

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' MEETING MINUTES
July 15, 2025
7:00 P.M.
CHERRY VALLEY & ROCHDALE WATER DISTRICT
Hybrid

I. CALL TO ORDER – Chairman Shocik called the meeting to order at 7:01 P.M.

The following were in attendance:

John Shocik	2 - attending subscribers
Robert Jones	0 - online subscribers
Michael McCormick	
Benjamin Morris, Superintendent	
Jennifer Wood, Treasurer	
Cheryl Balkus, Clerk - absent	

II. District Member Forum – Chairman Shocik opened the District Member Forum. Subscriber Tom Lennon had a question about the rates. Chairman Shocik explained that they are all new board members, and the board had a few different scenarios to look at and none of them really knew about it ahead of time. The district had a rate study done and he did not really like the way the rate study was done because of the commercial rate the people who were using more were paying less on the commercial rate. Chairman Shocik stated that he came in the next day and talked to Treasurer Wood and Superintendent Morris. The Treasurer worked on more numbers and came up with another scenario that we will look at later. Commissioner Jones stated that we were doing the rates in a trial period and then we were going to go revisit it. Per Subscriber Lennon 80% of the revenue comes from the resident and asked if the one we were talking about later is still the 0-1000 tier for the first tier or not. Chairman Shocik stated no it is not. Per subscriber Lennon the 0-1000 is not fair to the lower user because of the base charge and he wanted us to look at what he did because if you divide it out and do the math the more usage you use the less you are paying per cubic foot. Per Chairman Shocik he did not look at it that way but the rates that we are going to present the less you use the less you pay. Per Treasurer Wood the rates that we are presenting we used the Capital Strategic Solution plan and played around with the commercial rate so that the large commercial customers did not see such a break. Per Chairman Shocik we will get back to talking about rates later in the agenda and asked if there was any other topics to be discussed. There were no further questions or comments from the board or the audience attending. Commissioner McCormick motioned to close the District Member Forum. Second, by Commissioner Jones. All in Favor. Approved.

III. APPROVE MINUTES

June 3, 2025, Meeting Minutes – Commissioner McCormick motioned to approve the June 3, 2025, minutes. Second, by Chairman Shocik. All in favor. Approved.

IV. FINANCE

A. Approve 6/9/2025, 6/16/2025, 6/23/2025, 6/30/2025, 7/7/2025 & 7/14/2025 warrants.

Chairman Shocik motions to approve all the above warrants. Second by Commissioner Jones. All in favor. Approved.

B. June bank transfer – Commissioner McCormick motions to approve the transfer from the water checking account to the sewer checking account in the amount of \$63,757.01. Second by Chairman Shocik. All in favor. Approved.

- C.** FY25 budget transfer – Chairman Shocik read out each of the transfers. Commissioner Jones motions to approve the transfers. Second by Commissioner McCormick. All in favor. Approved. Superintendent Morris commented that some of the consulting fees large transfers are because we received a grant for Stafford Street and Pleasant Street design, it had to be taken out of the budget to pay the invoices, but we will be reimbursed. The way the grant works is that we must wait until the check is cashed before we can even submit it for reimbursement. We are still waiting for one check to get cashed so we can submit for reimbursement. The City of Worcester went over because of all the leaks we accounted for this year.

V. Administrative

- A.** Swamp design contract – Per Superintendent Morris as approved at the annual meeting is the Tata & Howard contract that needs to be signed. It is to look at the design from 148 Henshaw St to Bunker Hill to Peter Salem out to Route 56. They will look for an alternative route other than going through the swamp. It includes the cost of filing NOI (Notice of Intent) to the town for the work that is included. As for test borings we will have to go through the swamp to identify what is involved for direct drilling and to look at lining the existing line after we have the new line. This will allow for a redundant line just in case we need it as a backup if anything happens again, so we won't have disruption to the other end of town. Subscriber Buteau commented about the plan and specs that you must shake out the alternatives or are they going to do the design for both. The Superintendent read through the contract of what options 1 and 2 were, and they owe us a product for the alternative as well. He also stated he has a meeting regarding the wetlands analysis on Thursday. Commissioner McCormick motions to approve the signing of the contract. Seconded by Chairman Shocik. All in favor. Approved.
- B.** Rates – Per Chairman Shocik as we are finding out now at the last meeting and per the notes, we basically enacted a new rate study which is Option 2 with a 13.5% increase across the board and as we were discussing it, we were coming up with numerous situations. But as you said Tom I do not want to stick with it. As presented last month with the commercial and residential rates it showed the high commercial users seeing a decrease instead of an increase. We still must come up with an increase to come up with the demands. Subscriber Lennon said so the rates that are presented would make us even correct this is more what I was talking about. If you included the base rate then divided out the usage the rate would go down the more you used, and the lower user would be paying more. Chairman Shocik said we do not want to chase the big people out of town, but they are not in the business of saving water, and we need to take care of the other people in this district such as the elderly and people with 1-2 people households. Chairman Shocik will make a motion to accept the new rate structure as presented. Chairman Shocik what would be considered residential vs commercial can we do something for nonprofit and municipalities and make them residential? Per Treasurer Wood after discussion with the Superintendent would have to review the rates because we need to see what it does with the revenue to see how it would affect the revenue by changing all of them. Residential we consider if it is a property you reside in everything else is considered commercial. Where we are cutting it so close with the rates only being only \$5,000 over, I do not believe the district we can just do that. It is something we can look at in the future, but it will require some leg work. Per Subscriber Lennon per page 13 of the study it shows the different bill classes, and we said yes, residential is residential and everything else is considered commercial. Per Subscriber Buteau you must be careful because you do not want to be considered discriminatory. Per the Treasurer we would have to make anything effective with the September 1 bills due to all the changes in the billing software. Commissioner McCormick motions to

accept the rates as presented effective with the September 1, 2025, bills. Seconded by Commissioner Jones. All in Favor. Approved.

- C. Non-communication fee - Per Superintendent Morris stated he is not sure if you pay attention to your national grid bills or notices. They are going to start charging an additional fee if you do not change your meter out. It had us talking about our meters because we have a lot of customers that do not want us to change the water meter or will not respond to letting us get in to change the meter or investigate a meter that is not reading and as a result we are estimating bills. A policy would allow us to charge a non-meter fee or something for them not letting us change it. Treasurer Wood stated it shouldn't just be for the meters that are not reading it should also be for those who will not let us get in to change old meters. The software for the old meters is old and no longer supported either and to update to newer software would be thousands of dollars to keep the older meters. Superintendent Morris will do up a policy for the next meeting. This is to be tabled until the next meeting.

VI. Operations –

Per Superintendent Morris had a meeting with wet land scientists this week so they can start flagging the wetlands onto the plans. This will be a lengthy process from here to Route 56.

The annual tank inspections have been done. They climbed the tank and inspected it. They will provide reports together on safety and security concerns and we will review when it comes back.

The sanitary survey that was done several weeks ago remains as pending.

Last week I attended a conservation meeting and received a NOI (Notice of Intent) for Kettle brook crossing to direct drill under that. Still pending the grant, no further work needs to be done for the leak that occurred there, but we are covered for the NOI for the replacement.

We had a couple of leaks this week, but we were able to fix one and the other one should be finished by tomorrow.

Some of the hydrants are getting serviced. At the town meeting it was voted for an account to do hydrant maintenance, so they hired Hydra Tech to service them. The work Hydra Tech does will benefit us.

Getting ready to start the last portion of lead service line inventory excavations. Tata & Howard to coordinate that they are currently getting prices from three different contractors. Trying to work with Leicester water to see if we can get them all done at the same time. Last year it took 7 days to do about 50 holes by the time they were paved in all that.

Grindstone well running had a few piping issues that we addressed. It is all plastic fittings so when you fix one it breaks somewhere else. It is running but it is leaking we will have to change out some piping. A plumber is coming in to look at it and see if something can be done. Arsenic levels have been non-detected so they are working properly as it should.

Subscriber Buteau inquired if the Superintendent had any information regarding the two grants. Per Superintendent Morris, one grant is for Kettle Brook, and we have not heard anything back on that and it is because it is shovel ready. Per subscriber Buteau what we have for existing grants use them up because you do not know what is going to happen. Per the Superintendent we are in the process of submitting another one to MassDEP for the Asset Management Plan

for the water district. The goal is to tie everything we have together. It won't be available to us till next summer even though we are applying for it now.

- VII.** Date of Next Meeting: Commissioner McCormick motions to hold the next meeting Tuesday, hybrid, August 19, 2025, at 7:00 pm at 148 Henshaw St. Leicester MA. Seconded by Chairman Shocik. All in favor. Approved.
- VIII.** Adjournment: Commissioner Jones motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Chairman Shocik. All in favor. Approved. The meeting was adjourned for 8:26 pm.