

Monday, January 22, 2018

Greater Augusta Utility District Board Minutes

Council Chambers, City Center, 16 Cony Street, Augusta, Maine

Trustees present: Ken Knight, Bob Corey, Kirsten Hebert, Cecil Munson, Pat Paradis and Bradley Sawyer

Trustees absent: Dave Bustin, Charlotte Warren and Keith Luke

Attendees: Brian Tarbuck, Andy Begin, and Sherry Kenney

Guests: Don and Will Cole from Trees Limited, Andrew Shultz from a. Forestry, Dan Wells and Richard Coleman from the Winthrop Utilities District

At 18:00 Chairman Ken Knight called the meeting to order.

Chairman Knight asked if there were any additions to the agenda. There were no new items.

Chairman Knight asked for public comments. There were no public comments.

The District's forester, Andy Shultz from a. Forestry addressed the Trustees. Mr. Shultz has been working on a five year harvesting plan for the District's Carleton Pond, Hatch Hill and Sanford Road sites. The Carleton Pond site is his first priority. Shultz explained that Carleton Pond is located in both Readfield and Winthrop and that both have different forestry regulations. Knight asked if public trail access could be part of the harvesting plan. Shultz stated that now would be the time to work trails into the plan but he would need to know specifics such as the area where the District wants and does not want trails. Shultz mentioned that he is planning an access road on the west side of the pond. Trustees discussed motorized and non-motorized public access at the Carleton Pond Site and the effect they would both have on the environment. Shultz informed the board that the Carleton Pond site has an invasive plant issue. Don and Will Cole from Trees Limited presented a slide show of the Carleton Pond wood lot and the positive effect selective harvesting has had. They also discussed how their machinery works and how damaged trees from the October 2017 windstorm had been recovered for pulp and saw logs.

The Central Maine Water Council application has been filed with the Internal Revenue Service. There are no further updates at this time.

Knight and Tarbuck attended the City of Augusta's annual planning session. At the session Knight discussed some of the 2018 goals and objectives set by the District's trustees which included actions and dates for the ongoing stormwater review. Corey suggested that the District move forward with the first goal as it pertains to stormwater by allowing Tarbuck to engage a consultant to review the stormwater allocations set in 2011. Tarbuck will reach out to the previous consultant used for stormwater allocations for their thoughts and estimated cost.

Representative Warren had recently submitted a placeholder bill in the legislature for changes to the District's current charter. Knight does not believe that charter changes will be complete by the time the next legislative session begins. Tarbuck will ask Warren to remove the placeholder bill.

Andy Begin presented an update on the 2017-2018 Capital Improvement Projects. The preliminary analysis from the dewatering study shows that the District has the ability to save up to \$130k annually depending on which dewatering system is purchased. Progress has been made on the CSO Four preliminary report. The placement of the tank has been decided but the logistics of placement need to be worked out. The biggest concern is the potential for differential settling of the soils beneath the proposed tank. An inch to an inch and a half of settling is expected. Progress has been made on the permit for the East Side Siphon Project. Begin is working with the City of Augusta on the placement of the storm drain on the Commercial Street Project. This will be a complicated project due to all the other utilities in Commercial Street. Oak Street and Cedar Street will also be complicated projects due to them both being very narrow streets.

The General Manager's report this month included: The rented odologgers that have been in place for the last month and are working. The District plans to return the rented odologgers and purchase new ones before odor season is in full swing. The hope is that the data will help the District to apply the correct dosage of chemicals to control the odor. The District is currently working with the Maine Public Utilities Commission (MPUC) and the Office of the Public Advocate (OPA) on changes to the District's Terms and Conditions. Kenney has been busy preparing for the District's annual audit. The District has currently employed two interns. One intern is working on stormwater data and the other is helping the instrumentation specialist on the SCADA Upgrade Project. Tarbuck recently attended a meeting of the New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission. A relevant focus of the meeting was how to harden up water and wastewater utilities in advance of a large wet weather event. Tarbuck will speak with the DEP to see if there is any grant funds to prepare for an event instead of using federal dollars to repair the utility after the event.

Due to the upcoming audit financial data for December, 2017 will not be presented.

Trustees were informed at the last meeting that the City of Augusta foreclosed on 29 Boothby Street due to unpaid tax liens. In the last month the property reverted back to the original owner but is once again being taken back by the city. Kenney suggest waiving automatic foreclosure on this property but keep the liens in place until the building on the property has been demolished. As soon as the City changes the deed all new stormwater fees will be invoiced to them.

The approved 2018 Capital Improvement Budget included \$350k for the purchase of a sewer inspection truck. After much researching and the specialized nature of this equipment management would like to sole source this purchase. Due to the large amount of funds being spent Knight recommended that management go through the request for proposals process to get the best pricing. Tarbuck will keep the specifications tight to make sure the District get what it needs.

At 19:11 Corey moved to approve 2 motions by consent agenda. The consent motion was seconded by Hebert. The vote to approve the consent motion was unanimous.

Motions included in the consent agenda motion:

1. Motion to accept the Board meeting minutes for December 18, 2017.
2. Motion to waive automatic foreclosure for the Augusta property located at 29 Boothby Street.

At 19:12 Sawyer moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Munson. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

Monday, February 26, 2018

Greater Augusta Utility District Board Minutes

Council Chambers, City Center, 16 Cony Street, Augusta, Maine

Trustees present: Ken Knight, Dave Bustin, Bob Corey, Cecil Munson, Pat Paradis, Bradley Sawyer and Keith Luke

Trustees absent: Kirsten Hebert and Charlotte Warren

Attendees: Brian Tarbuck, Andy Begin, and Sherry Kenney

Guests: Meredith Strang-Burgess from Burgess Advertising & Marketing

At 18:00 Chairman Ken Knight called the meeting to order.

Chairman Knight asked if there were any additions to the agenda. There were no new items.

Chairman Knight asked for public comments. There were no public comments.

At 18:01 Corey moved to accept the Board meeting minutes for January 22, 2018. The motion was seconded by Sawyer. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

The Central Maine Water Council application was filed with the Internal Revenue Service at the end of November and could take up to six months to process. A meeting of the Central Maine Water Council should be scheduled to discuss whether or not to allow public access, how to police the property and other options. Outside help may be needed. As the Winthrop Utility District (WUD) already allows public access, and is a member of the council, they should be a great source of information.

The Stormwater Committee has not met since Frank O'Hara presented his final report to the Board in December. The committee's next step is to meet with the Charter Committee to discuss the language in the charter as it pertains to stormwater boundaries and responsibilities. It was also recommended that the District engage an outside party to review rates and allocations which will be discussed later in the meeting. District employees have been compiling data on equivalent residential units (ERUs) and catch basins to prepare for a sensitivity study on removing catch basin charges and raising ERU charges. Knight stated that recommendations on any changes should be done before the end of the year.

An overview of the sewer and stormwater rate model was discussed. The last allocation study done showed a split between sewer and storm of 63%/37% respectively for all sewer related expenses based on a flow analysis at the wastewater treatment plant. Knight warned the Trustees that a new study would most likely decrease the sewer allocation and increase the stormwater allocation. This allocation is the foundation of the District's rate and budget structure and any changes should be decided on before rates/budgets are reviewed. Tarbuck explained how the rate model worked and what the allocations (GAUD Policy #18) are based on. The allocation for sewer and stormwater of 63% sewer and 37% stormwater is currently based on wet weather and dry weather flow observed at the wastewater treatment plant. Recalculating the flow to include January 2018 indicates the percentage of dry to wet weather flow is 59% sewer and 41% stormwater. As more stormwater is captured and treated the percentage of flow from stormwater will increase. Trustees asked to have the District's rate model consultant, Raftelis, give a presentation on the rate model and an overview of how the industry handles stormwater at the next Board meeting. Tarbuck received a proposal for \$19K from Raftelis to update the rate model, allocate cost and calculate rates and impacts. Trustees will then have to make a decision to keep the allocation as is or to change the allocation which could affect the current rates. Trustees are very conscious that any changes in rates or allocations could affect customer budgets and therefore Trustees agreed that any changes to the allocations would not be implemented until 2019. Trustees discussed removing the catch basin charge and moving to ERU's only.

At 18:31 Munson moved to approve the contract with Raftelis with a cost not to exceed \$19,000. The motion was seconded by Bustin. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

Meredith Strang-Burgess provided a review of the 2018 communications strategy and the District's online presence. Meredith pointed out that all the minutes from the Stormwater Committee meetings as well as the final report are

posted on the District's website. She suggested that the local newspaper do a follow up article on the Stormwater Committee and that the final stormwater report be put in city councilor packages. The District can also point customers to the stormwater report by posting notices on their invoices and on social media platforms. Meredith discussed how the District's outreach program reached different demographics by using social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter and by mailing newsletters and flyers to customers. The spring newsletter is currently being discussed along with a mailing schedule for the 2018 flyers. Meredith's report also included how many people are visiting the District's web site, Facebook page, tweets and the top six posts.

Charter Committee update. The placeholder bill to change the charter has been pulled as requested at the last meeting. The Charter Committee will meet with the Stormwater Committee to discuss stormwater boundaries and responsibilities. The outcome of this discussion could also affect the foundation of rates and allocations.

Andy Begin presented an update on the 2018 Capital Improvement Projects. There has been no movement on the Cony Street reconfiguration project. Andy is analyzing the draft report from the wastewater plant residuals dewatering study which forecasts an operation and maintenance savings of approximately \$130k annually. Andy thinks the savings will be higher than that. Rehabbing the existing system would cost approximately \$400k and a new system would cost \$2M to \$3.5M. The preliminary report on the CSO Phase IV project is being reviewed. The soils at the tank site are being reviewed. Furthermore, the environmental review process triggered the need for a Phase I Archaeology study. A draft permit for the East Side Siphon Project is being reviewed. This will most likely be a November project. Begin is working with the City of Augusta on the placement of the storm drain on the Commercial Street Project. Design on Lambard Court will be started as soon as the ground thaws. Oak Street design is 90% complete and should be out to bid in the next 4 to 6 weeks. Cedar Street will hopefully go out to bid next week.

The General Manager's report this month included: Phyllis Rand receive the Alfred E. Poliquin award at the New England Water Environment Association's annual conference. Randi Taylor gave a presentation on monthly billing at the Maine Water Utilities Association's annual conference. Randi has been asked by other Utilities to help them transition to monthly billing. The District finished the last phase of monthly billing. All Augusta customers are now being billed on the same day. Internal training on laboratory ethics was provided by Phyllis Rand. Phyllis also testified before the legislature on LD 1797. The Maine Warden Service used the District's abandoned water treatment facility for canine training. The District is trying to rent out the recently acquired property at 28 Arsenal Street.

Kenney gave an overview of the yearend financial statements. Cash at the end of 2017 totaled \$5.4 million. Cash in all divisions stayed above the acceptable limits set by the Board. Net position increased in all divisions for a total of approximately 4%. Revenue in all divisions came in slightly above budget while expenses came in 3% to 13% below budget. Audited financial statements will be presented at the next meeting. Financial reports from January 2018 were presented. Revenue in all divisions is tracking close to budget while expenses are tracking slightly below budget. The cash balances in all divisions are at acceptable levels. Due to Central Maine Power's new billing system some District accounts have not been billed. Power expense was estimated for the January financial statements.

At 19:39 Corey moved to accept the financial statements from January, 2018. The motion was seconded by Paradis. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

There are no liens for review at this time.

Two new credit card payment options have been set up for large payments. Customers can call the office and the staff will process the payment.

Last fall the Board had approved the updated Terms and Conditions; however the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) rejected some of the language in the revision. Tarbuck has taken the PUC's recommendations into consideration and is presenting the second revision for Board approval. The largest change is an increase to the seasonal turn on fee. This fee will add \$120 per year to each of the District's seasonal customers. A disconnection fee has also been added. Trustees asked to see a comparison of the old fees versus the new fees before they approve the Terms and Conditions.

At 20:00 Bustin moved to table the discussion on Terms and Conditions until the next meeting. The motion was seconded by Paradis. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

At 20:01 Corey moved to enter executive session to discuss a personnel matter pursuant to Title 1 Chapter 13, Section 405 6 A. The motion was seconded by Sawyer. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous. Trustees exited Executive Session at 20:18.

At 20:20 Bustin moved that this body stand adjourned. The motion was seconded by sawyer. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.