

2023 Special Meeting

Wednesday, May 3, 2023, at 7:00P.M.
North Conway Water Precinct Office
104 Sawmill Lane North Conway, NH

Present:

Commissioner Suzanne Nelson
Commissioner James Umberger
Superintendent Jason Gagnon
Fire Chief Chad McCarthy
Moderator Donald Ekberg

Treasurer Robert T. Anderson
Nicholas Preece
William Hounsell
Recording Secretary Hannah Andersen.

Donald Ekberg: It's seven o'clock. I'm Don Ekberg, the moderator. I will call this special meeting together. Um, I think we'll pass on the formality we usually have for the full meeting cause there's only one agenda item. Does everybody have a copy of it? It saves me from reading it.

Suzanne Nelson: Don ... where we've got the camera and it's gonna be so short. Why don't you read it?

Donald Ekberg: Okay. I'll read it. You want me to read it? I'll read it. The new business. This is a, uh, the item, uh, on the floor. Uh, I guess I need a motion to get it on the floor. Is there a motion to put this on the floor?

Suzanne Nelson: Well, would you like me to read the new business? The purpose?

Donald Ekberg: Okay, you can do that.

Suzanne Nelson: Ok, I can do that. So, um, the purpose of this Special Meeting is to discuss the funding available from New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services, um, relative to pre-treatment of the Mount Washington Valley Solid Waste District Landfill Leachate. Um, New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services funding will be provided through the Clean Water State Revolving Fund Loan Program with 100% of the loan principle forgiven. The sole order of business at the Special Meeting shall be granting authority to borrow from this funding.

Donald Ekberg: Okay, thank you. Um, the article is attached and I guess everybody had a copy. **Is there a motion to put this on the floor?**

James Umberger: So moved.

Donald Ekberg: Is there a second?

Suzanne Nelson: Second.

Donald Ekberg: I'll read the article:

SP Article 01: Long Term Borrowing – Landfill Leachate Pre-Treatment Study

To see if the voters of the North Conway Water Precinct will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$600,000 (gross budget) for preliminary study and design of a pre-treatment system for landfill leachate (the "Project"); and to authorize the Commissioners to issue up to \$600,000 of bonds or notes in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act (RSA Ch. 33) and, as applicable, the State Water Pollution Control Revolving Fund Loan program, and to negotiate such bonds or notes and to

determine the dates, maturities, interest rates, and other details of such bonds or notes; and to further authorize the Commissioners to apply for, accept on behalf of the Precinct, and expend federal, state, or private grants or loans, or other aid that may become available to offset the net cost of this Project. This project is anticipated to receive 100% principal forgiveness through the New Hampshire Clean Water State Revolving Fund and shall have no tax impact.

Donald Ekberg: So is there any, uh, any body who wishes to speak on this article.

Jason Gagnon: Do you want me to describe it a little bit for...

Suzanne Nelson: Yeah, for the people watching, would be great.

Jason Gagnon: Of course. So the Water Precinct has historically taken all of the landfill leachate from the Town of Conway's Landfill, leachate is the water that oozes out of the bottom of the dump after it rains, in exchange for them taking a portion of our wastewater sludge. Recently with all the new emphasis on PFAS, which are fluorinated chemicals, we've been proactive down here at the Wastewater Plant trying to figure out where our PFAS is coming from because we're at risk of violating our permit by discharging too much PFAS out the end of the Plant. Again, we're not making PFAS; it just comes to us and we have to deal with it. What we found is that landfill leachate is a significant source of PFAS and we've been working with DES behind the scenes to figure out how we can address this issue.

So this project here looks at the beginning of that project, selecting a consultant who has experience with these types of things, specifically PFAS treatment and landfill leachate, bringing them in here to do an evaluation of what we have at the wastewater plant, what they have up at the landfill, and then identifying the best technology to implement to treat that PFAS and remove it. It's anticipated that this phase will, will be followed by a second phase, which DES has also indicated they have funding for us, or to actually build and construct this thing. So this first one is really that initial design study. What, what are we gonna do and how are we gonna do it? And then the next phase will be, okay, now let's actually go ahead and put this thing in place and build it.

Moderator Ekberg: Thank you. Uh. Anybody wish to speak on this? Mr. Anderson.

Robert T. Anderson: Want me to stand up, Mr. Moderator?

Donald Ekberg: You can do anything you want. Identify yourself for the record.

Robert T. Anderson: Uh, Tim Anderson, North Conway. They're gonna give us \$600,000 to do this project. When's it gonna start? When's it gonna end?

Jason Gagnon: So we have the request for qualifications out right now. Uh, we've actually gotten some big names internationally in PFAS who've come down and, and met with little old North Conway about this project. A lot of people are pretty excited about it. The RFQ responses are due back, uh, June 2nd I believe, or third, whatever that, whichever is Friday. Uh, after that, we will select a consultant. So I imagine that things will probably get rolling late summer and they'll do their study through the fall. And depending on how quickly things wrap up, we could have a project ready for Annual Meeting next year. Uh, or it could be after that. I really don't know because I've never been involved in a, a PFAS project of this scale.

Robert T. Anderson: Yes. I'm, I'm only concerned about the money side. So they're gonna pay the 600,000.

Jason Gagnon: Yup...

Robert T. Anderson: Yep. And we're not gonna take a RFQ over 600?

Jason Gagnon: No. So the way the RFQ works is we, we have to select the most qualified consultant and then we negotiate a scope and fee. If that fee is more than \$600,000, then we can't do it. Okay. We, we negotiate the scope down or we then move to the next most qualified firm and try and negotiate a fee that's within budget with them.

Robert T. Anderson: Okay. I I got that. So, because we can only spend 600,000.

Jason Gagnon: Correct.

Robert T. Anderson: So, the next question is, is I'm not quite sure why we're bonding it. If when the project's done, they just won't pay for it.

Jason Gagnon: So DES has two wings. They have their Drinking Water wing and they have their Clean Water, which is what they call the wastewater wing. The drinking water wing is, they're fine with giving out grants. They do grants all the time for whatever reason, the clean water side doesn't like to do grants. They do 100% principle forgiveness loans. And I think that has to do with how their paperwork and strings are handled on the back end on their side. They just, it's just what they, the way they do it. There was some discussion about maybe they would move to a grant for this and they said, no, we're gonna stick with the a hundred percent principle forgiveness loan, which is why we have to have this special meeting. Cuz if it was a grant, we wouldn't have to...

Robert T. Anderson: So we're back to the same question. When are they gonna pay?

Jason Gagnon: They pay when it's done. Um, we get, well actually, they, they pay whenever we submit a disbursement request. So what will happen is we'll enter into a contract with this consultant. They will do work, they'll send us bills, we will pay them out of our fund balance that we have. If we choose, we can submit a disbursement request to DES. Well, they'll then reimburse us for that, but anything that we request before the end of the project, we pay construction period interest on. Which, you know, depending on what that is, it could be a couple thousand dollars over the course of whatever. That's one of the advantages of us having a very healthy fund balance is that we don't have to pay that construction period interest because we have that cushion.

Robert T. Anderson: So in the RFQ, we have a start date and stop date?

Jason Gagnon: Not yet, because we don't even have a, a scope negotiated.

Robert T. Anderson: It will be...

Jason Gagnon: I think that the loan has to be expended within, I think it's like two or three years, uh, is what the, the start and the stop date of the funding availability is. Um, but we, we won't have an official start and stop date with the consultant until we negotiate that scope and figure out exactly...

Robert T. Anderson: Well, that's what I mean...

Jason Gagnon: Yeh. Yep.

Robert T. Anderson: So, you're not anticipating any interest at all then?

Jason Gagnon: No, I'm hoping we don't. Nope. I also think that \$600,000 is, is, uh, very conservative and I think we'll be able to come in under that depending on how many different types of treatment they decide to, to pilot, which is where they bring in a small unit and see how it actually works in place.

Robert T. Anderson: Yep. So, so my final question. If the commission decides to bond this...

Jason Gagnon: Yep.

Robert T. Anderson: ... and we take a bond out for whatever the interest is.

Jason Gagnon: Yep.

Robert T. Anderson: ...and however, at that point you decide to pay it, this does come under the treatment plant, right?

Jason Gagnon: Yes.

Robert T. Anderson: So that falls under the IMA?

Jason Gagnon: Under the IMA, yes.

Robert T. Anderson: Okay.

Jason Gagnon: Yep.

Robert T. Anderson: Thank you.

Jason Gagnon: Yep.

Donald Ekberg: Any other comments or questions on... Yes, Mr. Hounsell?

William Hounsell: Um, on the design, what this says, preliminary study and design, what are they designing?

Jason Gagnon: Well, nobody knows yet. So the first part is, is, uh, really it's gonna be a characterization of what the landfill leachate has in it...

William Hounsell: Right

Jason Gagnon: ... so they can figure out what they're trying to treat.

William Hounsell: Right.

Jason Gagnon: And then they have to figure out what we have here for receiving facilities.

William Hounsell: Right.

Jason Gagnon: And figure out whether it makes sense to put whatever they use to treat down here, or it makes sense to put it up at the landfill or

William Hounsell: So it's a design vision?

Jason Gagnon: It... yeah. This is preliminary engineering, so we're not gonna,

William Hounsell: The next stage would be the actual design if we

Jason Gagnon: Correct.

William Hounsell: If we go along with that.

Jason Gagnon: Correct. Yep. So this will get us to the point where we know what we want to do and we know how much it's gonna cost.

William Hounsell: Right...

Jason Gagnon: The next phase will be to actually design it and build it.

William Hounsell: Yep.

Donald Ekberg: Yes?

William Hounsell: I, I would like to say that we're on the frontier of this issue. And, uh, I congratulate the Commissioners and all for, for leading the way. Across the state, PFAS is a big, big issue. And this supports this, this must be coming through the state revolved loan thing. So wastewater coming through that comes from EPA is a loan program. So the only way they can pivot to communities is through a loan, but then they can figure it at hundred percent. Now on this particular loan, if we go further, then that puts us in the position of getting SRF loan with some grant forgiveness maybe. And the 30% State Aid Grant with that we are always fighting for. So this, there's a lot of grant potential for this, but we are on the frontier of it because it's, uh, pushing the envelope on science. And the Town has a big involvement in this because if we can't take their leachate, the burden's put back onto the Town Tax Payers to come up with a solution. And the other thing I would like to, to mention is that we're all in this together. Every system that's a private system has to get pumped and it comes here. So, so everybody, whether they're on this system or not on this system in the valley, uh, should be very interested in how we handle

a trash valley line and how we handle the, uh, septage either in our private systems or, or this, this facility. And I congratulate you for keeping focus on the fact that this facility could be the answer to the whole Valley's problems and the regional solution and to that extent, leading frontier with DES. Thank you.

Donald Ekberg: Thank you. Anybody else wish to speak on this issue? Are you ready for the vote? All in favor of this article signified by saying aye.

Crowd: Aye.

Donald Ekberg: Opposed? The ayes have it.

Donald Ekberg: The article has passed. Is there any further business of this meeting?

James Umberger: Motion to adjourn.

Donald Ekberg: Second?

Suzanne Nelson: Second!

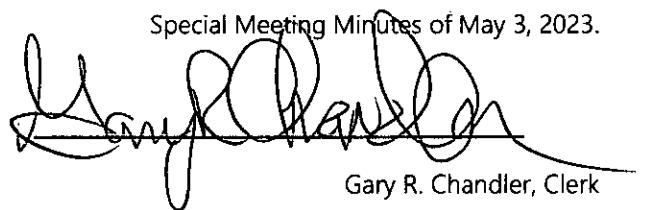
Donald Ekberg: Adjourned.

Minutes recorded by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hannah K. Andersen', written over a horizontal line.

Hannah K. Andersen, Recording Secretary

I, Gary R. Chandler, certify these minutes as the
Special Meeting Minutes of May 3, 2023.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gary R. Chandler', written over a horizontal line.

Gary R. Chandler, Clerk
North Conway Water Precinct