

## Belfast Water District Board of Trustees Meeting of October 2, 2023

The Belfast Water District Board of Trustees met on Monday, October 2, 2023, at the 41 Wight Street office.

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

The Chairman of the Board requested to add to the agenda an executive session to discuss a real estate matter pursuant to 1 M.R.S. §405 (6)C before the presentation of the Superintendent's Report.

The following attendees were present during the roll call: Chairman Bruce Osgood, Vice-Chairman Kenneth Colby Home, Treasurer Stephen Hall, Secretary Jill Goodwin, Trustee Chad Otis, Superintendent Frank Short, and Administrator Tammy Morse.

At last month's board meeting, the Board of Trustees discussed with the District's accountant the supporting data for a full rate increase, mentioning the significant rise in inflation to operate our water system, the need to address infrastructure improvements, meeting debt obligations issued for capital improvements, and the loss of revenue. The Trustees understand their responsibility to ensure that the District's infrastructure is properly maintained to provide safe drinking water to customers and a reliable water supply for firefighting while protecting the system for the future. In Maine, water utilities, like ours, generally increase rates every three to five years. However, the last rate increase for our District was nine years ago, in 2015. Since 1998, the Belfast Water District's rates have increased by 15-24 percent every 3-4 years. After considering all the relevant factors, the Board of Trustees decided to increase the existing water rates by 30% effective January 1, 2024. The primary objective for the future is to avoid significant rate increases by implementing small yearly increases as permitted by the Maine Public Utilities Commission.

**VOTED:** On a motion by Chad Otis, seconded by Kenneth Colby Horne and unanimously approved 5-0, to increase the existing water rates by 30% effective January 1, 2024, and to submit the new rate schedules and supporting documents to the MPUC for approval.

Frank said he would notify our largest customers of the rate increase by phone or in person, as a courtesy, before publishing the notice in the newspaper.

The public hearing is scheduled for Thursday, November 16, 2023, at 6 p.m. at the Belfast Water District's office located at 41 Wight Street.

The Board discussed the presented "Board Meeting Ground Rules" and made a few changes. The Chairman then called for a vote to adopt the rules.

**VOTED:** On a motion by Jill Goodwin, seconded by Stephen Hall and unanimously approved 5-0, to adopt the Board Meeting Ground Rules as presented with the proposed changes.

**VOTED:** On a motion by Kenneth Colby Horne, seconded by Chad Otis and unanimously approved 5-0, to accept the minutes of the regularly scheduled board meeting of September 11, 2023.

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

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The Chairman requested a motion to enter into executive session to discuss a real estate matter.

**VOTED:** On a motion by Jill Goodwin, seconded by Stephen Hall and unanimously approved 5-0, to enter into an executive session to discuss a real estate matter pursuant to 1 M.R.S. §405 (6)C at 1:16 p.m.

**VOTED:** On a motion by Jill Goodwin, seconded by Stephen Hall and unanimously approved 5-0, to adjourn the executive session to discuss a real estate matter pursuant to 1 M.R.S. §405 (6)C at 1:23 p.m.

Returned to the regularly scheduled board meeting.

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

Frank reported to the Trustees that he had received an estimate from DPU Construction (Harold Townsend) for the Jackson Pit Goose River Crossing Project. The estimate for a 1,800-foot horizontal bore under the Goose River is between \$750K and \$1M. Approximately 2,500 feet of the water main is underwater due to the water flow over the Swan Lake Dam. Frank stated that he would contact the Swan Lake Association to close the dam so we can determine if the right-of-way that runs along the bog should be relocated to dryer ground. Frank referred the Trustees to the map of the transmission main, pointing to an open area that would shorten the access point to be on dryer ground. Frank noted that instead of the 8-inch HDPE, as previously discussed, he stated that it would be best to use the 12-inch HDPE to increase the water flow volume.

The main on the north end of Ocean Street is complete and has held a street pressure of 110 psi since installation. We are now awaiting the pressure test and disinfection before connecting customer services. The main is installed at the south end of Ocean Street. The lateral connection and the hydrant still need to be installed. The cost to date is \$108,000; therefore, we may be over the estimated cost of \$131K. The extra hydrant, the increased price of materials, and the hot top contribute to the higher cost.

The newly installed SCADA system works flawlessly at Jackson Pit and Lincolnville Avenue Booster Station. Hopefully, the Smart Road connection will work as expected once the new Pribusion radio system is installed. The pole at Smart Road has yet to be set by CMP; Frank said he would contact them this week. The SCADA cost to date is \$66,000 (mostly programming), which appears will stay under the estimated \$102,000.

Midcoast Fence has completed the installation of the new fence around the 500,000-gallon tank on Lincolnville Avenue, with a final cost of \$23,350. Tammy will submit a reimbursement request through the Water System Asset Security Grant, awarded to the District through the Maine Drinking Water Program up to \$20,000.

Last week, we received new service installation applications for the 115 Congress Street Project. We provided water service estimates for five domestic services with 2-inch meters and five 6-inch fire services. The large taps will be contracted, two 6x12 for fire services and two 2x6 for domestic services. The sewer and storm drains will cross our water mains; therefore, test holes are necessary.

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The Urgent Walk-in Care Facility at 20 Belmont Avenue has contracted EJ Prescott to cut a 6x12 tap for their new 6-inch fire service. The crew will return to cut a 2-inch domestic service after the fire service line has been pressure tested and disinfected.

The City of Belfast has requested an estimate for a seasonal dog watering station at the Footbridge. This service will come off a 1-inch blowoff on our water line crossing under the Passagassawakeag River, installed many years ago.

Olver Associates has provided the District with plans for the City of Belfast Phase 1 Sewer Improvements. The area covers the upper portions of Waldo Avenue and High Street, where the water main is under Route 1. This section of the water main has been a concern and a topic of discussion over the past year. The plans include Field Street and Vine Street. Mandy, Olver Associates, will inform us of the timeline before the project goes to bid.

The City of Belfast Phase 2 Sewer Improvements will include Church Street and High Street in the direction towards town.

The District received a Risk Reduction Grant to install a new generator at the 41 Wight Street office, completed by Davey Small of Arc Electric. However, we are on the waiting list for the propane installation by Dead River Company.

The vendor temporarily fixed the Smart Road generator and recommended a new radiator, which we have ordered. Our onboard mechanic, Zach Harriman, will install the radiator once we receive it.

During tropical storm Lee, the Lincolnville Avenue Booster Station generator ran for about six hours (our customers were unaffected), and a large branch fell behind the office (causing no damage to the building). The new pole and antennas for our new SCADA held up just fine.

This past month, the crew:

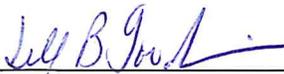
- Worked every day on the Ocean Street Main Project.
- Turned off the Wentworth Event Center and removed the meter.

Hayden Bradford earned his Class 2 Distribution License. Congratulations, Hayden! Zach is studying for his Class 2 Distribution.

Upcoming this month, the crew will:

- Continue with the Ocean Street Main Project.
- Oversee the installation of a new fire service and a new domestic service at 20 Belmont Avenue.
- Start to winterize fire hydrants.
- Cut a new 1-inch domestic tap for 28 High Street.

**VOTED:** On a motion by Jill Goodwin, seconded by Stephen Hall and unanimously approved 5-0, to adjourn the regularly scheduled board meeting at 1:55 p.m.



Jill B. Goodwin, Secretary/Clerk

