their account allocation. A penalty of \$10,525 was listed on their September statement. Excessive usage was attributed to several plumbing leaks and a well pump failure which required extensive flushing of the hotel lines. The major leak was discovered in an underground in a manhole which could not be repaired until the hotel was shut down; it was reported that their plumber estimated that the leak probably started last March when the water was turned on. Manager Barbara Hirsch testified that at least three other leaks were discovered when the hotel was being shut down; one leak, in employee's housing could have been going on for a long time.

D. Simmons said that the Spring House is a stand-by customer for municipal water service. When the well pump failed, the original municipal line feeding the Spring House was found to be severed and a new line had to be installed to provide service. J. Ziegler discovered an accounting error in the Spring House's penalty charge which should have been \$4,575. D. Thimble said that a blow-off pipe needed to be installed at the well head; the next time work had to be done at the well, it would prevent fouling the entire water system.

D. Simmons suggested using the average summer usage over three years (2004, 2005 and 2006) as a realistic sewer usage figure for the 3rd quarter calculation. Average third quarter usage was calculated $[(718K + 885K + 756) / 3]$ to be 786,333 gallons. The 2007 3rd quarter usage was 1,026K gallons; the difference between the average and actual use would be credited to the account.

MOTION: by D. Thimble to credit 239,000 gallons to the 2007 3rd quarter usage on the Spring House's 6330 sewer account upon receipt of testimony from their plumber and on the condition that they install a blow-off pipe at the well head in order to clear the lines the next time work is done there. The motion was seconded, a quorum was present and the vote was:

AYE: 5 (Cunningham, McQueeny, McGinnes, Thimble). NAY: Ø. ABSTAIN: Rice.

The motion carried.

2. Reports from Officials.

DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS AND ENGINEERING.

- EPA Decentralized Wastewater Demonstration Project: Sewer and Water Laboratory Support Testing of The Great Salt Pond Tributaries for Coliform, Nitrogen & Phosphorus. A. Cunningham summarized the last meeting of the Ad Hoc group which was attended by Joe Migliore from RI DEM (Department of Environmental Management). The Town's harbors department and the Committee for Great Salt Pond have been separately monitoring The Great Salt Pond and tributaries. The meeting was called to look into the tributaries because, although the Pond was not problematic, the streams have indicated high pollutants. J. Migliore indicated that the

Town should address the problem before DEM decides to do so. Of particular interest are two tribs which feed Harbor Pond: Mill Pond/Mill Tail and Bridgegate Square; and one trib entering Cormorant Cove.

The Ad Hoc group would like to make use of the sewer and water laboratories as informal testing facilities. Water has agreed to perform nutrients, nitrogen and phosphate analysis and sewer has agreed to perform coliform testing. The goal is to map out the origins up stream. Mention was made of the Les Sirkin geology books which had extensive information on streams and their flows.

MOTION: by H. Rice to grant permission to the Ad Hoc committee to use the laboratories facilities to perform testing as needed. The motion was seconded, a quorum was present and the vote was:

AYE: 5 (Cunningham, McQueeney, McGinnes, Thimble). NAY: Ø. ABSTAIN: Rice.

The motion carried.

- N. Dodge announced that a contract for \$208,167 with Waterline Industries was signed for Improvements to the Sewer Aeration System. The work is to be completed by May 2008. A. Cunningham inquired whether the remaining funds could be used for engineering studies for restoration of the outfall.
- The Town auditors have completed the Fiscal Year 2007 and a date for the "exit audit" will be announced.

FINANCE. FINANCE REPORTS:

- AUGUST/SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER

Sewer: Noted that septic revenues were down relative to last year. There were no anomalies in expenses. A deposit from USDA brings cash/investments to ~\$675K.

Water: Water's user fees are down; several large, but temporary, users are missing this year. There were no anomalies in expenses. Cash/investments are ~\$700K.

- Aging Report. A. Lewis stated that currently there were 15 sewer and 10 water accounts over 90 days past due. One party has been obstinate in complying. E. Taubman reminded everyone that legal addresses were Post Office boxes on Block Island; not street addresses. He reminded finance, that tax notices should include sewer and water bills
- Wastewater Collection Policy. A. Lewis reported that there was little support for hiring an outside collection agency; there was only one outstanding wastewater fine. D. Thimble estimated that another five fines were possible.
- Affordable Housing Grants. A. Lewis stated that before the Commission entertained additional loans, it needs to have a serious discussion with Geremia & Associates about paying down what already exist; current debt is ~\$1M. C. McGinnes speculated whether the Commission could borrow from reserves to complete construction of the units and then have rent payments go back to reimburse reserves. E. Taubman said that he would look into what is acceptable wording, by RIMFAC (Mortgage Finance Assistance Corporation), for specifying lessee eligibility.
- Report on Water & Sewer Rate Design Workshop. A workshop review, written by Bob Morency from Rural Community (RCAP) was distributed. The objectives are to ease rates for year-round users (non-impact), as opposed to seasonal (high impact) users, have a base rate (with an flow allowance) to recover costs not directly related to production, plus a flow charge. The workshop will resume in January 2008.

OPERATIONS REPORTS FOR WATER AND SEWER PLANTS.

C. McGinnes suggested that if the monthly reports were mailed out with meeting packages and agenda, the verbal readings could be dispensed with and topics needing discussion could then be addressed.

Water. D. Simmons said that the new roofs were completed; preliminary work for electrical updates and installation of the sprinkler system were started. Geremia reported that the DEM RIPDES discharge permit may

be received by end of the month. Sands Pond level continues to drop, presenting an ideal time to start exploration for past water flows. The major problem in Sands Pond is the phosphorus level and it's unknown where it is coming from. The easiest way to get rid of it is dredging; in the old days the Pond dried up in the winter and people farmed the peat to burn over the winter.

Before Sands Pond is consider for abandonment as a drinking water source, one of the other wells should be drilled into the deep aquifer as a backup to wells 5 and 6. C. McGinnes, in favor of drilling well 4 because it is the furthest removed, said that aluminum wire could be run in the existing conduit; it would help with the installation costs, but not with the voltage drop. Power could be brought in from Payne Road; an electrical engineer will be needed for the design.

Sewer. RI Septage Disposal Fee Update. n/a

- Wastewater Management Inspector's Report. D. Thimble said that the number of sub-standard systems was not changing; the ones that are not leaking are not a problem. A lot of upgrades are being performed. Galleys have been outlawed, they do not work; if a septic system needs renovation, then they must be upgraded. H. Rice added that three-quarters of the island have galley systems.

C. McGinnes inquired about hooking up Ebbit Hollow to the municipal collection system; the resistance is in cost of the installation.

3. Draft for Update to TNS Comprehensive Plan: Water, Sewer, Wastewater. A preliminary draft was available for the Commissioners. C. McGinnes deflexed on areas of future development should be added: Ebbits Hollow for sewer and water, New Harbor for water and Old Town Road for sewer.

4. Correspondence, Announcements and Public Comment.

- November 1 letter from J. Geremia re: Notice of Award to Waterline Industries.
- November 26, Sewer Commission/Water Board Retreat. C. McGinnes called for input for topics.
- Holiday Turkeys for Employees. The Commission unanimously agreed to present holiday wishes to all of its employees with a turkey from Block Island grocery.

5. Adjourn.

MOTION: by H. Rice to adjourn the meeting and that the time period for the filing of the minutes be extended to 75 days from today's date. 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: 25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Janet Ziegler
District Clerk

Approved: December 11, 2007

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