

Milford Water/Wastewater Commissioners' Meeting Minutes

June 23, 2020

Present: Michael Putnam, Chairman
Robert Courage, Vice-Chairman
Dale White, Commissioner
Kevin Stetson, Director, Water Utilities Department
Evelyn Gendron, WUD Executive Assistant, Videographer

Call to Order

At 6:08 p.m. Chairman Putnam called the meeting to order with introductions. He explained that in light of COVID-19, steps recommended by the Center of Disease Control (CDC) will be taken to reduce the risk of infection while conducting this open, Public Meeting, including:

- *disinfecting* the conference room table prior to/after the meeting
- *encouraging* public comments/questions be submitted prior to the meeting, via phone 249-0661, or email: kstetson@milford.nh.gov to be read aloud during the meeting and facilitate public participation
- *requesting* people who exhibit COVID symptoms not to attend the meeting
- *encouraging* application of hand sanitizer prior to the meeting
- *encouraging* social distancing
- *encouraging* face masks be worn by meeting participants

The Board of Commissioners must meet to ensure that local government keeps functioning and values the public's cooperation to keep everyone safe.

Press and Public Comments – none

Decisions & Approvals

Meeting Minutes – Upon motion by Commissioner White, seconded by Vice-Chairman Courage, the meeting minutes of the May 28, 2020 commissioners' meeting were approved as presented. The motion passed by the 3/0 vote.

Water Users Fee/Tax Collector's Warrant – May 2020 – The commissioners signed the Tax Collector's Warrant for collection of taxes in the matter of water users fees for the May 2020 Bill Commitment 200529 in the amount of \$158,060.03 and for the May 2020 Final Bills issued in the amount of \$601.39.

Sewer Users Fee/Tax Collector's Warrant – May 2020 – The commissioners signed the Tax Collector's Warrant for collection of taxes in the matter of sewer users fees for the May 2020 Bill Commitment 200529 in the amount of \$174,220.69 for the May 2020 Final Bills issued in the amount of \$404.91.

Discussion/Information Items

Public Comment Period - NPDES Permit Renewal

Director Stetson provided a summary of correspondence and the EPA Public Notice Number NH-013-20 for the period May 20, 2020 through June 22, 2020. The EPA declined Milford's request for an extension for studying the treatment plant capacity at the present time. Plant capacity can be addressed in the future through the NHDES, one year after the after permit compliance was suggested. A final permit decision will be issued after the EPA has reviewed and responded to comments. Wastewater treatment facility upgrades will be necessary to improve effluent treatment for meeting new standards. Requests for proposals will be prepared toward meeting permit requirements. A pre-application for available state revolving funds for loans and grants has been sent to NHDES. Chairman Putnam inquired of 2021 Capital Improvement Project equipment upgrade plans and costs. The Board's attention was then drawn to this evening's agenda item #5 CIP topic for discussion, specifically to Director Stetson's 9/18/2019 spreadsheet of 2020 – 2025 CIP projections, referring to projects classified in differing inks to differentiate between projects as "Existing", "New" and "Moved".

Projects identified as "New" CIP project topics included:

- 2020: WWTF Nutrient and Metals Upgrade (EPA Permit)
Milford Water Utilities' maintenance management software
- 2021: WWTF Equipment Upgrades
- 2022: WWTF Capped Sludge Landfill Remediation
Main Pump Station Flood Prevention Improvements
- 2025: Curtis Well Re-pack
Water Main Parallel main project

Mr. Stetson roughly estimated CIP costs for the Aeration Basin Treatment Upgrade, WWTF SCADA PLS upgrades, WAS Holding Tanks, Effluent Filtration, and MWUD Maintenance Management Software to amount to the ballpark cost of between \$6 million and \$9 million, based upon exact 2015 Facility Plan costs as were laid out in the Capital Reserve Plan to bring projects into place before the permit was issued. No percentage-based increase had been factored by Mr. Stetson.

Vice-Chairman Courage suggested that since that Milford has been notified of what needs to be done to be in compliance with the permit renewal requirements, a Request for Proposal should be prepared and distributed, to bring a consultant firm on board to review Underwood Engineers' 2015 Facility Plan report, to review the Facility Plan's numbers and the thoughts outlined within the Facility Plan in comparison to today's 2020 reality. Beyond capacity, which is not a consideration today, design documents of what needs to be done to meet the phosphate and aluminum permit requirements must be planned. The RFP must be distributed this year to select a consultant firm to do this scope of work, including costs, the design, and supporting documents to be finalized and received by July of 2021, well ahead of Milford's Town Meeting in 2022 for construction. Capital Reserve Funds should be utilized for this engineering work. Additionally, he said, the project items specified by Mr. Stetson as part of the permit upgrade should be confirmed as necessary by the engineering firm selected as a result of the RFP process. Mr. Stetson agreed, stating that he could assemble the RFP's, with no money to be agreed on at this time, and decisions could be made after the RFP bids are received, similar to the recent water main project RFP whereby the engineering firm managed the design, plan and bidding. Commissioner White reiterated the RFP must first allow the engineering firm to be selected, based upon cost effective plans to ensure new permit limitation compliance. Chairman Putnam noted that engineering firm funds needed for July 2021 expenses must be allocated by early December 2020. Mr. Courage stated that the Board of Water/Sewer Commissioners reserve the right to award this RFP bid based upon the best engineering proposal in the best interest of Milford, not necessarily based upon price. RFP responses should spell out specific, main tasks and

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assign an item cost per main task. For instance, “Existing Permit Review....Price”, “Project Design....Price”, “Project Implementation...Price”, “Project Inspection...Price” and “Project Close-out...Price” will be expressed within the RFP, inviting engineering firms to cite their qualifications based upon their experience with having planned and managed similar work for other treatment facilities in response to NPDES permit upgrade requirements. Doing so will facilitate processing Capital Reserve payments as the work stages are completed.

Commissioner White inquired of the Collection System CMOM (Capacity, Management, Operation and Maintenance) program status. Due to the COVID-19 challenges facing many workplaces, this program had stalled temporarily. Mr. Stetson will contact Hoyle Tanner to schedule a date to meet at the Water Utilities Department CMOM, as well as schedule next steps for the Asset Management Program which is approximately 80% complete. These important project titles will remain on each future BOC agenda through project completion.

Water Ban Update

On Saturday, June 20th, a press release was distributed announcing the water use restriction, with the exception of watering vegetable gardens. Distribution was made to WMUR-TV, social media accounts, and the Town webpage. Residents have called and requested clarification. Water use has been reduced and water storage tank levels are improving as a result of implementing the water ban. With the combination of water use, expected dry weather and lower Souhegan River levels, we can expect to keep the restrictions in place during the next couple of months, depending on changes in the dry weather conditions. Notification of the water ban will be made to local newspapers. The Milford School District has requested an exception to the outdoor watering ban to water their sports/field zones. The fields include the three at the high school, one at Heron Pond School and one at Jacques School. Many local families look forward to enjoying Keyes Pool during the next six to eight weeks. Deciding how to conserve and preserve precious water during a drought to maintain appropriate water levels to meet the needs of many must be weighed with an abundance of caution in the event of fire suppression needs. During this time of a pandemic warranting safer-at-home guidelines and maintaining social distances to reduce the risk of spreading a COVID respiratory infection, imposing outdoor water restrictions is very necessary yet may be unpopular. The nearby town of Merrimack lost two wells due to PFOA issues. Nashua’s Pennichuck Water provides water to Merrimack, while is contracted on a stand-by basis to supply up to 1 million gallons of water daily to Milford, if needed.

Following a long discussion, it is with deep regret that the Board of Water and Sewer Commissioners reluctantly decided to not agree to allow the Keyes Pool to be filled with water or the Milford School District to water their athletic fields, upon the motion made at 6:52 p.m. by Chairman Putnam, seconded by Vice-Chairman Courage. Motion passed by the 3/0 commissioners’ vote. The commissioners requested to receive water level details each Friday regarding the amount of Milford’s water demand, production, and specifically what the water well level is above the screen. Further, a BOC work session meeting will be scheduled with Pennichuck Water to determine contract requirements to increase Milford’s back-up water supply limit from one million gallons to two million gallons. It was noted that Pennichuck Water had not yet implemented an outdoor watering ban as of today. The NHDES Drinking Water and Groundwater Bureau announced that the entire state was categorized as abnormally dry as of June 18th and has issued a press release urging private well owners to conserve, and those on public water systems to abide by restrictions. As the NHDES announced in today’s email, over the last 60 days, the state has experienced a significant deficit in precipitation when compared to average precipitation amounts for the same time period. The neighboring town of Merrimack is practicing enforcement of its current outdoor watering restrictions, including disconnection and a reconnection fee. Milford’s water ordinance does not allow for enforcement currently, however a NHDES regulation model

may assist Milford with options to consider. Low water level alarms have been experienced in Milford recently, the pumps have shut off. Low Souhegan River levels coincide with low well water levels. Water conservation is very important. The aquifer supplying Milford's water wells serves many. Chairman Putnam will schedule a meeting with the Wilton Water Commissioners to discuss valuable water resources that need careful management.

Next step water exploration options to consider might include Pennichuck as a permanent second source, Fernwood Drive water tank as a reserve storage, neighboring town agreement, and a water supply on the south end of town. Near Cirtronics is an existing water well supply, which was not included in the Emery and Garrett survey of water supplies. It may be time to renew a dialogue with Emery and Garrett. With legal assistance, it may be possible to circumvent conservation easements that preclude entrance to properties for well testing for a community like Milford. Land conservation protection and water wells can coexist. Chairman Putnam will research the degree to which legal intervention may be necessary to navigate established easement restrictions.

Dewatering Project Update

The commissioners reviewed Director Stetson's June 23rd correspondence noting that Alfa Laval is looking into the centrifuge diverter leak, as Underwood Engineers had forwarded a video depicting that the leak is in the same location as prior to introducing sludge to the unit. The operations staff is working with Alfa Laval and the polymer supplier to fine tune the centrifuge efficiency. Process changes such as septage received, temperature, and process removal rates all may contribute to the recent dewatered sludge not being as dry as earlier operations. Adjustments needed to address these issues should be made part of the operating procedures for maintaining process improvements and efficiency. The commissioners reviewed Underwood Engineers' updated substantial completion project punch list through March 25th, as well as their budget update indicating that \$22,532 of the centrifuge pre-purchase is "ahead of budget costs" and this amount could be included in the last disbursement request. For this project, Milford has 10% loan forgiveness, and the Town of Wilton will be responsible for 14.89% of the overall project cost.

2020 Hydrant Rentals

Director Stetson explained that the present hydrant rental fee is \$344.00 per hydrant. The last change in per-hydrant rental rate was done in 2010. Some hydrants have been added since 2010. Currently Milford has 503 hydrants, and two in Amherst. He asked whether the commissioners wanted to propose a change for the 2021 per-hydrant rate, while noting that the 2019 water main improvement project was intended to improve the water system fire protection capacity. This improvement benefits the Town of Milford. Hydrant rental fees will assist in absorbing the costs of the water main improvement project. For the July 7th BOC meeting, Mr. Stetson will present the hydrant rental fee recommended in the most recent water rate study for the commissioners' consideration, as that fee may be "unsaleable".

2021 Capital Improvement Plan

Mr. Stetson distributed a spreadsheet of last year's CIP presentation, asking whether the commissioners wanted to add to or change any projects for the 2021 – 2026 CIP project/budget list of "placeholders" to be forwarded to the Community Development Director, Lincoln Daley in September. He will make it abundantly clear that our CIP projections are just placeholders until the wastewater permit renewal RFP engineering bids are received, an engineering firm is selected and which necessary, projected costs relative to the construction portion of the wastewater permit upgrade are known. Also included in the CIP spreadsheet is the landfill remediation, for which Emery and Garret has completed the sampling aspects and is working on the plan of action to be presented to the NHDES. Those costs will be identified for the CIP presentation to the Community Development Department in September. He asked whether the commissioners would consider keeping or

changing plans for the 2021 Brookview pump station improvement project, or keeping/delaying the 2023 plan to eliminate old 4” pipe so that new 8” pipe may be installed on Linden to Olive Street, Olive Street to Laurel, in addition to on Laurel Street and on Riverview Street.

Flow Meter Calibration Results

The calibration results received indicated “within specification” reflecting that sewage gallons-per-day levels exceeded earlier projections. Chairman Putnam questioned whether the drought these past four weeks created a decrease in numbers. Mr. Stetson agreed that seasonal usage is higher December through May. Mr. Putnam asked if there is not much infiltration whether it would be worth doing some more pipeline work. Mr. Courage commented that the collection system is generally pretty tight. It was agreed that the asset management and CMOM program work will begin to reveal more information.

Items Not On The Agenda

Director Stetson will be following the relationship between the anticipated quarterly water/sewer revenue projections and the actual revenue.

Activities Report

Reviewed by the commissioners. The Water Foreman will be requested to submit meaningful water department accomplishments and planned activity one-liners. The vacant water department operator position has been filled. Some good candidates for the equipment operator vacancy will be interviewed.

Financial Reports

The commissioners reviewed the following financial reports:

- Year To Date Budget & Appropriation Reports, dated June 3, 2020
- Revenue Report by Department, dated June 3, 2020
- Grand Total Water and Sewer Revenue through May 2020

Non-Public Session – RSA 91-A:3,II(a) Personnel

At 7:24 p.m., the motion made by Chairman Putnam to enter into the non-public session per RSA 91-A:3,II(a) for the purpose of discussing personnel, seconded by Mr. White, was unanimously approved. The motion carried by the 3/0 “aye” votes.

Adjournment – The meeting adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

Future Meetings

- Tuesday, 7/7/2020 6:00 p.m. at the Water Utilities Department, 564 Nashua Street

Michael Putnam, Chairman

Date

Robert Courage, Vice-Chairman

Date

Dale White, Commissioner

Date