

The Belfast Water District Board of Trustees met at the Little River Station office on Monday, April 4, 2022, at 1:00 p.m.

Bruce Osgood, the Chairman, called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

A roll call of attendees was as follows: Chairman Bruce Osgood, Vice-Chairman Kenneth Colby Horne, Secretary Jill Goodwin, Trustee Stephen Hall, Superintendent Keith Pooler, and his Administrative Assistant, Tammy Morse.

The Chairman welcomed the District's accountant, Nick Henry of Horton, McFarland, and Veysey, to present the 2021 Financial Statement. Nick stated it was an excellent audit, with no findings or discrepancies. There were no indicators of risks. Nick explained that the audit tests internal controls, expenses, payroll, and fraud assessment. Audits are judgment assessments designed to find everything significant. Belfast Water District is responsible for all financials. The audit presents reasonable assurance that the numbers are correct, although not 100% guaranteed. The District's coverage ratio rating is 5; meaning there are enough funds to cover our expenses and bond payments; anything over 1.25 is great. Nick expressed that Belfast Water District's financial numbers are holding, considering there has been no rate increase since 2015; seven years without a rate increase is out of the ordinary.

Nick stated the District has a good base for a surcharge with the MDOT Goose River Project or can easily justify a 10% complete rate case without waiting for the Talbot Well bond. Keith commented that the Talbot Well would eventually be built due to the lifespan of Jackson Pit Well (1965) and Smart Road Well (1955).

VOTED: On a motion made by Stephen Hall, seconded by Kenneth Colby Horne, and unanimously approved 4-0, to accept the minutes of the regularly scheduled board meeting of March 7, 2022.

The Board discussed the next board meeting date and agreed on Monday, May 2, 2022, at 1:00 p.m. at the Little River Station office.

Keith Pooler, the Superintendent, presented his report to the Trustees.

The closing for the Little River Property took place with Nordic Aquafarms and the City of Belfast on March 14, 2022. A portion of the funds received from the closing purchased 41 Wight Street, and the remodeling of the building and construction of a new garage are in the works. It's unfortunate for the District that building material costs have doubled since the initial signing with NAF and the City of Belfast in 2018. As agreed, NAF paid a prorated amount for the 2022 minimum water.

Keith updated the Board on the progress of the remodel of our new office at 41 Wight Street. Randy Butler of Dirigo Engineering checked the property lines to begin planning where the new 40 x 80 garage will situate on the property and the parking. Keith referenced two garage designs: shed roof versus gable roof. The new garage will have 400 square feet more than the garages at the Little River Station. The Crocker Road land is a great location for an additional garage and storage if needed. At 41 Wight Street, the crew has removed all the old flooring, removed two partitions to enlarge the conference room, and removed one partition between two offices. The crew cleaned the yard and removed the trees encroaching on the parking lot and the office roof. Parenteau's Flooring mentioned vinyl laminate as a good choice but will provide a quote for all options. The Trustees decided to tour the new office after the meeting.

Keith informed the Board that he is inquiring about temporary space to store our garage contents and equipment. Our lease with Nordic Aquafarms states the garages at Little River Station must be vacated within 90-days of the closing date.

Penobscot McCrum's plant succumbed to fire on Thursday, March 24, 2022. It could have been far worse if not for the bravery and hard work of everyone involved in keeping the fire contained. A lot of water was used on the fire (3,100,000 gallons) in a short amount of time which could have caused significant damage to the system if not handled correctly. Our 130-year-old system pulled 2,500 – 10,000 gallons per minute to fight the fire, and the crew contacted Searsport Water District for the use of the interconnect.

Recognition should be awarded to everyone involved but none more than the employees of the Belfast Water District. Our customers should know that our firefighters were doing everything to help protect life and properties. At the same time, our operators fought the fire and operated the water system at a level never seen before. No customer was without water. Amazing! A job well done by all BWD employees! AND by all of the firefighters!

Penobscot McCrum is our highest water user and pays \$61,000 annually, which will affect our revenues. We can only hope that the plant will be rebuilt in Belfast for our customers and the 138 employees without a job and the City of Belfast.

The Emergency Management Agency's (EMA) site engineer, Thomas Fowler, submitted a new Stormwater Site Plan to the Department of Environmental Protection for their property on Swan Lake Avenue in Swanville, Maine, Tax Map 5 Lot 28. The new EMA buildings were over part of the 2500-day Wellhead Protection Area in Goose River Aquifer public water source. Thomas Fowler revised the Stormwater Site Plan to include the extra protection requested by our engineer, Rick Pershken. Rick is reviewing the revised plan.

The Belfast Water District notified the City of Belfast of the opening on our Board of Trustees, mentioning two customers who reside in East Belfast that have expressed an interest in serving on the Board. City Manager Erin Herbig stated the City Council would interview in May or June to fill various positions, including the Belfast Water District's Board of Trustees opening.

Keith presented the Mayo Street Utility Improvements Bid Tabulation to the Trustees as prepared by Olver Associates. The low bid for the City of Belfast sewer improvements was Sitewerx. A bid for the District's water main was \$249,500. Olver Associates stated the City would award the sewer project to Sitewerx. Keith contacted Sitewerx, and they will not reduce the water main portion of the bid. Our staff is not available to install the water main during the project, nor is Sitewerx willing to wait to wrap up the entire project. Keith reminded the Board that the existing water main on Mayo Street was upgraded in 2016 and is in good condition. At some point, 250-foot of water main can be renewed, and the other 400-foot will be a main extension. Keith stated we have two choices: accept Sitewerx's bid of \$249,500 or reject Sitewerx's bid and refrain from the project.

VOTED: On a motion made by Jill Goodwin, seconded by Stephen Hall, and unanimously approved 4-0, to reject the bid price provided for the water main portion of the Mayo Street Project.

Keith reported to the Trustees that the District needs temporary office staff starting this Friday, April 8th. Both office employees will be absent for a short time. Tammi Short has offered to help cover the office, and if needed, Augusta Water has also offered to assist. Although the COVID-19 pandemic was unfortunate, Keith expressed that it equipped our office employees to do a lot of their work from home. The office staff works from the office and continues to maintain a remote routine if an emergency occurs, such as our current situation. Keith has recommended to the Board that we accept Tammi's offer to cover the office, and the Trustees agreed.

This past month the crew:

- Removed the flooring at 41 Wight Street.
- Finished annual maintenance at the wells.
- Changed out the tubing on the chemical pumps.
- Worked long hours at the fire of Penobscot McCrum while taking care of our 130-year-old water system.

Upcoming this month, the crew will:

- Work at 41 Wight Street.
- Move all items out of the garages to temporary storage space.
- Start flushing hydrants.
- Repair lawns and roads from service and main breaks this past winter.

Keith advised the Board that due to not receiving the final costs from the MDOT for the water main portion of the Goose River Bridge Project to close on the interim loan by May 13, 2022, our bond counsel, Bernstein Shur, needs to prepare the necessary documents for an extension. A vote is needed to amend the original \$2,273,535 Revenue Obligation Note dated May 13, 2021, to change the maturity date to May 13, 2023, and to authorize the Treasurer to execute all documents for said amendment. Keith mentioned that we would use only about \$300,000 of the bond and rescind the remainder as concurred by the Board at the July 2021 regular meeting.

VOTED: On a motion made by Stephen Hall, seconded by Kenneth Colby Horne, and unanimously approved 4-0, to (1) amend the \$2,273,535 Revenue Obligation Note dated May 13, 2021, and awarded to the Maine Municipal Bond Bank, Augusta, Maine, by changing the maturity date to May 13, 2023; and (2) authorize the Treasurer and the Chairman of the Board of Trustees to execute all documents necessary to complete said amendment. All other terms and conditions as stated in the Revenue Obligation Note will remain the same.

VOTED: On a motion made by Jill Goodwin, seconded by Stephen Hall and unanimously approved 4-0, to adjourn the meeting at 3:02 p.m.



Jill Goodwin, Secretary/Clerk

