

**EAST LYME WATER & SEWER COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, MARCH 26th, 2019
MINUTES**

The East Lyme Water & Sewer Commission held a Regular Meeting on Tuesday, March 26, 2019 at the East Lyme Town Hall, 108 Pennsylvania Avenue, Niantic, CT. Acting Chairman Seery called the Regular Meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

PRESENT: Kevin Seery, Acting Chairman, Dave Bond, Steve DiGiovanna, Dave Jacques, Dave Murphy, Joe Mingo, Carol Russell, Roger Spencer, Dave Zoller

ALSO PRESENT: Joe Bragaw, Public Works Director
Brad Kargl, Municipal Utility Engineer
Dan O'Neil & Jason Burkhard - Sensus USA Inc
Mike Burdin, EJ Prescott
William Scheer, Deputy Public Works Director
Anna Johnson, Finance Director

ABSENT: Mark Nickerson, Chairman

1. Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance

Acting Chairman Seery called the Regular Meeting of the East Lyme Water & Sewer Commission to order at 7:00 PM and led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Approval of Minutes

▪ **Regular Meeting Minutes – February 26, 2019**

Mr. Seery called for a motion or any discussion or corrections to the Regular Meeting Minutes of February 26, 2019.

****MOTION (1)**

Mr. DiGiovanna moved to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of March 26, 2019 as presented.

Ms. Russell seconded the motion.

Vote: 8 – 0 – 1. Motion passed.

Abstained: Mr. Zoller

FILED

3. Delegations

Mr. Seery called for delegations.

There were no delegations.

Apr 1 2019 AT 10:05 AM/PM
(Ann Zoller)
EAST LYME TOWN CLERK

4. Executive Session – Landmark Appeal from Commission's Adoption of Sewer Capacity Regulations

****MOTION (2)**

Mr. DiGiovanna moved to enter Executive Session for the purpose of discussion on the Landmark Appeal from Commission's Adoption of Sewer Capacity Regulations at 7:03 PM inviting Attorney O'Connell, Mr. Bragaw and Mr. Kargl to join them.

Mr. Spencer seconded the motion.

Vote: 9 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

****MOTION (3)**

Mr. DiGiovanna moved to return to Regular Session at 7:26 PM with no action taken in Executive Session.

Mr. Murphy seconded the motion.

Vote: 9 – 0 – 0.

5. Meter Replacement Project – Update and Presentation by Sensus Representatives

Mr. Scheer introduced the Sensus and EJ Prescott people and gave an overview on the meters noting that they have no moving parts and are able to capture the low flows. Currently it takes two (2) employees six (6) weeks two (2) times per year to do the meter readings. The new meters will be set up to do radio reads. They have an RFQP for the meter replacement program. The written proposal takes in a combination of qualifications and price and they plan on opening April 10th. It is an aggressive schedule; the contractor has 10 months to install 6200 meters.

Don O'Neil from Sensus explained the IPERL Smart Meter noting that it is high tech and does not wear out over time. It has a 20 year warranty, 15 year supplemental battery warranty, smart alarms and leak alarms.

Mr. Mingo asked if the battery is replaceable.

Mr. O'Neil said no, they have to replace the whole meter.

Mr. Mingo asked about tampering.

Mr. O'Neil said that any abnormality is time stamped and logged and notified.

Mr. Burkhard said that they expect the meters to last 20-21+ years.

Mr. O'Neil added that they would gather more revenue as the meters are solid state.

Mr. Bond commented that while they last the 20 years that 20 years goes by fast and they would have to be replaced which is an expense. He added that he thought that they could just go out and put a new battery in rather than have to replace the entire meter.

Mr. Spencer said that they should be saving by not having to send people out for some 12 weeks per year to read them.

Mr. DiGiovanna asked if there is an issue with reading them if they are in a pit.

Mr. O'Neil said no.

Ms. Russell asked about the cold and how they hold up.

Mr. O'Neil said that there are many throughout the Northeast and Canada and it is case dependent.

Mr. Scheer added that if the meter freezes it is the homeowner's issue – they pay for it.

Mr. DiGiovanna asked if as they are replacing all of the meters if they should consider moving those in meter pits to inside.

Mr. Kargl said that frequently the meter pit actually helps rather than hinders.

Mr. Murphy asked for some information on Sensus as a company.

Mr. O'Neil said that Sensus was Rockwell International and the parent company is now Xylem in New York which does some amazing things in the water field. Raleigh NC is where their headquarters is located.

Mr. Murphy asked if they build these meters or if they are built for them.

Mr. O'Neil said that they are built for them – manufactured in Mexico. He noted that the radios also have a 15 year/5 year warranty. The meter is read every hour and data transmitted every four (4) hours. There is minimal radio frequency exposure.

Ms. Russell asked if any of the systems that they utilize have gone down and if there is a need for redundancy.

Mr. Burkhard said that he has not seen a mass failure of a system and that there is redundancy built into the system.

Mr. Bond asked if there is ever a glitch where everything just stops reading for a period of time.

Mr. Burkhard said that on the network side the information is backed up – it runs in NC and in Idaho and they can swap back and forth so the date is not lost.

Mr. Murphy said that he was seeing on the break-out sheet that there is a \$15,450 recurring Flexnet charge.

Mr. Scheer said that is for maintaining the hardware and software.

Mr. Murphy asked if there is an annual increase.

Mr. Burkhard said that the annual maximum increase is 3% but that does not mean that they will see that.

Mr. Mingo asked if they would have full capability of the system.

Mr. O'Neil, Mr. Kargl & Mr. Scheer said yes – the only thing that they are not getting at this time is the customer personal portal log in. they will know everything else about leaks and usage as it is happening so they should be able to save considerably on lost water.

Mr. Seery thanked everyone for the presentation.

6. Billing Adjustments

There were none.

7. Approval of Bills

There were none.

8. Finance Director Report

Ms. Johnson noted that they had her report in their packets. The sewer assessment cash balance was \$1.5M at the end of February and they are no longer taking any payments out for the sewer debt as that portion has been paid off. She noted that the water side outstanding bond debt information that Mr. Murphy had requested was attached. She explained the breakdown of the various remaining debt.

9. Proposed Water & Sewer Operating Budgets for FY2020

Mr. Bragaw explained the proposed budgets noting that the Flexnet (new meter system) is already factored into the budget.

On the water side he noted that he is sticking to what he has said previously and that while at this time he does not have anticipated revenues the usage is not dropping but going up. Also, this year is the spike year for the bond payment and next year it drops however it will go back up with other bonding coming on so he is proposing a debt reserve. He noted that they were able to secure better diesel rates. Also, it is in the second year that they have to make the Flexnet payment and not in the first that it starts. He said that he would have the revenue projections for them next month and will propose paying back the meter deposits that they have.

Mr. Mingo asked if this takes effect for July 1, 2019.

Mr. Bragaw said yes. He added that at next month's meeting that they will approve the meter project contractor(s).

Mr. DiGiovanna asked how many bids they expect to get.

Mr. Bragaw said at least three (3) as the State wants them to have three (3).

Ms. Russell noted that she had provided information in the yellow folders on ways to obtain more revenue on the water side with the hydrants.

Mr. Spencer noted that he did not see that on the agenda.

Mr. Seery said that it actually falls under revenues and suggested that they table it until next month as

Mr. Bragaw has said that he does not have the revenue information at this time.

Ms. Russell said okay.

On the sewer side Mr. Bragaw noted that he also did not have any revenues at this time but would have them next month. He said that he has reached out to New London regarding the treatment plant and is waiting on more information. He has increased dollars for utilities and chemicals as he has been seeing 'pressure' on these items. He also noted that Mr. Scheer has been more involved with both water and sewer so his salary is covered by water by 20% and sewer by 20% and the other 60% is covered by the Town.

Mr. Mingo asked if they have a vehicle for Mr. Kargl and the new assistant that they are hiring.

Mr. Bragaw said that they would provide him a vehicle to use.
Mr. Kargl said that he does not need a vehicle, he prefers to use his own for meetings, etc.
Mr. Bragaw said that Mr. Kargl gets mileage.

Mr. Bond asked if any of the guys take the vehicles home.
Mr. Bragaw said that the Superintendent does and those who are on call.
Mr. Bond asked if the vehicles are leaving Town.
Mr. Bragaw said that generally no as the people live in Town.

Mr. Bragaw also noted that he had bumped up contingency and that at present they are showing a 3.5% increase that he is hoping will be 3% once he has the revenue information which he will have for next month. He said that the largest part on the sewer side is that 45% goes to New London. With respect to vehicle acquisition he noted that the vacuum truck would be shared with water and that they do need a flatbed truck. They are also looking to replace two (2) really old vehicles.
Mr. Murphy asked if they were able to borrow or even lease a piece of equipment from Waterford.
Mr. Bragaw said that they have and do.

Mr. Bond asked when they need to re-negotiate with New London.
Mr. Bragaw said two (2) years.
Mr. Bond said that he reads about it in the Waterford minutes as they are already discussing it.
Ms. Russell asked what part of the budget is tightening up on infiltration.
Mr. Bragaw said that contingency is where it would be taken from.
Ms. Russell noted with regard to personnel and the split time paid for Town personnel such as Ms. Johnson with 20% from water & 20% from sewer if other members of the finance department are also sharing in the work and what that breakout on services is.
Mr. Bragaw said that if they want to do that he would warn them that if it is broken out that they would find that they would be paying a lot more than what these breakouts amount to.
Mr. Bond said that they have gone over this many times before and that he thinks that it is a bad idea to go there.
Mr. Seery concurred and said that they would discuss the revenues at their next meeting.

10. Niantic Pump Station

Mr. Kargl recalled that Mr. Spencer had said that he knew someone who could do an analysis on the vibration. He put Mr. Webster in touch with Bob Wallace who is scheduled to come down and do an analysis. Mr. Webster will be working with him on this.

11. Shore Road Sewer Pump Station – Discussion and Possible Action to Authorize Reimbursement from Benefit Assessment Fund to Sewer Operating Fund for Pump Acquisition

Mr. Kargl said that he would request a transfer from the sewer benefit to sewer operating to cover the big hit that they took at the Shore road pump station. This also allows them to have a spare as the Giants Neck Pump Station has the same size pumps.

****MOTION (4)**

Mr. Murphy moved to transfer \$11,561.00 from the Sewer Benefit Assessment fund to the Sewer Operating Fund, Account #06-01-600-600-400 for the pump replacement work at the Shore Road Sewer Pump Station.

Mr. DiGiovanna seconded the motion.

Vote: 9 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

Mr. Jacques asked about the style of the pumps and if they could be rebuilt.
Mr. Kargl said that they were not holding and that they could not be rebuilt.

12. Water Project Updates

- **Well 1A and 6 Treatment Plant Project**

Mr. Kargl reported that they were very close to finalizing the documents to go out to bid and that it should be done in the next week or so.

13. Correspondence Log

There were no comments.

14. Chairman's Report

Mr. Seery noted that they are looking into the possibility of sending water & sewer to the Honeywell building at some future point. The facility now covers 100 people per day which they won't have.

Mr. Bond asked when they were projected to move into that building.

Mr. Seery said probably early next year – they will know more in another four months time.

15. Staff Updates

a. Water Department Monthly Report

Mr. Bragaw noted that the billing format will totally change with the new meter fee that has been added.

Mr. Seery suggested that they notify people about the new meters perhaps on the billing somewhere.

Mr. Bragaw and Mr. Kargl said that they would do that on the website.

Ms. Russell asked about the PFAS issue and if we have any issues with it here.

Mr. Kargl said that they did not and that the State does not have a figure for it at this point.

b. Sewer Department Monthly Report

There were no comments.

16. Future Agenda Items

No comments.

17. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Seery called for a motion to adjourn.

****MOTION (5)**

Mr. Mingo moved to adjourn this Regular Meeting of the East Lyme Water & Sewer Commission at 9:10 PM.

Mr. DiGiovanna seconded the motion.

Vote: 9 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Zmitruk,
Recording Secretary

