

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

I. CALL TO ORDER – Chairman McGinn called the meeting to order at 7:02 P.M.

The following were in attendance:

Joseph McGinn, Chairman	1 - online subscriber
Benjamin Morris, Superintendent	
Robert H. Lemieux, Sr., Commissioner	
Jennifer Wood, Treasurer	
Cheryl Balkus, Clerk	

A moment of silence was held for Commissioner Levesque.

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.

III. APPROVE MINUTES

February 11, 2025, Meeting Minutes – Commissioner Lemieux motioned to approve the February 11, 2025, minutes. Seconded by Chairman McGinn. All in favor. Approved.

IV. FINANCE

A. Approve 2/17/2025, 2/24/2025, 3/03/2025 & 3/10/2025 warrants.

Chairman McGinn motions to approve all the above warrants in the amount of \$124,095.52. Seconded by Commissioner Lemieux. All in favor. Approved.

B. February bank transfer – Commissioner Lemieux motions to approve the transfer from the water checking account to the sewer account in the amount of \$74,370.17. Seconded by Chairman McGinn. All in favor. Approved.

C. Treasurer report – Per Treasurer Wood Beginning balance: \$1,313,530.70, Expenditures: \$989,247.31 Remaining balance: \$324,283.39, Balance after reimbursements: \$447,332.83.

February Revenue: \$135,104.62, SBA Rental: \$2,018.01
Reimbursements: \$383.16, Misc Drainlayers \$62.00 for a total of \$137,567.79.

Expenses to date	
Operating expenses	\$985,648.16
Loan payment	3,599.15
Total expenses	989,247.31
Total revenue brought in	916,091.69
Revenue expenses	(\$73,155.62)

Operating Budget FY'25 \$1,313,530.70

Service agreement Sewer portion \$164,065.92
Total budget \$1,477,596.62

The River Leak came out of the budget and when we are reimbursed it will go back into the budget. As a reminder it was voted to use \$150,000.00 in free cash to use towards the budget.

Free cash certification has been received in the amount of \$1,508,008.00.

- D.** Draft budget - Per Superintendent Morris & Treasurer Wood reviewed line items and explained that due to increased prices there will be some line-item increases. Most insurances are increasing up to 20%, lab work had a 5% increase 1/1/2025 and payroll increased due to hiring a new operator at a higher amount, other employees obtaining licenses and Christian being kept on part time.
The approved FY25 budget is \$1,209,060.71, the proposed FY26 budget is \$1,359,389.58 being a difference of \$150,328.87.
Commissioner Lemieux asked about the telephone line in the amount of \$3,800.00. The line item includes items such as office phones, cell phones, Scada, cell phone chips for fire alarms, burglar alarm. Commissioner Lemieux commented about ordering from 100 to 150 meters per year and agrees with the prices going up significantly to ordering more before the increase and asked about the City of Worcester line increase since we have the well online. Per the Superintendent, unfortunately we do not know what City of Worcester is going to charge us until after the fiscal year, as previously discussed, the district has faced inflation, and we have done a lot of work over the years to lower the City of Worcester line item. The Superintendent would like to have the final budget presented at the April meeting.
- E.** Draft warrant articles – A list of the draft warrant articles was presented to the board and there were some minor corrections. The Superintendent suggested we may want to add a warrant article about funding the replacement of the line in the swamp area and the Kettle Brook Crossing. The design work for Kettle Brook has been approved and the Stafford St water line project design is underway with the one stop grant. We would need to look at the construction part of each project and perhaps utilize the free cash to upgrade and replace the 1 ½ mile line from the office to Rt. 56. Massachusetts Rural Development covered the funding of the design of the Stafford St.
Subscriber Buteau asked about article 11 (Amending certain provision of Chapter 105 acts of 1996) – Per Chairman McGinn the purpose is to update and clarify the language to reflect the current operations, the way the district is structured and how it operates with the intent is to bring it to the legislature.
- F.** Free cash transfer (Swamp Leak) – A formality suggested by DOR. Commissioner Lemieux motions to move \$300,000.00 from free cash to repair the swamp leak line item. Seconded by Chairman McGinn. All in favor. Approved.

V. Administrative

- A.** Summer Hours - Per the Superintendent would like to go forward to having summer hours (Memorial Day to Labor Day) for the staff to work four nine-hour days and half days on Fridays and most DPW's practice this. It makes it attractive to keep current employees, attracting future employees and the district would continue meeting our compliance Monday- Friday with the system that we have. The board agreed and the chairman asked for a formal request to be presented to the board at the next meeting for review and approval.

- B.** River leak update – Discussions were held with the insurance co and involved legal regarding the additional \$14,000.00 over the \$100,000.00 claim. Legal had conversations with the person who caused the accident and agreement was made with his legal representative and ours to collect the overage. \$7,000.00 has been paid, the balance to be paid in May and a check is to be issued by the insurance company for the \$100,000.00. DOT has been to the area and did not know why the barriers were removed. The overall feeling is that the entire area should be rebuilt and there would not be any expenses for the district. DOT short-term fix is to reinforce the area and have better signage installed. Commissioner Lemieux reiterated that this situation was handled so well and appreciated everyone who was involved.
- C.** Part time position – A brief description was provided to both commissioners about bringing back Christian once he has completed the fire academy. His use would allow him to come back in a few hours here or there for a cap of 20 hours as a placeholder. The purpose is the availability of working on special projects, weekend coverage, vacations, emergencies and it would be in the best interest to keep him on board for his institutional knowledge. It is set in the budget to split the time between water and sewer which is 80% water 20% sewer. Commissioner Lemieux motions to approve. Seconded by Chairman McGinn. All in favor. Approved.
- D.** 190 Main St application – This owner is looking to begin construction at the end of the month. The applications are for fire protection, water services and fire suppression. All paperwork and plans have been reviewed and approved and require the board to approve and sign the applications. Commissioner Lemieux motions to approve the applications. Seconded by Chairman McGinn. All in favor. Approved.

VI. Operations - Superintendent Report

To submit application for the Stafford St project

The well is back up and running and working with the new staff of how it operates as what we are doing and what the purpose is.

A couple of leaks found one on Craig St and another resident on Pleasant St.

Actively leak detecting to make sure we do not have any other issues.

Issues with the antenna with SCADA. In the past month there have been recurring issues and it was changed last Friday.

Working on the annual reports to have ready for the May meeting.

Swamp leak – has reached out to state representatives' and congressman to see if there is someone available to assist and ended up having a meeting with USDA. The recommendation was to write up the schedule of events that led to the break and we could possibly be eligible for a maximum of \$150,000.00. Once submitted there will be a 60-90 days follow up.

I had been working with Dave LeBouef with our district, other district and the town and met with individuals' office in Boston to sit in and hear what we face for challenges and

financial issues that the town sees. Said that they would take into consideration and work with David Leboeuf. The superintendent does not believe we will see anything immediately but the fact that we showed up to have conversation and that they are very aware of situations that have been going on and will keep a close eye on seeing if they can assist.

Our new hire Ethan has been on board for the last month and has been able to get him into the water distribution class. Our other operator Neil is working on his treatment licenses. Both are very willing to learn, it is challenging, and they are doing great.

Will be out of state for the next few days and has Superintendent Wood of Leicester Water available if something is to arise and former Superintendent Knox.

Awaiting to hear if the state will be ending the virtual meetings by 3/31.

- VII.** Date of Next Meeting: Commissioner Lemieux motions to hold the next meeting hybrid April 8, 2025, 7:00 pm. Seconded by Chairman McGinn. All in favor. Approved.
- VIII.** Adjournment: Commissioner Lemieux motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Chairman McGinn. All in favor. Approved. The meeting was adjourned at 8:33 p.m.