

May 20, 2020

A regular meeting of the Board of Water Commissioners was called to order by Chairperson Michael Caron at 12:00 noon. Commissioners present were Paul Ingersoll, Paul Poulin, Sean Brungot and ex-officio member Mayor Paul Grenier. Also in attendance were Superintendent Craig Carrigan, General Foreman Steve Lefebvre and Lynne C. Lessard.

There was neither Public nor Board comments.

It was moved by Commissioner Poulin, seconded by Mayor Grenier, with all in favor to accept and place on file, the Minutes of February 19, 2020. For the record, the Board of Water Commissioners did not hold their scheduled meeting on March 18<sup>th</sup> or the April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020 meeting due to COVID-19 State of Emergency Governor's Emergency Order #23 Pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04. However, staff continued to supply the Board with their monthly information packet.

Under the Berlin Water Works Monthly Status Report dated May 20, 2020, Superintendent Carrigan reviewed and discussed the following with the Board:

1. Treatment Systems - Ammonoosuc Treatment Facility & Brown Farm Well:
  - a. The FBOP Berlin has contacted the Berlin Water Works and would like us to do their backflow testing and bacteria testing. They are not satisfied with current testing company and would like us to do the testing. We sent them our rates and they are in the process of getting approval.
  - b. We assisted Androscoggin Valley Hospital with checking chlorine residuals in the facility. They are required to maintain at least a .1% chlorine residual throughout the building. The maintenance supervisor met with us and we took the residuals where the water lines entered the building and at the furthest points on all three floors. They are required to do this in case of a Legionella outbreak. If a .1% is not maintained, they will need to incorporate an internal flushing program within the facility.
  - c. Donny covered for the foreman and treatment plant duties at the beginning of last month. Steve was forced to quarantine for two week and Marc was out on vacation.
2. Distribution System & Compliance:
  - a. Water supplied into the distribution system for April averaged 1.47 MGD. The average for the last three months was 1.55 MGD.
  - b. April's daily sludge flow to the City Pollution Control facility was 120,489 GPD.
  - c. Burgess Bio-Mass April water usage was 674,438 GPD.
  - d. Burgess Bio-Mass was offline for 5 days in the month of February, 1.5 days in March and 6 days in April.
  - e. The Staff cut down and removed some trees at the Brown Farm Well field that had been killed by the spruce budworm.
  - f. The 2020 Water Main Improvement List was sent to the Public Works Director to inform him what streets we are planning to be working on this season and to find out if he has any issues in those areas that he wants to take care of before we final pave. I also mentioned we are interested in partnering with the PWD to work on the River Walk Project.
  - g. The staff has been doing ground work at the Brown Farm Well in preparation to install the new fencing for the Local Source Water Protection grant.
  - h. We sold the materials and subcontracted to Presby Fabrication to fuse the 6" HDPE pipe and assisted in laying the fire line to their office on Jericho Road. The cost billed was \$6,905.57.
3. Water Meter Replacements & Backflow Preventers Project:
  - a. Meter replacements have been put on hold due to Covid-19. In the last two months, 34 backflow preventers have been installed. So far, we have installed 157 new meters. Our

- goal was 200 this season. Our new plan will be to increase number next season and install 243 meters.
- b. We had ten 24-year-old meters sent out and tested for accuracy. None of the ten meters passed the accuracy range of 98.5% - 101.5%. We were losing revenue on all ten meters.
4. Office System & Building Upgrades & Personnel Training:
- a. All classes for CEU's have been cancelled. At this time, we do not know when they will be rescheduled.
5. Cost Reduction/New Income/Improvements/New Customers:
- a. We have received our solar RECS for the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2019 for \$558.00 and the fourth quarter for \$80.00.
  - b. The April water usage for the total 51 accounts was \$109,225. Of this amount Burgess Bio was \$61,756 and the Federal Prison was \$17,850.
6. Safety/Personnel/Other:
- a. BWB has not had a Lost Time Accident (LTA) in the last 250 days.
  - b. We have started the yearly reviews for non-union staff.
  - c. We received our health insurance rate increase for July from Health Trust. The increase will be 0.9%.
  - d. We received 13 applications for the union job position and we will interview 5 tomorrow.
  - e. We have completed the FY21 Draft Budget and as it stands, there will be a 4.99% decrease over the FY2020 Budget. The Berlin Water Works has not had a rate increase for the past 23 years.
  - f. Since 2015, we have made early debt payments in the amount of \$1,957,566. This computes to a savings of \$292,691 if we would have not paid down the loans early.

It was moved by Commissioner Brungot, seconded by Commissioner Ingersoll, with all in favor to accept and place on file the Berlin Water Works Monthly Status Reports for the months of February, March and the May Report dated May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

It was moved by Commissioner Ingersoll, seconded by Commissioner Brungot, with all in favor to accept and place on file, the Cashier's Report for the month of February, 2020.

It was moved by Commissioner Poulin, seconded by Commissioner Ingersoll, with all in favor to accept and place on file, the Cashier's Report for the month of March, 2020.

It was moved by Commissioner Brungot, seconded by Commissioner Ingersoll, with all in favor to accept and place on file, the Cashier's Report for the month of April, 2020.

**Under Old Business:**

- a. Project Status:
  - 1. 2020 Capital Improvements Status: We plan on starting in the streets on June 1<sup>st</sup>. We are going to do three service lines on Main Street. While we have funding, we will do that first then off to Western Avenue. After that if funding permits, we will start on Goebel Street in front of Alpine machine shop.
  - b. BWB Office Building Settling Issues: The Superintendent informed the Board that HEB Engineering is willing to make a payment toward our outstanding invoice for the Willow Street Foundation & Slab Work. AR Couture has retained Attorney Jack Crisp. We have in turn have had our Attorney Roland Oliver respond to his Attorney in a letter dated May 01, 2020. There was no further information to provide to the Board at this meeting.
  - c. Other Old Business: There was no other old business to discuss with the Board.

Under New Business:

- a. **BWW Response to COVID-19 Status:** This also hit the Berlin Water Works by surprise. We stopped meter upgrades and only did the essential work such as turning water on for those coming back from their winter homes. We closed the office to the public but continue to take on-line payments, checks by mail and the use of our drop box outside the office. As for safety in the office, we are looking into installing plexi-glass as a shield to the customers when the Governor lifts the orders to reopen. The Chair suggested glass as a possible more permanent solution. As of this date, it is undetermined when our office can open to the public and meet social distancing guidelines. The Mayor said that City Hall is open by appointment only.
- b. **Approve Red Flag Policy:** It was moved by Mayor Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Poulin, with all in favor to accept and place on file, the Red Flag Policy with revised date of February 25, 2020 signed by the Chair & Clerk.
- c. **Approve Construction Charge Out Rates:** The only changes to the rates were the labor charges. It was moved by Commissioner Poulin, seconded by Mayor Grenier, with all in favor to accept and place on file the FY20-FY21 Berlin Water Works Hourly Charges & Special Services effective April 01, 2020.
- d. **Re-appoint Commissioner Paul Poulin:** During the City Council meeting held on April 2020, the council accepted the Mayor's re-nomination of Paul Poulin as a member of the Berlin Water Works Commission with a term to expire May 01, 2024. Commissioner Poulin will continue as Clerk of the Board.
- e. **Approve SRL #11 Payment:** It was moved by Mayor Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Brungot to make our annual payment to the State in the amount of \$132,486.10. There are no more loan payments to be made to the State for FY20.
- f. **FY2021 Budget Review:** The Superintendent asked the Board if they had any additional questions regarding the draft FY21 Budget that was sent off to them April 15<sup>th</sup>. The upcoming budget reflects a 4.99% decrease from FY2020. The Chair is hopeful that the FY22 Budget could even be lower as we will no longer have any State Revolving Funds to work with. At this time, the Superintendent said that he was sent a survey from the NHDES to find if we had any further "shovel ready" projects. He told the Board that Yes, we do and have about \$5.2m in already designed projects. In the past, we always over engineered the projects so that we were prepared to continue replacing water mains. He also said that several years ago when "ARRA" funds were available, we were the first in the State that was shovel- ready. After discussing the survey, it was moved by Mayor Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Brungot, with all in favor to move forward and present the FY21 Forecast Budget to the Public. The Public Hearing has been scheduled for May 27, 2020 at 5:30pm via "Zoom" presentation.
- g. **Wallace Cartwright – 99 Pine Street:** We received a letter addressed to the Board of Water Commissioners dated May 04, 2020. Mr. Cartwright is requesting an abatement because he received a high sewer bill as sewer is based on water consumption. After review of his account, we find notes that there was a leak in the basement and he wanted the water turned off for repairs. As per our rules and regulations, we may make a one-time adjustment for a leak as we would do for any customer. This abatement will be \$195.00. Abatements are made on the Assessment portion of the bill and not the consumption. The office will contact Mr. Cartwright to let him know that we are making the adjustment and he can contact the Sewer Department to discuss a sewer adjustment.
- h. **Approve Other & Communications:**
  1. **211-215 Glen Avenue:** The garage was turned off for non-payment in September 2019. On that property is a small shop that has its own water service. The office has been reviewing accounts that will be put on the next round of disconnects. Due to COVID-19 and the State of Emergency, we are not able to turn off any customer who cannot pay their bill during these trying times. However; BWW did discover that a hose connection was set up by the owner from the shop to the turned off business. We were informed that a sewer bill was sent to the previous tenant of the small shop that had moved out in October,

2018 and had left the water account in good standing. Since then, there has been high usage to the vacant shop which led BWB to investigate thinking that maybe the pipes had frozen and split only to drive by and discover the hose connection. The previous tenant of the shop provided us with a cellphone video clip of the connection from shop to garage and also there is also a split in the hose spilling out water onto the ground. It was suggested by the Mayor to contact our Attorney for guidance on turning the vacant shop off as this account is no longer in good standing prior to the Covid-19 State of Emergency and to contact the City Manager about whether they will be tax-deeding the property.

2. Retired BWB Superintendent Roland Viens has contacted Superintendent Carrigan to approach the Board to request a change in his Health Insurance Plan provided by Health Trust as he and his wife have moved to Florida where our current plan network does not cover out of state. Mr. Viens has been also been in contact with our Health Trust representative Peter Chapel and found a plan thru Health Trust. When Mr. Viens retired, the Board agreed to pay for a single plan until his wife retired at the age of 65. After discussion, the Board agreed that since there is only one year left to pay for coverage, that he would be able to switch plans as long as there is no additional cost to BWB. It was moved by Commissioner Ingersoll, seconded by Commissioner Poulin, with all in favor to allow the change thru Health Trust.

There was no other business or communications to come before the Board.

The Board agreed to hold their next regular scheduled meeting on June 17th, 2020 at noon. Location to be determined.

There were no Public or Board comments.

It was moved by Mayor Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Poulin, with all in favor to enter into a Non-Public Session under RSA91-A:3II(a) – Personnel – Wages – Grievance. By roll call vote, with all members in favor, the Board entered into the non-public session at 12:38pm. At this time, the general foreman & office manager left the meeting.

At 12:40 pm, it was moved by Commissioner Brungot, seconded by Commissioner Poulin, with all in favor, by roll call vote, to end the non-public session and enter back into the public session.

During the closed session, it was moved by Mayor Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Poulin, with all in favor to accept the Superintendents recommendations for non-union wage adjustments.

There being no further business to come before this meeting at this time, it was moved by Commissioner Poulin, seconded by Commissioner Ingersoll, with all in favor to adjourn this meeting.

The meeting did so adjourn at 1:00 pm.

A True Record:

Attest:

Paul W. Poulin, Clerk of the Board