

Board of Commissioners
Minutes
December 20, 2023

The Commission meeting convened at 10:00AM in the meeting room at the North Conway Water Precinct, 104 Sawmill Lane North Conway, NH.

The following were present:

Commissioner James Umberger

Eric Grenier of HEB

Commissioner Suzanne Nelson (Phone)

Mark Francher of Kearsarge Condo Association

Superintendent Jason Gagnon

Recording Secretary Hannah Andersen

Fire Chief Chad McCarthy

Call Meeting to Order

Meeting called to order at 10:00 AM by Commissioner Umberger. Commissioner Suzanne Nelson joined the meeting via telephone.

Minutes

Motion of Commissioner Fauver and seconded by Commissioner Nelson to approve the Public Meeting Minutes from 12/06/2023 and the Saco River Erosion Project Informational Meeting Minutes from 12/06/2023.

Motion carried by a 3-0-0 voice vote.

Fire Department

Membership:

37

Personnel:

One member on leave of absence.

Still working on filling the Lieutenant's position.

Training:

Department Training: 3rd party training company. (Hose movement)

Tower 2 Training: Chimney fires with Engine 3.

Rescue Training: Team building program with horses.

Department Activities:

Place of assembly inspections, rental and life safety inspection on going.

Emergency Calls:

Five year call average is 1,276 calls a year.

Five year monthly call average is 106 calls a month.

Five year daily call average is 3.49 calls a day.

The department has responded to 1,533 calls year to date for 2023

Monthly call average is 127.75 calls a month for 2023 year to date.

Daily call average is 4.20 calls a day for 2023 year to date.

The department responded to 101 Calls for the month of November.

Apparatus / Trucks:

No change on work to be done to Engine 3. Work will start ASAP.

Equipment Issues:

No change

Purchase for New Equipment:

No change, equipment is on order.

There was a discussion about the flooding event from Monday. There were rescues in Transville Acres and in Jackson. This event was the first time the Chief has seen the Saco River running down Washington Street. The Commission talked about mandatory evacuations and what to do in a scenario when someone refuses to leave their home.

Motion of Commissioner Fauver and seconded by Commissioner Nelson to have Jason reach out to Legal counsel to discuss the Transville acre situation and our ability to require mandatory evacuations and to inquire with the town of Conway if they will pass it by their counsel to come up with a collaborative approach.

Motion carried by a 3-0-0 voice vote.

Commissioners Reports / Superintendent Report

Project Status

Asset Management – Energy Efficiency Grant

No change.

Jason asked HEB to go measure the water levels by Well 2; after this last flooding event, the water was moving swiftly through that area we need to know how close we were. If we put them in at 6 feet off the ground, there's a safety component involved.

Asset Management – Traditional Asset Management

No change – progress is still moving along.

Landfill Leachate

No change – scope update meeting to be scheduled in the first week of January.

An interesting aside on landfill leachate: Our contract with the Town stipulates that no more than 60,000 gallons of leachate can be brought in a day. The Town has surpassed that value many times this year but in the interest of being a good neighbor and partner, the Precinct has not enforced that limit. Of particular note is that landfill leachate is very high in ammonia – about 330 mg/L. The oxygen required to convert the ammonia to nitrate (which can then be treated biologically in our system) is about 4.5 mg of oxygen per 1 mg of ammonia – more than 4 times more oxygen than is required to treat our regular sewer / septage waste on an equivalent mass basis. While there is much grumbling in certain circles about septage being the primary culprit for our aeration upgrade needs, the reality is landfill leachate also plays a very significant role in our oxygen demand. Especially in recent times – with high rainfall and extra surface area open at the landfill – this ammonia loading has been very challenging for our operators to manage. I want to recognize the job that our wastewater operators do managing these shock loads of ammonia and highlight the Precinct's willingness to go above and beyond to accommodate the landfill's byproducts in the best interest of the entire community.

Commissioner Fauver asked that an update on Leachate amounts being dropped at the Precinct is given to the Town via letter. Jason will prepare the letter.

Sludge Dryer

No change.

Saco River Erosion

Our public information session was held two weeks ago. General consensus from those in attendance seemed to be that the Precinct should pursue the alternative with the lowest degree of long-term risk to the WWTF and aggressively pursue funding opportunities to make it affordable. This is likely the river remeander option (construction of a new channel). With the Commission's agreement, I'll work with Inter-Fluve to advance that alternative.

Motion of Commissioner Nelson and seconded by Commissioner Fauver to move forward with alternative option one for the Saco River Erosion project.

Motion carried by a 3-0-0 voice vote.

WWTF Aeration Upgrades

In a surprise, NHDES is requiring an asbestos survey for areas to be impacted that "might" contain asbestos materials. For this project, the area includes the standby generator room. It's unlikely that we have any asbestos given the age of the facility, which is why it's a surprise NHDES is requiring it. Rather than do a contract amendment on Wright-Pierce's design agreement (which is tied to the CWSRF Loan), I am proposing that we cover the cost of the asbestos survey out of this year's operating budget. We received multiple prices from two qualified firms and recommend moving forward with EOC Environmental at a cost not to exceed \$2,000 (attached quote is not firm price, unit costs are provided).

Cranmore-Artist Falls Water Main

No change.

Country Road Sewer

I have been working with Eric Grenier from HEB on finalizing the design. Our next project meeting is scheduled for this Friday via Zoom.

Mark Fancher and Bill Dineen from the Kearsarge Condo Association were in attendance to speak about the progress of the condo connection. They touched on the history of the project; a few years ago, the Condo Association established a sewer committee and awarded the job to Horizon Engineering. After working through all available options, the current plan that the association has from Horizons involves only one building connection to a gravity feed into Birch Bend but they will need a pump station for the other 7 buildings.

Survey work is currently being done and they are eager to see the results. There are only 4 of the buildings that will be required to hook up and it's possible that the other houses may vote not to join. They have been designing for all 8 buildings because otherwise it would leave 22 households stranded. There was talk about extending the Birch Bend Connection so that it falls within 400 feet of 6 of the buildings (it would be ~1,125 feet of pipe).

There was a discussion about precedent for previous Precinct projects like this and similar scenarios exist on several places in the system. If we are going to own a pump station, we need to oversee the design and construction. One way would be to include it in the bid for Country Road. At this point, the Precinct needs to see real dollar figures from Horizon. Anything we would do to add more funding to the project will have to go through Annual Meeting; we would need to know by the end of February for Public Notice Purposes.

Pine Hill Franchise Area

No change.

LCRR – Lead & Copper Revised Rule

USEPA has issued new lead and copper rules intended to protect consumers from lead in water service lines. This issue gained national exposure when the Flint, MI crisis happened a few years ago. All water utilities are required to create a full inventory of water service lines within their entire system as a first step in the process. Precinct staff have started compiling our data using our existing tie card data and as-built drawings, but we anticipate having many holes in the data. EPA is requiring that utilities physically inspect not only the Utility-owned portion of the service line, but also the customer side of the service line (after the curb stop) if we don't have positive records of the service line material. As you can imagine, this is a gigantic undertaking. Mark Ewing and Alexis Wagoner have been working to compile the initial data. Once we identify what holes we have in that data, we will put together a plan for public outreach and service line inspection. This is a huge project that you'll be hearing lots about over the coming year.

There was a brief discussion about how to most effectively communicate with the community about these new requirements. It was mentioned to maybe involve Plumbers from in town, ask the State about a generic form on the website, how to be proactive with Press Releases and to put mailings in the bills.

DRAFT 2022 Audit

We have officially received our DRAFT 2022 audit *before* the end of 2023! This is huge progress for the Precinct and I want to recognize Hannah Andersen for her work with the auditors and accountants to make this a reality.

The DRAFT report and management letter are attached – if you would like hard copies, we're happy to print them at the office (50+ pages total).

There was a brief discussion about asking Plodzik & Sanderson come in and explain the audit. Hannah will be preparing an annotated version of the governance letter explaining the current status of repeated findings.

Glenn McDonald Retirement

Chief Operator Mickey McDonald is retiring at the end of June. Originally, Mickey had planned on retiring at the end of December 2023 and it was planned to bring on a new wastewater operator 6 months prior to that retirement so that the transition would be as smooth as possible but that hiring was postponed given Mickey's pushed-back retirement date. Given that Mickey's retirement date is in 6.5 months, I would like permission to advertise and hire for a wastewater operator with the intention that this new person would be brought on by the end of January (or as soon thereafter as we find a high-quality candidate) so that we can begin the training process and work toward a smooth transition. The funds for this will be included in the 2024 sewer budget.

Motion of Commissioner Fauver and seconded by Commissioner Nelson to move forward with hiring a Wastewater Operator.

Motion carried by a 3-0-0 voice vote.

The Commissioners would also like to make sure that an exit Interview is conducted for Mickey.

Well 4

Well 4 is up and running full steam ahead. We've gained about 75 gpm after the cleaning – the well is now pumping more than 1,300 gpm into the system.

Sawmill Lane

I still have not been in touch with Debbie Jones.

Cell Tower

No change. As discussed at the last meeting, the Precinct will put together an RFP for cell tower companies to build/lease a tower. Anticipated to have something to review at the next meeting.

Abatement Requests

Account #1958 – Sewer abatement for \$997.92

Motion of Commissioner Umberger and seconded by Commissioner Nelson to abate sewer charges in the amount \$997.52 for account #1958.

Motion carried by a 3-0-0 voice vote.

Purchases

Motion of Commissioner Fauver and seconded by Commissioner Nelson to authorize Jason to purchase the 60 HP Kubota from MB for the total cost of \$53,238 in line with his December 19th email.

Motion carried by 3-0-0 voice vote.

Motion of Commissioner Fauver and seconded by Commissioner Nelson to order the Zylem pump as outlined in his December 19th E-Mail.

Motion carried by a 3-0-0 voice vote.

Motion of Commissioner Fauver and seconded by Commissioner Nelson to repair the dump truck, outlined in Jason's email from December 19th.

Motion carried by 3-0-0 voice vote.

Signing of Checks

Motion of Commissioner Fauver and seconded by Commissioner Nelson to ratify checks signed out of session:

- a. Accounts Payable checks dated 12/21/2023
- b. Payroll checks dated 12/21/2023

Motion carried by a 3-0-0 voice vote.

Non-Public

At 11:45 AM, Motion of Commissioner Umberger and seconded by Commissioner Nelson to enter into Non-Public Session per RSA 91-A:3, II(a) The dismissal, promotion, or compensation of any public employee or the disciplining of such employee, or the investigation of any charges against him or her, unless the employee affected (1) has a right to a meeting and (2) requests that the meeting be open, in which case the request shall be granted.

The Commissioner Re-Entered Public Session at 1:02PM.

Motion of Commissioner Nelson and Seconded by Commissioner Fauver to award the Chief his full merit pay for the year.

Motion carried by a 3-0-0 voice vote.

At 1:03 PM, Motion of Commissioner Umberger and seconded by Commissioner Nelson to enter into Non-Public Session per RSA 91-A:3, II(a) The dismissal, promotion, or compensation of any public employee or the disciplining of such employee, or the investigation of any charges against him or her, unless the employee affected (1) has a right to a meeting and (2) requests that the meeting be open, in which case the request shall be granted.

The Commission Re-Entered Public Session at 2:24PM.

Adjourn

Having nothing further to come before this public meeting, **motioned by Commissioner Umberger seconded by Commissioner Fauver to adjourn this public meeting at 2:25PM. Motion carried by 3-0-0 voice vote.**

Respectfully,

Hannah Andersen
Recording Secretary