

The Belfast Water District Board of Trustees met on Monday, January 9, 2023, at 1:00 p.m., at the 41 Wight Street office.

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, Treasurer Stephen Hall, Secretary Jill Goodwin, Trustee Chad Otis, Superintendent Keith Pooler, Superintendent in-training Frank Short, and Administrator Tammy Morse.

Keith Pooler, Superintendent, and the Board of Trustees wanted to officially recognize Charlie for all he has done for the District these past four years, primarily this past year, getting us moved into our new facilities. The District's budget was \$1.3M to finish the facilities; thanks to Charlie, the cost was considerably under budget. Charlie was commended for his work, talent, knowledge, and connections. When the Board hired Charlie Plourde as the 41 Wight Street project's overseer, it was a wise decision indeed. The Belfast Water District expressed a special thank you to Charlie!

Charlie thanked the Board of Trustees, Keith, the front-end team with design, all of the contractors, and especially Belfast Water District's immeasurable labor.

The new garage will be ready for a tour after next month's meeting.

VOTED: On a motion made by Stephen Hall, seconded by Chad Otis, and unanimously approved 5-0, to accept the minutes of the regularly scheduled board meeting of December 5, 2022.

The Board discussed the next meeting date and agreed on Monday, February 6, 2023, at 1:00 p.m. at the Belfast Water District office at 41 Wight Street, Belfast, Maine.

Bruce Osgood, the Chairman, added to the agenda 'Open to the Public' and welcomed a Belfast resident from Wight Street to express concerns. The resident feels fluoride is an unnecessary additive to our water system. The Belfast Water District must add Sodium Fluoride to the water system at the EPA-recommended rate, as authorized by a referendum ballot on March 14, 1960, by the citizens of Belfast, to reduce tooth decay. The Board of Trustees advised contacting the City of Belfast to inquire about a referendum ballot to remove the added fluoride from the water system, and if further information is needed to contact the Belfast Water District.

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

The District currently rents a storage container from PE O'Halloran for \$135 per month located on Crocker Road. Keith stated he would like to continue the rental for a few more months to see what we need before deciding if we want to buy. The Board concurred.

The contractor at 126 Church repaired the water line to get it tested. Frank did an excellent job!

Frank has kept informed of the Waterfall Arts issue to replace the backflow preventer, acknowledging that it is an expensive project. Still, it is imperative to get it fixed as it is affecting their drinking fountains' water quality.

Hayden Bradford passed the Distribution Class I and now working toward the other licenses. Congratulations Hayden!

The Belfast Water District received a \$1,000 grant from the Maine Drinking Water Program for the Leadership training courses that Frank is attending, which covers the amount paid to Maine Water Utilities Association. This grant was a welcomed surprise.

As voted at the November 2022 Board Meeting, the Trustees offered Frank Short the Superintendent's position upon Keith's retirement in February 2023. An official promotion for Frank Short should be on record.

VOTED: On a motion made by Kenneth Colby Horne, seconded by Jill Goodwin, unanimously approved 5-0 to promote Frank Short as Superintendent effective March 1, 2023.

Frank Short addressed the Board of Trustees with the need to fill the Foreman's position now that it will be vacated. Frank, as well as Keith, recommended promoting Dustin Howes. Dustin has worked for the District for six years and has earned his Class II Distribution and Class II Treatment licenses, plus he has experience and knowledge of the Belfast Water District system.

VOTED: On a motion made by Stephen Hall, seconded by Chad Otis and unanimously approved 5-0, to promote Dustin Howes to Foreman of the Belfast Water District effective March 1, 2023.

These promotions leave a vacancy on the crew; therefore, it is necessary to hire another water operator as soon as possible. Now is the time to encourage suitable candidates to apply. The District offers many benefits, including a long-term career and an excellent retirement with the Maine Public Employees Retirement System. We have received one application for this position by word of mouth, with others inquiring. The District advertises with Maine Rural Water Association, Maine Water Utilities Association, Maine Municipal Association, the Local Papers, and other utilities. The Board concurred to advertise the water operator vacancy.

Maine Rural Water Association (MRWA) held its 42nd conference at the Samoset in Rockport. The crew attended excellent training classes to earn their required TCH hours to retain their water operator licenses. Not only does MRWA offer beneficial training, attendees are also kept up to date with changes in the water industry, meet new contacts, and get the opportunity to converse with other districts. Keith mentioned to the Board that he was chosen to speak on Thursday in an open session about retiring superintendents. Kirsten Hebert, MRWA, informed the attendees that this was their first workshop, and felt it would work well for future events. Amongst the attendees, there were over 100 years of experience.

Over the Christmas Holiday weekend, a winter storm caused power outages at the Crocker Road Tank, Smart Road Station, Jackson Pit Station, and LABS for a brief period; the crew ensured the generators were ready. These 20-year-old generators require service beyond the regular maintenance, and we are very fortunate we have yet to invest much in them. Frank stated he contacted Cummins of Scarborough for an estimate to service the Jackson Pit and Smart Road generators which could be more than the authorized \$2,500.

VOTED: On a motion by Stephen Hall, seconded by Kenneth Colby Horne and unanimously approved 5-0, to authorize the servicing of the diesel generators up to \$5,000.

The District has rented space for communications antennas on the Crocker Road Tank for many years, one of which is for Waldo County Communications (WCC). The District charges a considerably low rate to help out our community. Recently, WCC installed an automatic standby generator for their equipment on the Crocker Road Tank. The District benefits from this installation because our telemetry is now connected to WCC's standby propane generator.

Frank Short informed the Board of Trustees that Tim Sawtelle of Dirigo Engineering has been repairing and updating our current 15-year-old Scada System, now obsolete due to a lack of replacement parts. Tim has been researching a replacement for our SCADA system that will work best for the District. Radio will eliminate the phone lines but requires repeaters, yet we can troubleshoot and repair them ourselves. Fiber optic is another possibility. Unfortunately, cellular reception is scarce at the well sites. The choice of radio, fiber, or cellular depends on the frequency we decide to use. Tim Sawtelle is preparing proposals for our next board meeting and will check to see if grant money is available.

If the new SCADA system needs an antenna site for a radio repeater, the District owns property on the Back Searsport Road, across from the Skinners, purchased many years ago because of its high elevation (330 feet above sea level), which would provide an excellent location for another possible water tank.

This past month the crew:

- Moved and organized inventory inside the new garage.
- Located mains and services for Olver Associates who is preparing for the City of Belfast sewer projects on Upper High Street and Vine Street.
- Winterized hydrants.

On December 22, 2022, Nick Henry of Horton McFarland & Veysey conducted a pre-audit due to the Nordic Aquafarm sale and purchase of 41 Wight Street. Nick was impressed by how smoothly the audit went. Keith recognized Tammy and Suzette for keeping the District's records organized and complying quickly with the two auditors' requests.

Upcoming this month:

- Finish the new garage.
- Check fire hydrants.
- Schedule the servicing of the generators.
- Conduct in-house annual safety training, which discounts our insurance rates.

Keith expressed to the Board and the District's employees that his final gift to the Belfast Water District is to complete the Maine Drinking Water Program Lead Inventory Survey of every service line in the water system on our side and the customer side of the service line. This requirement is mandated by the Environmental Protection Agency and is due by October 16, 2024. The spreadsheet consists of entering every street address, type of service on our side, and, more challenging, on the customers' side of the service. If there is any lead pipe 3 feet or longer, it is considered a lead service. Over the years, we have yet to encounter a service that is a complete lead service. Our records show we have over 2,000 services. With such a time-consuming project, having the workforce to meet this requirement could have been problematic. On the upside, documented staffing time is reimbursable by the Maine Drinking Water Program.

Our engineer, Tim Sawtelle, filed the Maine Drinking Water Program State Revolving Loan Fund application to replace 500 feet of 8-inch cast iron on Waldo Avenue, for which we have yet to receive approval. Tim is working on the plans with a basic concept, starting at Field Street, boring under Route 1 north to Waldo Avenue, and adding a new fire hydrant. The water main is in poor condition, and Keith stressed the urgency of replacing it as soon as possible in 2023. Because this water main runs underneath Route 1, if it breaks, it could cause extensive damage to Route 1.

Keith informed the Board that, as requested at last month's meeting, Tammy researched CD rates with the local banks and found that our long-time bank, Camden National, would match the CD rates of other local banks. Tammy then consulted the District's accountant on his recommendation for our funds. Keith and the Board thanked Tammy for her research so the District could take advantage of these current CD rates to make money for the District.

VOTED: On a motion made by Stephen Hall, seconded by Jill Goodwin, and unanimously approved 5-0, to take advantage of the increased CD rates at 4.15% CD (12 months) and convert the existing 1.55% CD to the 3% CD (24 months) based on the recommendation of the District's accountant.

Bruce Osgood informed everyone that we are gathering at the Waldo County Shrine Club on Sunday, January 29th, at 1 p.m. to celebrate and recognize our retiring Superintendent, Keith Pooler.

VOTED: On a motion by Jill Goodwin, seconded by Stephen Hall and unanimously approved, to adjourn the meeting at 2:21 p.m.



Jill B. Goodwin, Secretary/Clerk

