

Trustees of the Belfast Water District met on Monday, May 11, 2020, at 1:00 p.m. remotely via Zoom conferencing. The following Trustees were in attendance: Stephen Hall, Bruce Osgood, Henry Chalmers, Eileen Dubinett, Kenneth Colby Horne, and the Superintendent, Keith Pooler and his Administrative Assistant, Tammy Morse.

Stephen Hall, the Chairman, called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

VOTED: On a motion made by Henry Chalmers seconded by Eileen Dubinett and unanimously approved, to accept the Minutes of the regularly scheduled board meeting of March 9, 2020.

VOTED: On a motion made by Eileen Dubinett seconded by Henry Chalmers and unanimously approved, to accept the Special Meeting Minutes of April 27, 2020.

The Board discussed the date of the next board meeting and agreed on Monday, June 8, 2020, at 1:00 p.m.

Keith informed the Board of Trustees that he contacted the Maine Drinking Water Program (MDWP) as directed to request a revision to the Belfast Water District project placed on the 2020 DWSRF Primary Project List to include the Route 1 Goose River Bridge Water Main Replacement Project on Searsport Avenue. The MDWP approved this request. Authorization from the Board of Trustees is needed to borrow funds up to \$2,273,535 from the 2020 Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Program for these upcoming projects.

VOTED: On a motion made by Eileen Dubinett seconded by Bruce Osgood and unanimously approved, to authorize the borrowing of funds up to \$2,273,535 from the 2020 Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Program for the 'Water System Improvements-Talbot Well' and the 'Route 1 Goose River Bridge Water Main Replacement'.

Superintendent Keith Pooler presented his report to the Board of Trustees.

Goose River Hydro offered the Belfast Water District first refusal to purchase the Goose River Dams, namely Masons Dam, Kelley Dam, Mill Dam, CMP Dam, and Swan Lake Dam. Keith stated that he contacted Rick Pershken of Dirigo Engineering to determine how these dams affect the District's wells and the Goose River Aquifer. Dirigo Engineering is doing further investigation.

The Chief Financial Officer of Nordic Aquafarms (NAF), Brenda Chandler, has contacted the Belfast Water District and is requesting another extension of the Options and Purchase Agreement. The Board favors an extension, however, it wants to make it known of the situation that the District finds itself in. The District has had to search for a new location to move its facilities since the phosphorus issue was discovered on the Crocker Road property offered to us by the City of Belfast. Knowing we had five acres of land on the Crocker Road for \$1.00, this significantly reduced the sale price to NAF. Now it appears that the Belfast Water District is in an unfavorable position and may have to buy property at fair market value.

Due to the coronavirus 'COVID-19', the District has waived late fees to assist our customers during this difficult time and no disconnections for nonpayment of water services until further notice from the Maine Public Utilities Commission.

As of April 27, 2020, Revision Energy is working on the proposal for Solar Development at Jackson Pit and Smart Road. As previously mentioned, these locations are ideal for solar energy.

Our 2019 Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) is now on our website, and hard copies are available at our office. The April, May, and June bills reference a direct link to the report on our website as required by the Maine Drinking Water Program (MDWP). Customers can request a hard copy by calling our office. Copies of the CCR are posted at public locations; Belfast City Hall, Belfast Free Library, and Hannaford Supermarket. The deadline to certify to the MDWP that we have distributed the CCR and attest to its accuracy is due by October 1, 2020.

The 2019 top five largest users are as follows:

#1 Penobscot McCrum using 2,629,100 cubic feet (19,665,668 gallons) of water with a revenue of \$56,929.47, which is 4% of the District's operating revenues. #2 Northport Village Corporation, #3 Waldo County General Hospital, #4 Ducktrap River Fish Farm, and #5 the City of Belfast. The list of the top ten users is on file at the District's office.

One of our customer's inquired of the 12% fire protection rate increase listed in the City of Belfast budget for 7/1/20 – 6/30/21. Keith explained that each year when the City is working on their budget, they ask if we anticipate a rate increase. The District has not increased water rates since 2015. Because of increasing costs and decreasing revenue, our accountant indicated that we would need to consider a rate increase in the near future. Also added to this year, the Maine Department of Transportation is doing a large project at the Goose River Bridge on Searsport Avenue. This project is an unbudgeted expense of \$250,000 to the District to lay a new water main in the affected area.

The District's Pandemic Emergency Response Plan is in force due to the COVID-19 coronavirus. Our primary concern is keeping safe water supplied to our customers. To safeguard our employees, Keith advised the Board that the crew was divided into opposite shifts as of March 19, 2020. Personal protective equipment and supplies are being used. On April 2, 2020, Governor Mills mandated a 'stay at home' order for all nonessential employees. Keith stated he instructed the office staff to work from home to honor the Governor's request and alternate days for office coverage. The District's software vendors were quick to accommodate the office staff so they could have access from home and continue their duties.

The crew returned to their regular schedule on April 29, 2020. They built a plexiglass divider for the front office to protect employees when the office reopens to the public.

On May 5, 2020, the crew installed a new 1-inch domestic service on Union Street that took extra time due to 'social distancing' during the COVID-19 outbreak. The labor charge will not exceed the estimate provided to the customer.

This past month the crew has:

- done maintenance on our buildings
- continued with annual safety training
- removed hydrant flags
- repaired the 'Belfast Water District' entrance sign due to vandalism
- rebuilt or repaired equipment
- installed a new small engine on the pump
- cleaned yards and chipped fallen trees from the wind storm
- mowed lawns

In the upcoming month, the crew will:

- raise gate boxes for the paving project in-town
- start flushing hydrants
- possibly activate a 1-inch water service installed in 2013
- install two new water services

VOTED: On a motion made by Henry Chalmers seconded by Bruce Osgood and unanimously approved, to adjourn the meeting at 1:54 p.m.



Eileen Dubinett, Secretary

