

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' MEETING
HYBRID MEETING MINUTES
MAY 10, 2022
7:00 P.M.
CHERRY VALLEY & ROCHDALE WATER DISTRICT**

I. CALL TO ORDER - The meeting called to order by Chairman Bergin @ 7:00 pm

The following were in attendance:

Kevin Bergin, Chairman
Arthur E.J. Levesque, Commissioner
Benjamin Morris, Superintendent
Robert H. Lemieux, Sr., Commissioner
Jennifer Wood, Treasurer
Cheryl Balkus, Clerk

LCAC & 3 subscribers (1 in person, 2 online)

II. District Member Forum – Per Chairman Bergin commented that there has been an uptick regarding social media comments that with future development of Rt. 56 that there will never be business coming in because CVRWD cannot provide water. Per the Chairman this is incorrect information, we have the water to provide, and affirmed by Superintendent Morris. A business is coming in that we will be providing water to.

Per Chairman Bergin the average monthly bills for the most recent cycle were \$78.59. There are some users that have lower bills, others that have higher bills it is a consistent number that we have been showing and as the seasons change there is the higher demand in the summer months with gardens and pool fills. There were no additional comments from the attending or listening audience. Commissioner Levesque motions to end the district member forum. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in favor. Approved. The forum ended at 8 minutes and 58 seconds.

III. APPROVE MINUTES

A. April 19, 2022, Meeting Minutes - Commissioner Levesque motions to approve the April 19, 2022, meeting minutes. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in favor. Approved.

IV. FINANCE

A. Approve April 25, 2022, Warrants – Commissioner Levesque motions to approve the April 25, 2022, warrants. Seconded by Chairman Bergin.
Commissioner Lemieux asked about warrant #5564 in the amount of \$20,386.46 Baystate Regional Contractors. Per Superintendent Morris this is one of the payment installments to our contractor for the well project. All in favor. Approved.

B. Approve May 2, 2022, Warrants- Commissioner Lemieux motions to approve the May 2, 2022, warrants. Seconded by Commissioner Levesque. All in favor. Approved.

C. Approve May 9, 2022, Warrants – Commissioner Levesque motions to approve the May 9, 2022, warrants. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in favor. Approved.

The summary of warrants consists of office expense, solar, electricity, lab work, insurance, postage, payroll, technology, telephone, Grindstone Well \$20,386.46, repairs & maintenance, small tools, legal fees, and pipes for a total of \$49,174.90.

- D. April Bank Transfer** – Commissioner Levesque motions to transfer \$58,542.00 from the water checking account to the sewer checking account. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in favor. Approved.

This is the money collected by the water district on behalf of sewer district. This money does not belong to the water district.

- E. Rate Study** – Chairman Bergin came to the Superintendent and the Treasurer to review the rates. The FY23 budget is \$1,264,993.00 and we took what we take in of money received for bills, took out our other revenue sources such as solar farm, tower rental, average penalty revenue and fire service fee and the total amount rates need to cover is \$1,212,319.53. The current rates estimated revenue is \$1,269,680.80 with a difference of \$57,361.27. If we take a penny out of each tier, we will run in a deficit of \$14,498.64 and this is only if we spent every single dollar in the budget. We could make it work for the next coming year, though it is not astronomical, this would be the start of savings. We do not know what inflation will be and how this will affect. It is the board's decision if each tier should be reduced by the penny or leave the rates as they are.

Per Chairman Bergin we know we will be spending more in electricity to operate the well, we are not sure what additional steps MADEP may impose on us and though on paper it is shy of what we need he is comfortable with the deficit. If it were \$50,000.00, he would be concerned but comfortable with the \$15,000.00 deficit with the rate reduction. Next year we should have at least a years' worth of data of the Well to see where we are at. Per Commissioner Lemieux it does not amount to much per month per subscriber it is an estimate of \$4.52 per month and wants to ensure its not going to cost us \$2,000-\$3,000 to making a change when it is relatively insignificant. It's not life changing but shows we are making the effort. Per the Superintendent if we were to change the rates, we would use up the bills we have now with the old rate printed on the back of the bill, there will be a notice included with the bills to explain the rate change will be reflected within the bills but that it is not printed on the bill and would be for the future. Commissioner Lemieux agrees with Chairman Bergin of reducing each tier by one penny. Subscriber Buteau, its movement in the right direction, the district is not giving enough credit to themselves stating that the website is showing 2019 rate information and should be updated with what all the rate reductions have been. Per the Superintendent we have not had a rate change since 2019, the site is up to date. Chairman Bergin added that prior to the current rate we had a temporary rate reduction in rates for a few months prior to the 2019 rates. Commissioner Levesque motions to accept the new water rates as proposed. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in favor. Approved.

The new rates will be effective with the July 1, 2022, bills.

V. ADMINISTRATION –

- A.** 4-25-22 12-month payment plan - Commissioner Levesque motions to approve the 12-month payment plan. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in Favor. Approved.
- B.** 4-26-22 12-month payment plan - Commissioner Levesque motions to approve the 12-month payment plan. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in favor. Approved.

VI. Operations

A. Superintendent's Report –

Baystate continues to work on the Grindstone Well project. We were running off the hylift system, the booster pump station is offline from its prior location and permanently online in the new location. Coordination was done with RE Ericson to get all the communications to the pumps to operate as we have been. The old door of the building was removed to install the poly tanks and the biggest issue is the delay of the pumps. A copy of a letter has been

received from the supplier that they are due in by June. In the meanwhile, the contractor is working on chemical feeders.

Commissioner Levesque asked how long this project has been going. Per the Superintendent it has been 3 years and with the supply issues it has caused delays that are out of our control. Commissioner Levesque asked if they have a date to have this project completed by and if they do not meet the date can they be fined. Per the Superintendent it is coming to an end. Costs of hiring an attorney to see if there would be fines would cost more to the district that we do not want to happen. The supply chain issue is a nationwide issue beyond anyone's control. Per subscriber Buteau in his experience with a national issue of supply issues you cannot hold them legally accountable.

Hydrant flushing is wrapping up this week in the Valley and Rochdale will be next week.

Tata & Howard is reviewing a water demand plan for industrial warehousing development on Rt56. Fire demand projections are put into the hydraulic model that is on any large projects. There will be a lot of pipes going into the building and we have been collecting funds from them for Tata & Howard to do their work.

Water audit was a grant thru Mass DEP that he signed up for the unaccounted water accounts. It goes into a program to put a different perspective of a better way to track the water in our system. Data was collected and a few more steps to get a report of where we are at.

Working with RCAP to do an Asset Management Plan. They began with inventorying everything to build out the plan, using the GIS system to collect data and see what expected life span is to development of a capital improvement plan of how to come up with the funds to do the improvements. This plan being done is grant funded and will give us a great base line going future.

Follow up to the cell tower contract buyout – the buyout was for \$390,000.00 Able to locate the signed 2000 contract that was for 25 years and then a new contract was signed for 5 consecutive terms and puts the district with the tower till 2080 and will bring in over 3.5 million and this company who want to buyout wants to buy out for \$390,000.00. Per the Chairman knowing the specifics this is not something to be entertained and to leave what we have. Per Commissioner Lemieux suggests that to make an offer of \$10 million and see what they say.

Everything is in place for the annual meeting and reminded Commissioner Lemieux if rerunning we need no later than Monday, May 16, 2022, by 3pm.

Subscriber Buteau commented that the Rt. 56 project is 270,000 square foot facility equal to 6 acres. He also asked if there would be a follow up with Tata & Howard about the rural grant. He wanted to also know what the age is of the existing pipe that the Superintendent will follow up with him. The Superintendent did speak with Tata & Howard, and they felt that our project would not qualify.

VII. Communications – Nothing to report

VIII. PERSONNEL – Nothing to report

IX. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

A. Approval of Next Meeting - Commissioner Lemieux motioned to hold the next meeting

Hybrid Tuesday, June 7, 2022, at the Town Hall Selectboard Room 3 Washburn Square
Leicester, MA @ 7:00 PM. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in favor. Approved.

- X. ADJOURNMENT-** Commissioner Levesque motioned to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Chairman Bergin. All in Favor. Approved. Meeting adjourned at 8:06 P.M.

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