

Board of Commissioners
Minutes
December 6, 2023

The Commission meeting convened at 6:00PM in the meeting room at the North Conway Water Precinct, 104 Sawmill Lane North Conway, NH.

The following were present:

Commissioner James Umberger

Bill Hounsell

Commissioner Suzanne Nelson (Phone)

Karen Umberger

Superintendent Jason Gagnon

Alexis Wagoner

Assistant Fire Chief Josh MacMillan

Call Meeting to Order

Meeting called to order at 6:00PM by Commissioner Umberger. Commissioner Suzanne Nelson is with us via telephone.

Minutes

Motion of Commissioner Umberger and seconded by Commissioner Nelson to approve the Public Meeting Minutes from November 8, 2023.

Motion carried by a 2-0 voice vote.

Fire Department

Membership:

36

Personnel:

One member is on a leave of absence. Another member was added so now we have 37 members. We are in the process of refilling the Lieutenant's position. We had an Officer step down last week for personal reasons.

Suzanne Nelson: Chad, is that will be filled from within the ranks?

Chad McCarthy: Yes, it will.

Training:

Department Training: 3rd party training company. (Rapid Intervention Training)

Tower 2 Training: Chimney fires with Engine 3.

Rescue Training: Team building program with horses. There's no riding involved. It's this company that does this team building program all over the place. And they contacted us to see if we were interested, so we figured we'd give it a shot. This will take place on the 3rd Monday in December.

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 1,483 calls year to date for 2023.

The monthly call average is 122.91 calls a month for 2023 year to date.

Daily call average is 4.04 calls a day for 2023 year to date.

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

Apparatus / Trucks:

The estimate is in for Engine 3 repair. The work should be started by the end of January. The work will be done in White River Junction Vermont.

Chad McCarthy: So, I've been talking with our dealer that set this all up, and we are both under an agreement that that type of, or the, the season with snow and salt and all that stuff on the roads, that if it doesn't get in until spring, we're both okay with that.

Jim Umberger: This is body damage?

Chad McCarthy: Yeah, just body damage. It's, it's, it's all functional. It just got some scratches and dents and stuff on it. You know get it all fixed and repainted and driving it back in a snowstorm with salt on the road. It just doesn't make any sense. So, it will, it will get fixed.

Equipment Issues:

No change

Purchase for New Equipment:

Ordering 4.5 cylinders, gloves, hoods, traffic cones and portable radios.

Chad McCarthy: We started a grant process for replacing some 20-year equipment and the grant opens on January 8th. So, we're trying to get all the paperwork all together and see if we can get that in by January 8th. And it's to replace our air packs, the cylinders that we're replacing, it's for those air packs. The cylinders go on those air packs that we used right now, were bought back in 2003. And the new packs will replace those and they're about \$10,000 a pack. So, we're trying to get a grant to pay for it.

Project Status**Asset Management – Energy Efficiency Grant**

I met with HEB about a potential subdivision out at the Hussey property. If you remember, we had gone to the zoning board at the town to be able to put solar panels out there. Solar panels are not permitted within the flood plain in general, no structures are, and the town was unwilling to grant a variance for the project because the Hussies own the land. The precinct is exempt from zoning. So, our plan is to work with Justin. Hopefully we can come up with a good, reasonable purchase price just for that plan where the solar panels will go, and then we'll be able to put them out there. So, if you remember this project, those solar panels we're in line to get something like anywhere from 60 to 90% funding for them. So, we'll have to see what we can come up with in talking with Justin. But Justin's been great so far to work with. So, what we're doing right now is HEB's out there to do some of that survey for that subdivision plan. And we'll just kind of keep moving with that. So obviously any agreement that we reach tentative agreement would need to be approved at the annual meeting because that's a land purchase and those sorts of things. So that's not something that we would be able to do outside in a regular commissioner's meeting.

Jim Umberger: So where is the subdivision?

Jason Gagnon: So right off of Valley View Road, where our, well, two building is. Right on the other side of the tracks. It's currently an agricultural field that Justin plants different crops in. It's literally right where our water main and electrical lines are now anyway, that go out to the well, which is farther out in his field. So, it would just be the same corridor. We would just be looking to put panels there.

Asset Management – Traditional Asset Management

Progress is going well with the LLumin implementation. I want to give credit to Alexis for her work in moving things along on the project – there is quite a bit of “organization” of our existing data that needs to happen so that the import of that data into LLumin goes smoothly. We got our new tablets in that the staff will be using in the field. And so, we're getting those set up and pretty soon we'll be able to have all that information right at our fingertips. One of the cool things about Lumen, and one of the reasons we selected that software is because they have an app that works offline. So, we don't need to be spending extra money every month for all the tablets to be cellular connected. So, in the morning when you're here on your Wi-Fi, it uploads, you go out, you do your work during the day, you come back, you put it back and it uploads again, and everything sinks at the end of the day. So that's, it's pretty nifty.

Landfill Leachate

So, this is that 100% principle forgiveness loan, essentially a grant from DES to look at treating PFAS from the landfill leachate. So, after we did our RFQ, we ended up selecting Black and Veatch as our preferred consultant. So we had extensive conversations with DES and now Black and Veatch about what the scope will look like and Black and Veatch is putting together that tentative scope for the project, and they'll come up with the fee, and we should have that probably around early January with the hope that we can get that approved and then start working sometime after that. So eventually the goal of this money from the federal standpoint is they want to see work that's going to go toward a construction project. Right? So, what they are going to do as part of this project is they're going to do a big investigation into sort of what the existing conditions are, what the existing technologies for treatment are, and figure out what the best treatment technology is based on what we have for existing conditions here. Whether it's treating just the leachate, treating leachate and septage, treating leachate and some of the influent, you know, we don't know that's what the study is going to, tell us. And then what we have heard from some of the funding agencies is that there's another pot of money after that to then do construction projects. So, we are one of two in the state right now that are on this path, the other being Lebanon. So, we have an opportunity to kind of be progressive like the precinct has always been and treat what's coming into the plant. Cause at the end of the day, what comes into the plant goes back into our groundwater. And so, if we can remove that big source of PFAS, then that is a huge win for the whole community and for the aquifer as a whole.

Suzanne Nelson: So, Jason help me understand this. You are talking about the possibility of treating the leachate. Is that taking it out of the water and somehow, making it less potent? I mean what are you talking about when you say treating it?

Jason Gagnon: Yeah, so when I say treat, I mean remove the PFAS from the leachate before it comes into the plant. Right? Because once that PFAS before it comes into the plant.

Suzanne Nelson: Before it comes into the plant. Okay.

Jason Gagnon: Yep. I mean, part of the study is going to look at does it make sense to put that PFAS treatment somewhere else, maybe in our process somewhere. But in general, the consensus seems to be, it is probably most efficient to remove it before we go into our process rather than treat the large volumes that we have once all the sewage comes in. So, right now everybody is thinking that the right answer is probably going to be treat only Leachate and maybe Septage too, because those are two outside streams that sort of outside our rules and regulations that we can't test for, that we really can't control what happens with them. Whereas what's coming in through the pipes right now with all the bad press about PFAS, it's going to be one of those things where that problem may take care of itself anyway in 20 years as it gets phased out of being used. So, it doesn't make sense potentially to build something to spend the money to treat an influence stream that might go away anyway in 20 years. That was kind

of their reasoning behind looking at really the, the leachate, which the PFAS will be in that forever. And the septage, which is sort of out of our control, as far as what people do, what people use in their homes that then pump septage.

Suzanne Nelson: Well, I cannot say that I totally understand this.

Jason Gagnon: Yeah, PFAS is brand new.

Suzanne Nelson: There are people out there who do. So Yeah.

Jason Gagnon: PFAS is still pretty new. It's the soup de jour in the, in the hazardous materials world. So, I think everybody is learning as we go. And that was one of the key things when we selected Black and Veatch, was their extensive experience working on this stuff in private industry for, you know, more than a decade really. So, this stuff might just now be making its way to the public sector, but they've been dealing with it on the private side for a long time with the Department of Defense and chemical manufacturers and all that stuff. So, they bring a very extensive wealth of knowledge to the project.

Sludge Dryer

No change.

Saco River Erosion

Our public information session is scheduled for tonight immediately after this meeting. Inter-Fluve and DES will be attending the meeting.

WWTF Aeration Upgrades

No change. Wright-Pierce is working on the design.

Cranmore-Artist Falls Water Main

No real change in the Cranmore Artist Falls Water Main. If you remember last time, I mentioned that we got funding from the trust fund officially. We got our letter in the email, so that's good to go. They're working on finalizing that design. And again, we're hoping that that's going to go out to bid this winter for construction next year.

Country Road Sewer

I have been working with Eric Grenier from HEB on finalizing the design. We are still on track for a January bid and construction in 2024. We are currently considering the approach of breaking the bid into base work and alternate work so that if the full price comes in over our available budget, we can choose which sections we will move forward with that are within budget.

Pine Hill Franchise Area

We have received some of the documents back from the developer, which we'll be reviewing. If you remember, they are building a central sewer pump station over there. They're actually building two. One is just going to serve some of the residents. The other is a central station that's going to take kind of the whole rest of the development and some future undeveloped land. So, the precinct has agreed that as long as they build to our specs, we will take over that central pump station just like our other pump stations. And we do that because it gives us a lot more control over how people connect and what they connect in those future undevelopable lands. If everything was going to be all developed over there and we knew everything set in stone, we might not take it over cause there's really no benefit. But in this case, that gives us a little bit more control over what happens in the future around that area from a sewer perspective. So, there is definitely benefit to the precinct for that.

Jim Umberger: So, if we do take it over, then we would be responsible for?

Jason Gagnon: Any maintenance requirements. We are not letting them off the hook on it, they're going to build the exact station that we want.

Sawmill Lane

I still have not been in touch with Debbie Jones.

Cell Tower

I wrote no change on the cell tower again, but since I wrote that, I have been in touch with them. And what the gentleman who I've been working with lately who runs a tower management company, after kind of doing his research and looking at who's out there and who wants to be on the site, he's actually recommending that we don't build the tower ourselves, that we put out an RFP. We have a proposal from one company already. I think it's smart to do an RFP so we can get the best possible offer to the precinct from multiple companies. So, I'll work on putting that together, hopefully to get approved at the December 20th meeting to actually put it out on the street. So, then we can, then we can do that and see what they're offering.

Jim Umberger: So, have them build it and then give us annual rights. Funding of fees or whatever the case may be.

Jason Gagnon: So, it would work out that we lease them the land that the tower is on. In exchange for guaranteed payments with guaranteed inflators or whatever you want to call those, every year.

Jim Umberger: Is this going to help solve the problems in the Valley with cell service?

Jason Gagnon: Yeah, cause from what I understand that the problem is not a coverage problem. There is plenty of coverage in the Valley. There's not enough capacity, so they just need more circuits to handle the amount of data load that they have.

Northbrook Condos

Northbrook was able to get about half of their pits done this fall. They focused on the ones in the pavement first so that they were able to get the repaving done before winter. Work may continue through the winter on some of the other pits, weather permitting.

The Precinct is having a holiday potluck on 12/21/2023 where the employees all bring in a dish and we gather for a year well done. Commissioners and Chad, you are welcome to join if you would like.

Well 4

The new pump, motor, and column have been installed and tested. All of the mechanical components are working great – we've got a couple of small electrical issues in the control building that we're waiting on parts for in order to return the well to regular service. All indications are that we gained quite a bit of capacity with the cleaning, but the proof will come once we start pumping into the system.

Commissioner Umberger opens the floor for public comment.

Karen Umberger: Jason, I think you need to have a real conversation with the commissioners about PFAS and what all the problems are, why you're concerned about it, you know, all of the things that go along with this chemical mess. And I mean that because there's so much going on out there and there's so much money flowing out there, and there's so many problems out there. And as I understand it everybody is affected by it. Not only the water systems, but the private wells. And I think it's an issue that we need to, everybody needs to try to wrap their heads around so that when you come in to talk about it, there's an understanding.

Jason: Yeah. Like you said, it's such a broad issue. I don't think I could do a good job of explaining it. So, one of the things we're negotiating in with Black and Veatch in their scope is a public outreach and education component. So those guys who are the experts, both from a health standpoint, from a science standpoint, and from a regulatory standpoint, will be able to do a good job of explaining all that stuff in a concise package that everybody will understand. I feel like I would just talk, sit up here and talk like an idiot for two hours and nobody would, everybody would leave confused and, and dizzy.

Karen Umberger: I just, I just think that that's such an issue statewide, nationwide. Needs to step to the top with problem areas.

Bill Hounsell: Just to follow up on what Karen's saying a bit, has there been any discussion about how to link up with a town on that? Um, in other words, would you treat it at the, at the source?

Jason: That's one of the things we're going to look into. So, the town was involved in the RFQ process and helped us select Black and Veatch. So, we've made sure that they've been involved right from day one. Because obviously this affects them just as much as it affects us.

Bill Hounsell: And when you go to construction, if we seek grants, would that be in conjunction with the town seeking grants? Uh, us as a sub-goal entity of the state, but also the town?

Jason Gagnon: Yeah, I haven't gotten that far with DES yet. But the only thing that I know is that, as Karen mentioned, there is a lot of money floating around for PFAS right now. So, the purpose of the money that we're getting right now really is to get us shovel ready to then access the rest of that funding.

Bill Hounsell: I hope in, just from my personal point of view, I hope in this discussion that there is a broad discussion with the town and the precinct on it, it is a big issue with parents. Hard to explain because nobody knows. And it will be very interesting to find out what the engineers come up with, but I hope that with linking, with the town really well on it.

Commissioner Umberger closes the floor for public comment.

Signing of Checks

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

1. Accounts Payable checks dated 11/23/2023 & 12/7/2023.
2. Payroll checks dated 11/22/2023 & 12/7/2023.
3. Callfire Payroll checks dated 11/22/2023 & 12/1/2023.
4. Commissioners Q4 checks dates 12/4/2023.
5. Yearly elected official checks dated 12/5/2023.
6. Retention bonus check dated 12/6/2023.

Motion carried by a 2-0 voice vote.

Adjourn

Having nothing further to come before this public meeting, motioned by Commissioner Nelson seconded by Commissioner Umberger to adjourn this public meeting at 6:31PM.

Motion carried by 2-0 voice vote.

Respectfully,

Alexis Wagoner
Executive Assistant