



TOWN OF KINGSTON
BOARD OF WATER COMMISSIONERS
OPEN SESSION
WATER DEPT OFFICE - 22 ELM ST, MICHAEL J.
MACPHERSON MEETING ROOM & VIA ZOOM
NOVEMBER 28, 2023

4:00 PM – CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Richard W Loring Jr called the meeting to order at 4:00pm.

In attendance were Vice Chairman Erlandsen, Superintendent Chris Veracka and Clerk, Stacey Smith.
Attending via ZOOM was Kristen Berger of Resilient CE.

APPROVAL OF DEPARTMENT BILL SCHEDULES:

MEETING MINUTES:

VOTE TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF OCTOBER 30, 2023 AND NOVEMBER 15, 2023

Ms. Smith made an editorial edit to the agenda. She mistakenly dated the minutes for approval as October 30, 2023. She stated the Board met on November 1, 2023 not October 30, 2023.
The minutes to be approved were for November 1 and November 15, 2023. She apologized for the error on the agenda.

Chairman Loring made the motion to approve the minutes of November 1, 2023. Vice Chairman Erlandsen seconded the motion, and it was voted on unanimously (2-0-0).

The minutes of November 15, 2023, will be tabled for the next meeting.

APPOINTMENTS:

KRISTEN BERGER OF RESILIENT CE, RE: ENGINEERING UPDATES

GRASSY HOLE WATER TREATMENT PLANT - WINSTON NEEDS TO RETURN TO MAKE HYPO TANK AREA REPAIRS

Ms. Berger told the Board that both Nick from Winston Builders and Superintendent Veracka had come to an agreement to have the hypo tank containment area repaired this Friday.

MAIN STREET WATER MAIN PROJECT

Ms. Berger stated the design drawings for the project should be ready for review in a couple of weeks. The goal is to have submittal to Mass DOT by the end of December.

Chairman Loring said he was happy to hear this was moving according to schedule.

Superintendent Veracka referenced the Grassy Hole hypo tank repair. He said, as Kristen had stated the repair is scheduled to be made on Friday. Chairman Loring asked Superintendent Veracka if he felt this repair would correct the issue. Superintendent Veracka stated yes, with the correct materials he felt it would correct the issue.

Chairman Loring thanked Ms. Berger for her time.

WATER SUPERINTENDENT DEPARTMENTAL UPDATE:

FOREMAN ERIC HILLSTROM RESIGNED FROM HIS POSITION EFFECTIVE DECEMBER 1, 2023

Superintendent Veracka stated he received a letter of resignation from foreman, Eric Hillstrom. His last day is Friday, December 1, 2023. The letter was received last week and Eric gave two weeks notice. Eric will be the superintendent of the North Sagamore Water District. Superintendent Veracka said it is tough to see him go. He will be missed.

We will start the search and hiring process for a foreman. Vice Chairman Erlandsen asked if the short-term resolution was extra shifts for the current department. Superintendent Veracka stated no extra shifts, but the current crew will be taking on some additional work. Vice Chairman Erlandsen asked if there were any in-house candidates that would be interested. Superintendent Veracka stated no, unfortunately, we don't have anyone in-house that is qualified. They do not hold the required licenses. Chairman Loring asked if any of the water employees had passed enough of the tests to be a foreman. Superintendent Veracka stated one of them has, but he does not hold the cross connection survey license. There's another employee who will be completing his second license and will take the exam in several weeks. Chairman Loring said it's a tough situation for the short term, but it's important that employees know a line of progression is available to them if they are willing, and it's important the superintendent provides employees with all the support they need to potentially move up. He added, in theory, we've lost three employees in a short period of time, and we need to figure out what is happening and see if we can correct how we are dealing with each and every employee so that we maintain a desire to stay here.

Vice Chairman Erlandsen said, we can only do so much and there's not much that can be done for people advancing themselves in their careers.

Discussion continued regarding the conversation Chairman Loring had with Eric Hillstrom regarding his departure and how Eric stated that while he enjoyed working for the Kingston Water Department, this opportunity was a career goal he had set.

Vice Chairman Erlandsen asked if there were any certifications needed specifically for the foreman position and asked, in the short term, will we be OK? Superintendent Veracka stated the current employees are "OIT" or "operator in training" and do not have their "full" licenses. We will continue with water department operations. There is nothing preventing the department from operating without a foreman.

FY25 BUDGET & CAP PLANNING - OVERALL REVIEW BEFORE FINAL SUBMISSION TO TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

Superintendent Veracka presented a copy of the FY25 budget that was submitted to the Town Administrator. He noted a few things have changed since the last presentation regarding the capital plan.

Ms. Smith told the Board, a proposal for \$300,000 for water tank painting has been added. This is proposed to come out of revenue not free cash.

Additionally, Superintendent Veracka stated he met with USG and discussed adding the Smith's Lane tank to the water tank maintenance program. They will be putting together some figures for that proposal.

Superintendent Veracka said, regarding the purchase of a foreman's truck, this will be pushed forward a year and give the department another year to accumulate additional revenue.

Superintendent Veracka stated he received two roofing quotes from contractors. It's been difficult finding contractors that are interested in municipal work. One of the contractors returned for another "look" and more thorough investigation and he is waiting on those confirmed numbers.

Regarding the FY25 departmental budget, any increases are beyond the department's control. Chairman Loring stated the water treatment increase is shocking. Superintendent Veracka stated the biggest increase was with the Grassy Hole Treatment Plant as he believes the chemicals had not previously been taken into account. He stated going forward, we should see that maintain.

Vice Chairman Erlandsen asked, maintenance wise, if we put the foreman's truck off a year, will that hurt the fleet. Superintendent Veracka said no, as we maintain our own vehicles and keep maintenance vehicles on the truck. Ms. Smith asked Superintendent Veracka to explain the quote on the truck to Vice Chairman Erlandsen as he was not present at the previous meeting. Superintendent Veracka stated historically we have paid between 55-58K on a new truck. He explained the quote for the truck came in at 102K which was almost double our budget. Vice Chairman

Erlandsen stated he now understood the reasoning for the delay in the purchase.

ELM STREET TANK MAINTENANCE UPDATE

Superintendent Veracka stated the tank is 3/4 of the way painted and will be completed weather permitting. The bottom six feet of the tank remains to be finished. He was out at the site today, and they are cleaning up and breaking down equipment. They can paint as long as the surface temps are above 35 degrees. He added, we may be able to start adding water to the tank as early as next week. Chairman Loring asked, regarding the brackets on the top of the tank, how are they removed? Superintendent Veracka stated the brackets are permanently attached and they hold the arms. The arms will be removed by a man lift. The contractor suggested the top coat on the top of the tank be completed after the cell tower companies reinstall their equipment. This will prevent any damage to the painted surface on the top of the tank. This will happen in late spring when temps are warmer. Chairman Loring said that was a good idea and wanted the cell companies to be aware any damage caused by their equipment installation would be subject to their expense. He suggested perhaps this might persuade them to be a little gentle.

Superintendent Veracka stated the inside of the tank looks great, and the mixer control panel is installed and looks good as well.

SOUTH STREET VFD ISSUE UPDATE

Superintendent Veracka told the Board the new VFD was installed today at South Street. The well is running now and is back online. Superintendent Veracka said what needs to be determined by the electrician is whether the warranty includes the equipment and labor or just the equipment. Chairman Loring asked now that South Street is back online, will this allow us to begin to fill the Elm St Water tank when we are able without having to rely solely on Trackle Pond. Discussion continued regarding the plants running in sequence.

Superintendent Veracka stated Soules Pond had a pump failure and that well is currently offline.

Superintendent Veracka received an earth removal permit application yesterday regarding PK Realty Trust, representing the Norrie Family, pursuing a cranberry bog legacy project. This proposed project is near Trackle Pond Well. Chairman Loring suggested this be peer-reviewed by Kristen Berger at Resilient CE. Superintendent Veracka agreed, as they are proposing 1 million cubic yards to be removed and a portion of this project is in Zone 2.

NEW BUSINESS:

DEADLINES TO OPT OUT OF EITHER CLASS ACTION LAWSUIT, DUPONT & 3M, NEED TO BE MADE BY EARLY DECEMBER 2023.

Chairman Loring stated the next order of business was to decide whether to opt out of the PFAS class action lawsuits. This determination needs to be made in early December.

Vice Chairman Erlandsen felt there was more potential benefit to staying in the lawsuits versus opting out. He suggested not opting out. Chairman Loring stated he worries about the PFAS levels being lowered in the future. Superintendent Veracka said his concern is, if we stay involved, what the expenses will be on our end for testing and monitoring. These PFAS tests are very expensive. Superintendent Veracka asked Ms. Berger how other towns she works with may be addressing these lawsuits. Ms. Berger stated she was unsure if the towns are responsible for the testing expenses or if they are reimbursed out of settlement money. Discussion continued regarding the pros and cons and concerns of the lawsuit and the involvement, if any, of Mass DEP.

Vice Chairman Erlandsen made the motion not to opt out of the Dupont class action lawsuit. Chairman Loring seconded the motion, and it was voted on unanimously (2-0-0).

Vice Chairman Erlandsen made the motion not to opt out of the 3M class action lawsuit. Chairman Loring seconded the motion, and it was voted on unanimously (2-0-0).

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

KELLEHER ESTATE UPDATE (IF ANY)

No update

WATER CORRESPONDENCE FROM LAST MEETING:

NONE

BUSINESS OF WATER QUALITY REVIEW COMMITTEE:

NONE

NEXT REGULAR MEETING:

SCHEDULING OF NEXT MEETING TO BE DISCUSSED.

Ms. Smith asked the Board about the December schedule. She referenced we typically only have one meeting in December due to the holidays. Vice Chairman Erlandsen said he was able to go back to our normal schedule in January 2024 and asked to meet on Monday, December 11, 2023 at 4pm.

ADJOURNMENT OF OPEN SESSION:

Vice Chairman Erlandsen made a motion to adjourn. Chairman Loring seconded the motion, and it was voted on unanimously (2-0-0).

The meeting adjourned at 4:32pm.

ZOOM INFORMATION

TOPIC: BOARD OF WATER COMMISSIONERS

TIME: THIS IS A RECURRING MEETING MEET ANYTIME

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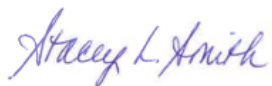
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Respectfully submitted,



Stacey L. Smith
Clerk