

Belfast Water District Board of Trustees Meeting of January 8, 2024

The Belfast Water District Board of Trustees met on Monday, January 8, 2024, at the 41 Wight Street office.

Kenneth Colby Horne, the Vice-Chairman, called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

Roll Call: The attendees present for the roll call were as follows: Vice-Chairman Kenneth Colby Horne, Treasurer Stephen Hall, Secretary Jill Goodwin, Trustee Chad Otis, Superintendent Frank Short, and Administrator Tammy Morse. Chairman Bruce Osgood was absent from the meeting.

VOTED: On a motion by Stephen Hall, seconded by Chad Otis and unanimously approved 4-0, to accept the minutes of the regularly scheduled board meeting of December 11, 2023.

Next Meeting Date: The Board discussed and agreed on the next meeting date of Monday, February 5, 2024, at 1:00 p.m. at the Belfast Water District office, located at 41 Wight Street in Belfast, Maine.

VOTED: On a motion by Jill Goodwin, seconded by Stephen Hall and unanimously approved 4-0, to enter executive session to discuss a personnel matter pursuant to 1 MRS 405 § (6)A at 1:05 p.m.

VOTED: On a motion by Jill Goodwin, seconded by Stephen Hall and unanimously approved 4-0, to adjourn executive session to discuss a personnel matter pursuant to 1 MRS 405 § (6)A at 1:10 p.m.

Upon returning to the regularly scheduled board meeting, the following vote was taken:

VOTED: On a motion by Chad Otis, seconded by Jill Goodwin and unanimously approved 4-0, to regretfully accept our Foreman, Dustin Howes', resignation from the Belfast Water District effective January 19, 2024.

All in attendance expressed their best wishes to Dustin in his new endeavor!

After a brief discussion of promoting within the District, the Board of Trustees voted as follows:

VOTED: On a motion by Stephen Hall, seconded by Chad Otis and unanimously approved 4-0, to promote Hayden Bradford to the position of Foreman if he so chooses, effective January 20, 2024.

Frank presented his Superintendent's Report to the Board of Trustees.

December 18th Storm:

The District experienced a power outage at the Jackson Pit Well, but fortunately, the backup generator started without any problems. However, the 41 Wight Street office experienced the power outage overnight, as Dead River has been unable to complete the installation of the new generator.

The Direct Communications fiber optic cable at the Lincolnville Avenue Booster Station was also down, which disrupted the viewing of our system on the SCADA Splash program. The earliest that the cable could be fixed was on December 22nd. On Christmas Eve, the new radio box at the Lincolnville Avenue Booster Station malfunctioned, and we are still trying to determine whether the issue was weather-related. However, a new radio box has been installed and the system is back online.

Tim Sawtelle and Frank plan to meet next week to discuss additional programming, remove old electrical components and switches, and create an as-built document that will be readily available.

Jackson Pit/Goose River Crossing: Frank met with Evan Hutchins, who owns the property near a potential crossing area. Evan had constructed a road and cleared a space leading up to the river to develop as a house lot. This location would be convenient for a right-of-way. Brian Chase, who works for Enterprise Electric, plans to visit the site this week to estimate the cost of directional boring. During the visit, they noticed a swan in the river, which Evan said was a rare sight.

Crocker Road Tank Site: Frank said he met with the City's Code Enforcement Officer, Steve Wilson, to discuss the District's plans to expand the working area. Steve recommended that a soil specialist inspect the site to document that there are no wetlands. Frank contacted Rick Pershken of Dirigo Engineering for the inspection, which should be completed this week, and then a permit application with the City of Belfast will be filed. In preparation for receiving the fill for additional space, the fence in the back of the tank must be removed before a local wood harvester removes the trees.

115 Congress Street: The water lines at 115 Congress Street were flushed, pressure tested, and passed. When these buildings are complete, five new 6-inch fire services and five new 2-inch domestic services will be added to our distribution system.

Little River Subdivision: No work has been started to date.

Water Leaks: The crew has been working diligently this month to locate and fix water leaks at several locations: 104 Swan Lake Avenue, 101 Waldo Avenue, Hyland Mobile Home Park, and 216 Swan Lake Avenue. This week, the crew will repair a leak at 34 Searsport Avenue and investigate a possible leak on Bayview Street. They start early in the morning to listen for the sound of water running on a gate valve, service line, or fire hydrant. As members of the Maine Rural Water Association (MRWA), a circuit rider will assist the crew to find leaks by correlation. Some leaks are discovered by our customers, while others are reported by passersby.

Veterans' Memorial Bridge: The Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT) plans to raise the bridge that crosses the Passy River by one and a half inches. As there is a water main hanging from the bridge, we must ensure no issues arise while MDOT repairs the bridge. Although problems are unlikely to occur, we should allocate some time to inspect our water main during the repair process.

Budget:

Based on the recommendation of our accountant, Nick Henry (Horton, McFarland, and Veysey) created a budget together with Tammy and Frank for the Board of Trustees' approval. This budget was prepared based on the Maine Public Utilities Commission approval of our 30% rate increase. The budget includes annual funds set aside for capital improvements. These annual funds are calculated based on the depreciation method set by the MPUC. As discussed with our accountant, Frank plans to present the upcoming projects and equipment purchases at the next board meeting.

Employee Compensation: Frank presented a request to the Board of Trustees to raise employee wages by the 2024 annual cost of living allowance of 3.2%, along with the possibility of merit raises. The Trustees concurred that the entire Board of Trustees should be present to discuss employee compensation.

VOTED: On a motion by Jill Goodwin, seconded by Stephen Hall and unanimously approved 4-0, to table the employee compensation discussion to the next meeting when a full Board of Trustees are present.

Belfast Area High School Program: Kayden Richards began working for the Belfast Water District through the BAHS Extended Learning Opportunity (ELO) Internship program. Kayden still works part-time and desires to become a full-time employee. Through Maine Rural Water Association, the Belfast Water District can take advantage of programs that assist apprentices in obtaining their water operator's licenses, which is a great benefit as a member of MRWA.

This past month, the crew:

- Performed leak detection.
- Repaired leaks, as mentioned.
- Checked and removed snow from fire hydrants.
- Flushed and assisted with the pressure testing at the 115 Congress Street Project.
- Cut in a curb stop for an operable shutoff at 152 Church Street.

Upcoming this month, the crew will:

- Hopefully, we will not find more leaks that need to be repaired.
- Continue to check and keep snow away from fire hydrants.
- Install propane lines to the new generator at the 41 Wight Street office.
- Work at the Crocker Road Tank Site.
- Start the annual maintenance at our well sites.

Frank summarized the 2023 year with the Board of Trustees.

New Services Installed:

- A 6-inch fire service at 20 Belmont Avenue.
- A 2-inch domestic service at 20 Belmont Avenue.
- A 6-inch fire service at 126 Church Street.
- Two 1-inch domestic services at 182 Searsport Avenue.
- A 1-inch domestic service at 28 High Street.
- Five 2-inch domestic services at the 115 Congress Street Project.
- Five 6-inch fire services at the 115 Congress Street Project.
- A 1-inch domestic service at 38 Patterson Hill Road.
- A 3/4-inch domestic service at 65 Wight Street.
- A 6-inch fire service at 123 High Street, the Co-op.
- Upgraded a 1-inch domestic service to a 2-inch domestic service at 123 High Street, the Belfast Co-op.
- A 3/4-inch domestic service for a horse barn on Priscilla Lane.
- A 1-inch domestic service at 18 Depot Lane.
- A 6-inch fire service at 52 Little River Drive.
- A 1-inch domestic service at 52 Little River Drive.
- A 1-inch domestic service at 31 Searsport Avenue.

Leaks Repaired:

- A 3/4-inch domestic service for the Nautilus Restaurant at 3 Main Street.
- A 12-inch D.I. water main in front of McDonald's Restaurant on Main Street.
- An 8-inch A.C. water main on the Back Searsport Road
- A 1-inch domestic service feeding the mobile home park at 104 Swan Lake Avenue.
- Packing on the 6-inch gate valve at the corner of Main Street and Congress Street.
- A second repair of the 3/4-inch domestic service feeding the Nautilus Restaurant.
- A 1-inch domestic service at 9 Porter Road.
- A 3/4-inch domestic service 235 High Street.
- A 2-inch domestic service for the Bowling Alley on Searsport Avenue.
- A 3/4-inch domestic service for Walter Ash on Searsport Avenue.

Other accomplishments:

- The 750,000-gallon storage tank at Crocker Road was painted.
- Washed both water storage tanks on Lincolnville Avenue.
- Installed a new SCADA System with Pribusion radio communications.
- Installed approximately 1,000 feet of 6-inch D.I. water main and two new fire hydrants on Ocean Street.

Tammy reported to the Board that the CD that matured on 12/23/23 gained \$25,000, and was automatically rolled to a new CD at 5.13% for 12 months.

VOTED: On a motion by Jill Goodwin, seconded by Chad Otis and unanimously approved 4-0, to adjourn the regularly scheduled board meeting at 1:57 p.m.



Jill B. Goodwin, Secretary/Clerk

