

Trustees of the Belfast Water District met at 1:00 p.m. at the Little River Station office. The following were in attendance: Stephen Hall, Henry Chalmers, Eileen Dubinett, Archie Gaul, Alton Kenney and Superintendent, Keith Pooler.

The Chairman, Archie Gaul, called the meeting to order.

VOTED: On motion by Henry Chalmers, seconded by Eileen Dubinett and unanimously approved; to accept the Minutes of the November 25, 2013 meeting.

The Board proceeded to authorize commitment to the Treasurer, Alton Kenney, the Certificate of Commitment of Water District User Rates.

VOTED: On motion by Stephen Hall, seconded by Henry Chalmers and unanimously approved; to commit to the Treasurer the water rates for the period beginning 11/1/2013 and ending 11/30/2013.

Keith informed the Board that the District's offer of \$750 per acre to purchase 51 acres of land that abuts the Jackson Pit Wellhead protection area has been accepted by E D Bessey Lumber Products, LLC. This new land acquisition borders property that is owned by town of Swanville. Both of these properties are located in the 2500 day time of travel wellhead protection zone.

Steve Johnson owns two properties located in the Jackson Pit Wellhead area. It would be important to obtain first refusal on the property or get a conservation easement to protect the wellhead area at Jackson Pit. Archie suggested that it would be good to get first refusal on one piece of land and a conservation easement for the remainder.

Since 2006 the District has taken steps to protect the Jackson Pit and Smart Road wellhead areas from potential contaminants by replacing oil tanks with new double walled tanks and have had septic tanks pumped out. The cost to remove the contaminants was paid for with grant funds through the Maine Drinking Water Program. The District will continue to seek grant money to address more oil tanks and septic tanks.

The Board reviewed the revised version of the city's project on Cross and Spring Streets in the Spring of 2014 and the work the District will be doing at the same time to replace water mains in those streets. The construction project will be put out for bid in April 2014. Keith showed the Board what is planned for the water main upgrades. Keith indicated that the 2015 Front Street project to upgrade the main with 12" ductile iron pipe ideally would like to see the water main continue from Main Street to Miller Street which will connect to the existing 6" water main, but eventually upgrade the 6" water main on Miller Street to a 12" ductile iron main to connect to the 12" main at Miller Street and School Street sometime in the future. This would provide the trunk line through town and would keep us out of the middle of town on High Street or Church Street. Then street by street the District could do pipe bursting that pulls a new main through the old main and bursts the old main right in town. This will depend on

how close other utilities are located near the water main. Keith also pointed out that he would like to see the District upgrade the water main on Spring Street to High Street that is not included in the 2014 project.

Keith informed the Board the new loader/backhoe arrived today. It is going to be a great piece of equipment. Everything is operating well. The old backhoe has been purchased by the Town of Morrill for \$30,000.

Discussed the draft report from Maine Public Utilities Commission on the inquiry into regulatory reform for consumer-owned water utilities. Keith indicated the initial draft doesn't look too bad and it appears that there isn't going to be any mandatory removal of the Public Utilities Commission regulating consumer-owned water utilities. Of concern is that some of the larger water utilities opt not to be regulated by the PUC. With fewer regulated water utilities, what will the cost of the regulatory fees be to the remaining water utilities? Archie commented, what would a few lawsuits cost? With PUC regulating water utilities, you pretty much don't have to worry about that.

Keith informed the Board that the City is working on design plans for the Front Street project that will take place in 2015. The water district will be upgrading the water main on Front Street from Pierce Street to Main Street and will apply for Drinking Water Program State Revolving Loan Funds. This project should be a good candidate for the primary list because it will replace old AC pipe, upgrade fire protection and water quality. Keith indicated he talked to the District's engineer to include the water main upgrade on Front Street from Main Street to Spring Street with the 2014 project because we can get a better price per foot with a bigger project.

Keith provided the Board with information regarding the wage proposal for 2014 requesting a wage increase of 1.5%. Henry Chalmers commented that he wishes that all the employees know how much the District is paying for the pensions and other benefits. Keith informed the Board that the employees are well aware of this but we can provide an analysis for them. Steve Hall commented that the District's wages are fair wages based on Davis Bacon wages. Keith informed the Board that some of the other water utilities are asking for a smaller increase, but also will be asking for merit increases from 0 to 3.5% for individuals who perform well during the year. Keith reviewed some of the wage increases being proposed for other area water utilities. Henry questioned if there are any employees that Keith may want to reflect a wage that would ensure retaining the employee. Keith indicated that he tries to keep the wages as fair as possible, but has not heard of anyone complaining about their wage. Keith explained to the Board that when looking at the Maine Rural Water Association wage survey it is not accurate in the sense that wages reported include large water utilities which explains why some wages are higher than small utilities.

VOTED: On motion by Stephen Hall, seconded by Henry Chalmers and unanimously approved to provide the employees with a wage increase of 1.5% for 2014.

Archie Gaul asked if the wood cutter has returned to harvest trees at the Smart Road lot. Keith indicated that with all the snow the wood cutter has not been able to do any work but expects in the next couple of weeks he will get back to harvesting the trees by the first of January.

Archie suggested that sometime in the spring it would be good for the trustees to take a look at the district's properties. Keith suggested that the District should look at the Durham lot to see if there is any gravel on the property which could affect the value of the property.

The meeting adjourned at 2:15 p.m.


Alton Kenney, Secretary/Treasurer

