

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' MEETING MINUTES
February 11, 2025
7:00 P.M.
CHERRY VALLEY & ROCHDALE WATER DISTRICT
VIRTUAL

I. CALL TO ORDER – Chairman McGinn called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

The following were in attendance:

Joseph McGinn, Chairman	1- online subscriber
Arthur E.J. Levesque, Commissioner - absent	
Benjamin Morris, Superintendent	
Robert H. Lemieux, Sr., Commissioner	
Jennifer Wood, Treasurer	
Cheryl Balkus, Clerk	
Michael Schrader – Capital Strategic Solutions	

II. District Member Forum – Chairman McGinn opened to the District Member Forum. There were no questions or comments from the listening audience or the board. Commissioner Lemieux motioned to close the District Member Forum. Seconded by Chairman McGinn. All in Favor. Approved.

Chairman McGinn changed the agenda to begin with Mike Schrader of Capital Strategic Solutions with the rate analysis presentation who provided several highlights and explanations from the presentation. Per request of Chairman McGinn, the presentation is to be posted to the CVRWD Website. www.cvrwd.com

Commissioner Lemieux asked if the rate structures support the recommended projects. Per Mr. Schrader the rates are designed to meet the revenue requirements as shown.

Subscriber Buteau commented that seeing this presentation for the first time is a lot to digest and asked the office for a copy of the report. Also asked if the staff and the commissioners saw this presentation prior to tonight's meeting. Per Chairman McGinn confirmed that per the timeline of the contract the commission and staff did review the presentation prior to tonight's meeting, and that the presentation can be emailed to him.

Per Chairman McGinn this is (CSS) Capital Strategic Solutions best efforts. This is just the first presentation from CSS, with no intentions to make approvals currently. Will then look for warrant articles about what may be added for additional warrants at the next annual meeting.

Per Superintendent Morris, he was very pleased and happy to work with Mike. That this was much needed, we want to manage risk and the importance of having this in place.

There were no further questions or comments from the board or listening audience. Mr. Schrader was excused from the meeting.

III. APPROVE MINUTES

January 7, 2025, Meeting Minutes – Commissioner Lemieux motioned to approve the January 7, 2025, minutes. Seconded by Chairman McGinn. All in favor. Approved.

IV. FINANCE

- A.** Approve 1/13/2025, 1/20/2025, 1/27/2025, 2/03/2025, & 2/10/2025 warrants.

Chairman McGinn motions to approve all the above warrants in the amount of \$216,939.94. Seconded by Commissioner Lemieux. All in favor. Approved.

- B.** January bank transfer – Commissioner Lemieux motions to approve the transfer from the water checking account to the sewer account in the amount of \$73,723.57. Seconded by Chairman McGinn. All in favor. Approved.

- C.** Treasurer report – Beginning balance: \$1,313,530.70, Expenditures: \$798,307.54 remaining balance: \$515,223.16, Balance after reimbursements: \$63,272.60.

January 2024 Revenue: \$101,068.32, SBA Rental: \$1,973.60
Reimbursements: \$835.16 for a total of \$103,877.08.

Expenses to date	
Operating expenses	\$694,755.81
Loan payment	3,599.15
Total expenses	798,307.54
Total revenue brought in	778,585.90
Revenue expenses	(19,721.64)

Operating Budget FY'25 \$1,313,530.70
Service agreement Sewer portion \$164,065.92
Total budget \$1,477,596.62

We still need to bring in if we are to spend the whole budget \$699,010.72.
(The entire reports are available on request)

- D.** Budget line-item - Per Treasurer Wood requires a vote to have this line item added to cover the River Leak and to move \$3,095.00 from the stabilization account. Commissioner Lemieux motions to approve the line item and to move \$3,095.00 from the stabilization account. Second, by Chairman McGinn. All in favor Approved.

- E.** Draft budget - Per Superintendent Morris, this is the time of the year we begin discussions to review the budget so that at the next meeting we can discuss the changes that the district is looking at. Per Charman McGinn and Commissioner Lemieux they are prepared to take under review to discuss at the next meeting.

Subscriber Buteau asked if we have received certified free cash yet. Per Treasurer Wood is currently working with DOR (Department of Revenue) and does not have currently.

- F.** Open line of credit – Per Treasurer Wood, Mike Schrader of CSS had mentioned in his report to see if we can obtain an open line of credit in case we have another break if we do not have the money to pay for it. She reached out to the bank and was informed that because we are a government municipality, we would require hiring counsel to see if we would even be eligible. This would be a board decision. Chairman McGinn suggested that we reach out to the Water Trust Group and if they are unclear then

suggests we reach out to our current legal counsel and see if he would know or if we need to reach out to another outside counsel.

V. Administrative

- A.** Personnel update – Per Superintendent Morris we conducted 9 interviews. None are licensed however we have someone who has worked in both the water/sewer industry, has manual labor experience, has been working on his sewer license and is recommending him to the board or if there is any opposition. The applicant is very interested, has stated he is stuck where he is and has a lot of interest in the industry itself. If we were able to get him in the next two weeks he would be put in the next Distribution Class. Commissioner Lemieux motions to offer to hire Ethan Stranieri for the Water Operator position. Seconded by Chairman McGinn. All in favor. Approved.

Neil has passed his test; his rate will increase per the agreement and is beginning his water treatment class. With Christian leaving it was previously discussed bringing him back part time. This would be as of next winter, he would fill in for sickness, vacations, assisting with leaks, or if we are doing infrastructure upgrades. Having him as a back-up would be solid with his knowledge and we need to keep his license as part of the staff requirements. He could fall into on call rotations, hydrant flushing, valve exercising, terminations and so forth to allow more flexibility. Chairman McGinn is inclined to go ahead to be incorporated for next year's budget with the understanding he would not be available while in his training period of Worcester Fire and we need to put something together for a board vote that will be tabled for the next meeting.

Commissioner Levesque update: When we last spoke with him, he was still in a rehabilitation facility and said that he would be home by this meeting and would be in attendance for this evening's meeting. We did not hear back from him and did not have an update.

- B.** 16-month payment plan – Commissioner Lemieux motions to approve the 16-month repair payment plan. Seconded by Chairman McGinn. All in favor. Approved.
- C.** Drain layer application – A.J. Belculfine did work in the system applied and paid fee. Requires to be approved to do any additional work in the system if needed. Commissioner Lemieux motioned to approve. Seconded by Chairman McGinn. All in favor. Approved.
- D.** Hiring Policy – Per the Superintendent when we previously spoke on this was when we hired the last operator. He wants to speed up the process and will write up a document to have for the next meeting to be officially approved.

VI. Operations - Superintendent Report

1/18/2025 at 3:00 a.m. received a call from the police department that a vehicle went into the river and possibly damaged our water line. It was confirmed that the car did land on and broke the transmission main. A tree company was brought in first to get to the area of work, we isolated the main, a valve was cut in closer, it was required to go into both sides of head walls, repaired 38 feet of pipe, installed a steel I beam for support, and significant clean up after repairs. Water Operators Christian LeBlanc, Neil McCarthy along with office staff Cheryl Balkus and Jennifer Wood were all available for coverage. Had to file with conservation, they had no issues on their part and wants us to hire a wetlands scientist to make sure nothing disturbed. Total costs to date are

\$106,000.00. A claim has been filed with the driver's insurance company and the maximum that they will pay is \$100,000.00 and asking if we will settle. The amount has been sent to our legal counsel regarding the additional monies that will be involved that are above \$100,000.00. The uncertainty is the head wall that Mass DOT owns. Their representatives visited the site, collected information to take back to their office to discuss with others above because the entire wall is very compromised. More to come to see how we can recoup all of the district's costs so that there are no out of pocket expenses. Per Commissioner Lemieux stated that he did visit the site, met with the crew and thought that they did a significant job. He figured the total costs would be close to \$200,000.00. Per the Superintendent it will probably be about \$130,000.00. The driver's property limit is the limit and if the person has an umbrella, we would be able to go after that. However, it does not appear that the insured driver has an umbrella. Per Chairman McGinn if we receive a check not to sign it until we speak with our legal counsel. If the counsel comes back to say accept the \$100,000.00, we need to figure out a plan to cover the excess amount such as free cash.

There was a second water main break end of January in the valley. A 12" leak in the hillside. We were able to isolate and repair within 6 hours. It was old pipe and no one knew that they had lost water.

The Grindstone should be back online next week.

Forestry should begin in the summer.

190 Main St behind Ellers: The contractors came in, paid all their fees to begin their construction in the better weather.

Commissioner Lemieux asked about the Grindstone being run at its max output. Per the Superintendent we are not able to at 24/7. We would probably go through the media much sooner and try to still figure what the best capacity is for it. We need to spend time determining what savings there are since it was put online. There have been several factors that changed from when it was discussed such as overall inflation. Per Chairman McGinn has concerns such what was DEP concerns regarding the well-rehabilitation process.

- VII.** Date of Next Meeting: This was approved at the 1/7/2025 meeting. Virtual March 11, 2025, 7:00 pm
- VIII.** Adjournment: Commissioner Lemieux motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Chairman McGinn. All in favor. Approved. The meeting was adjourned at 9:11 p.m.