

Monday, January 24, 2021

Greater Augusta Utility District Board Minutes

Location: Augusta City Center

Trustees present: Ken Knight, Pat Paradis, Bob Corey, Cecil Munson, , Bradley Sawyer, Charlotte Warren, and Trustees

Absent: Cary Colwell

Attendees: Brian Tarbuck, Andy Begin, Mike Payne

Guests: Meredith Strang-Burgess

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

At 18:02 Corey moved to approve the minutes from December 20. The motion was seconded by Paradis . The motion was approved unanimously.

At 18:03 Corey moved to approve the 2022 Board goals. The motion was seconded by Warren. The motion was approved unanimously.

At 18:03 Begin provided an update of the ongoing projects. The Kennebec River Utility Crossing will cost about \$5.5M based on current estimates.

At 18:10 Sawyer moved to reconsider the vote to approve the December 20 minutes. The motion was seconded by Corey and unanimously approved. Sawyer moved to correct the minutes from December 20 to accurately reflect that Sawyer voted against going into recess and with that correction moved to approve the corrected minutes. Paradis seconded the motion. The motion to amend the minutes was approved unanimously.

At 18:11 Tarbuck updated the Board relating to the organizational risk plan.

At 18:15 the Board discussed PFAS legislation and testing in drinking water.

At 18:26 the Board discussed proposed changes to drinking water and sewer rates. Corey presented the work that the rate committee has done to date and proposed rates to fund the District's anticipated expenses. The committee recommends a 10% drinking water increase in 2022 with a need for a subsequent increase in 2023. The committee recommends a 30% sewer rate increase in 2022 with a substantial increase needed in 2023. Both rates will go into effect on or about July 1, 2022. The cost to the average water ratepayer is about \$24 per year. The cost to the average sewer ratepayer will be about \$48 per year.

Corey noted that the recommendation for 10% for drinking water wasn't a unanimous decision of the committee as some urged a larger increase in 2022 to forgo subsequent increases in outer years.

Corey noted that the decision by the Board today would only set a rate goal that will then go to the public for review at a public hearing.

There was some discussion about how the rates and annual budget aren't done on the same timeline. Knight noted that the anticipated rate date of July 1, 2022 is done largely to benefit local municipalities that operate on a July to June fiscal year, not a calendar fiscal year like GAUD.

Munson noted that the committee is recommending an annual review to help minimize the rollercoaster rates and provide a more stable and more frequent adjustment of rates. The short term efforts now are painful but in the long run this will provide rate stability.

At 18:51 Corey moved to increase the sewer rates in an amount not to exceed 30% with a desired effective date of July 1, 2022 to move this on to public hearing. The motion was seconded by Hebert. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

At 18:51 Hebert moved to increase fire protection and drinking water rates in an amount not to exceed 10% with a desired effective date of July 1, 2022. The motion was seconded by Sawyer. Corey noted that the Board needs to

consider future financial demands. Munson asked for clarification regarding whether or not this motion was for one year or two years. It was noted that the motion is for only one year. Warren noted that if the Board needed future funds then a subsequent increase would be requested when the funding is needed. Knight reiterated his support for stabilization of rates and noted that there is a lot of funding available from the federal government and therefore supported a 20% increase to water. Voting to approve the motion were Hebert, Warren, Paradis, Sawyer and Munson. Voting to oppose the motion were Corey and Knight. The motion was approved.

At 18:56 Payne noted that there were no liens or financial statements to review.

At 18:56 Strang-Burgess provided an update on communications efforts.

At 19:06 Corey moved that the General Manager be directed to secure \$1M in new borrowing from TD Bank to support capital expenses needed to support the sewer division as read by Andy. The motion was seconded by Paradis. As Andy read the "Proposed Vote" document, Paradis moved to suspend the rules and dispense with further reading of the proposed vote. The motion was seconded by Corey. The motion to dispense with further reading was unanimously approved. The motion to approve the \$1M in new borrowing from TD Bank for sewer division expenses was unanimously approved.

At 19:07 Knight asked for public comment. There was none.

At 19:07 Sawyer moved that this body stand adjourned. It was seconded by Paradis. The motion to adjourn was unanimously approved.

Monday, February 28, 2022

Greater Augusta Utility District Board Minutes

Location: Augusta City Center

Trustees present: Bob Corey, Bradley Sawyer, Cary Colwell, Cecil Munson, Keith Luke, Ken Knight, Pat Paradis

Absent: Charlotte Warren, Kirsten Hebert

Attendees: Brian Tarbuck, Andy Begin, Mike Payne

Guests: Meredith Strang-Burgess (remote)

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

At 18:02 Corey moved to approve the minutes from January 24. The motion was seconded by Sawyer. The motion was approved unanimously.

Corey provided an update from the rate committee which last met on February 17. The process for setting rates is under way now with public hearings scheduled at the regular GAUD board meeting on May 16.

Knight asked Meredith Strang-Burgess if we are on track for the information that needs to be sent to the public and Maine PUC for the rate adjustments. She confirmed that we are on track.

At 18:03 Begin provided an update of the ongoing projects. Begin reported that the Kennebec river siphon project is nearing the end of the permitting process. Each environmental agency uses a different process which needs to be checked off before the permits in their totality may be approved. Corey asked when the loans would be secured and rates would be locked in. Begin noted that it would be after July, 2022 before loans would be secured. Work in the river can't start until August so costs would likely be incurred in the third quarter of 2022.

The upgrade to the computer system that controls the District's water and sewer operations is going smoothly.

Third and Fourth Avenue projects will improve stormwater in this area. Cushnoc and Glenwood are other stormwater projects that will be completed in 2022. A generator at pump station 6 failed and requires \$25k in repairs.

At 18:08 Tarbuck provided an update to the Board relating to hiring six people in 2022. Tarbuck noted that wastewater testing for the virus that causes COVID-19 disease shows a decrease in the number of viral 'copies' in the wastewater which supports other data that show the virus is less prevalent in the community. There is no additional news from the county ARPA fund.

At 18:13 the Board discussed requests for proposals for appraisals of the value of the land around Carleton Pond. Tarbuck said a new RFP is out now and that the prior two RFPs had no responses due in part to high demand for appraisals given the busy real estate market.

At 18:15 the Board discussed ongoing PFAS legislation and testing in drinking water.

At 18:17 Mike Payne reviewed two sets of financial statements with the Board.

The December, 2021 water revenue was \$4.2M, expenses of \$3.6M. The water division budget for 2021 forecasted a shortfall of \$270k but resulted with a surplus of \$641k. Water cash at the end of December was \$1.7M.

The December, 2021 sewer revenue was \$3.9M, expenses of \$4.2M. The sewer division budget for 2021 forecasted a shortfall of \$823k but resulted with a shortfall of \$323k. Sewer cash at the end of December was \$0.8M.

The December, 2021 stormwater revenue was \$4.1M, expenses of \$2.8M. The stormwater division budget for 2021 forecasted a surplus of \$723k and resulted in a surplus of \$1.3M. Stormwater cash at the end of December was \$1.4M.

The January, 2022 water revenue was \$0.3M, expenses of \$0.3M. Water cash at the end of January was \$2.0M.

The January, 2022 water revenue was \$0.3M, expenses of \$0.3M. Water cash at the end of January was \$2.0M.

Payne noted that the proposed rate increases for 2022 are not included in the 2022 revenue budgets.

The January, 2022 sewer revenue was \$0.3M, expenses of \$0.3M. Sewer cash at the end of January was \$0.9M.

The January, 2022 stormwater revenue was \$0.3M, expenses of \$0.2M. Stormwater cash at the end of January was \$1.8M.

Payne noted that the cash flow forecasts are very early and trustees should expect changes as the year progresses.

At 18:26 the board reviewed six outstanding liens in Augusta at the following locations: 36 Bridge Street; 12 Northern Avenue; 34 Fairview Avenue; 8 Weston Street; 4 Meadowrue Drive and 95 Eastern Avenue. The total lien amount was \$1,076.38. Corey noted that the City of Augusta holds liens at both 36 Bridge Street and 12 Northern Avenue. Corey moved to waive automatic foreclosure at each of the locations noted above. The motion was seconded by Sawyer. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

At 18:29 Meredith Strang Burgess (remotely) provided an update on communications efforts. MSB noted that there would be communications to the public regarding the upcoming public hearings related to sewer and drinking water rates on May 16.

At 18:30 the board reviewed a request to execute a quit claim deed on a small parcel of land located in Mill Park near Canal Street. The parcel was given to the City from the Augusta Water District in 1993 but the transaction was never recorded at the Registry of Deeds.

Sawyer moved to allow the General Manager to sign a quit claim deed for property described on Book 710 Page 119 on City of Augusta Tax Map 35, Lot 54, transferred to the City of Augusta by the Augusta Water District on April 1, 1993 but not properly recorded at the Kennebec County Registry of Deeds. The motion was seconded by Paradis. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

At 18:34 Corey moved to enter executive session pursuant to Title 1, Chapter 13, Section 405 6 D to discuss a labor contract. The motion was seconded by Sawyer. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

At 19:01 the board returned to the regular business meeting.

At 19:01 Sawyer moved that this body stand adjourned. It was seconded by Munson. The motion to adjourn was unanimously approved.

Monday, March 21, 2022

Greater Augusta Utility District Board Minutes

Location: Augusta City Center - Lecture Hall

Trustees present: Bob Corey, Bradley Sawyer, Cary Colwell, Cecil Munson, Keith Luke, Ken Knight, Pat Paradis, Kirsten Hebert

Absent: Charlotte Warren,

Attendees: Brian Tarbuck, Andy Begin, Mike Payne

Guests: Meredith Strang-Burgess (remote)

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

At 18:01 Corey moved to approve the minutes from February 28. The motion was seconded by Sawyer. The motion was approved unanimously.

At 18:02 Corey provided an update relating to the rate making process and noted that the communications documents required for the process were being developed in a timely manner in anticipation of a May 16 hearing.

At 18:03 Begin provided an update relating to GAUD projects. Some pipe and other materials are experiencing very long lead times. For example, some pipes are 20 to 30 weeks out. The permitting and funding is in place for the river utility crossing. Corey asked if the fiber optic portion of this under river project was still going to happen. Begin noted that this was still part of the project and would help state, local and county partners with their fiber optic communication needs. Third and Fourth Avenue stormwater separation project is out to bid now. It will remove 6 catch basins from the sewer making more room available for sewer development. Glenwood Street will receive a new offroad stormwater pipe to drain a chronically wet area by replacing an old pipe in that area that didn't have an easement. Two new easements have been secured for the Glenwood project so this will go out to bid soon. Begin noted that the recent acquisition of the SL-RAT (sewer line rapid assessment tool) has proven its worth by quickly evaluating the condition of gravity pipes by establishing a priority ranking to identify pipes that need cleaning / CCTV inspection. The police station location on Willow Street will require moving an existing 42" interceptor. Two miles of sewer relining will be put out to bid soon at an estimated cost of \$567,000. This work should be completed by the end of this year. Some work in high traffic areas will need to be completed at night.

At 18:10 Tarbuck provided an update. Three people have anniversaries this year: Isreal Colpitt (3 years), Randi Taylor (24 years); and Pete Kwiatkowski (32 years). No changes to the organizational risk plan. It's hard to find people to fill openings. There will be a Central Maine Water Council meeting on May 11. And the solar project in Brooks may not happen at all. There was no news relating to ARPA funds. The COVID data from wastewater analysis isn't showing a dramatic reduction in "copies" of the virus.

At 18:18 Annually required PFAS drinking water sampling was conducted on March 15th. There are no results available yet. Sawyer provided an update relating to current legislative measures related to PFAS.

At 18:22 Mike Payne reviewed financial statements with the Board. Knight noted that he had spoken to the District's auditors. The auditors didn't have any red flags. There were a couple of journal entries but nothing unexpected.

YTD February, 2022 water revenue was \$0.7M, expenses of \$0.6M. Water cash at the end of the month was \$2.0M.

YTD February, 2022 sewer revenue was \$0.5M, expenses of \$0.7M. Sewer cash at the end of the month was \$2.4M (\$1M was from a loan from TD Bank).

YTD February, 2022 stormwater revenue was \$0.6M, expenses of \$0.4M. Stormwater cash at the end of the month was \$1.4M.

At 18:26 Meredith Strang Burgess provided a communications update. Work is ongoing to create a spring newsletter and rate adjustment information (bill stuffer and postcard) to be sent to customers. Burgess Advertising and Marketing has gone through the website to correct ghost links.

At 18:28 Knight asked for public comment. There were no members of the public in attendance.

At 18:29 Sawyer moved to enter executive session pursuant to Title 1, Chapter 13, Section 405 6 D to discuss a labor contract. The motion was seconded by Munson. The motion passed unanimously.

At 19:01 the board returned to the regular business meeting.

At 19:01 Colwell moved that this body be adjourned. It was seconded by Sawyer. The motion to adjourn was unanimously approved.

Monday, April 11, 2022

Greater Augusta Utility District Board Minutes

Location: Augusta City Center - Lecture Hall

Trustees present: Bob Corey, Cary Colwell, Cecil Munson, Keith Luke, Pat Paradis, Kirsten Hebert, Charlotte Warren

Remote: Ken Knight for executive session only

Absent: Bradley Sawyer

Attendees: Brian Tarbuck - remotely

Guests: n/a

At 18:00 Corey called the meeting to order.

At 18:00 Corey moved to enter executive session pursuant to Title 1, Chapter 13, Section 405 6 D to discuss a labor contract. The motion was seconded by Hebert and approved unanimously.

At 18:10 Corey moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Munson and approved unanimously.

Monday, April 25, 2022

Greater Augusta Utility District Board Minutes

Location: Augusta City Center, Council Chambers

Trustees present: Kirsten Hebert, Pat Paradis, Bradley Sawyer, Ken Knight, Cecil Munson, Bob Corey, Cary Colwell, Keith Luke

Absent: Charlotte Warren

Attendees: Brian Tarbuck, Andy Begin, Mike Payne

Guests: none

At 18:00 Chairman Knight called the meeting to order and introduced attendees.

At 18:01 Corey moved to approve the minutes from March 21. The motion was seconded by Sawyer. The motion was approved unanimously. Corey moved to approve the minutes from April 11 with an amendment to show that Sawyer was absent. The motion was seconded by Sawyer. The motion was approved unanimously.

At 18:02 Corey provided an update relating to the rate making process. Corey noted that the May 16th drinking water and sewer rate hearing is coming and has been promoted through different inserts and mailings to customers. Corey wanted to be sure that the Board members had sufficient information available to them to be able to answer questions they might get from customers. Tarbuck noted that there was a complaint from one customer that he had received relating to water quality. An investigation of potentially closed valves or other issues in the area revealed nothing untoward. A neighboring customer was consulted about water quality and they didn't have any concerns that mirrored the complainant. There hasn't been much concern relating to the rates so far. Knight noted that he had discussed the rates with some people and reinforced the need for proactive information. Sawyer had a similar experience on Facebook where a customer was not happy about the need for rate increases.

At 18:08 Begin provided an update relating to GAUD projects. Materials shortages are still a problem. Prices are up about 20% for contracted services. The siphon project is out to bid now. Bids are due on May 24th. Maine DOT deferred their Hospital Street project to provide time for us to order pipes. The SCADA system work continues and has potential to receive Homeland Security grants to help pay for it.

The Third and Fourth Avenue stormwater separation project has been awarded to St. Laurent and Son for \$344,960. The estimate was \$258,700. This installs 700' of stormwater pipe and removes several combined sewer basins from the system.

Green Mountain will be relining about 6,500' of sewer pipe on Lower Western Avenue for \$243k. There is one additional bid to put out for relining this year.

At 18:16 Begin reviewed a slide that showed the status of the grants we have applied for and their status.

At 18:21 Tarbuck provided an update. Tarbuck noted that MEMA has been responsive to requests for cybersecurity assistance.

The consumer confidence report is done and posted online. Tarbuck noted the PFAS levels tested in accordance with new rules showed that Triangle station was non-detect and Riverside station was 10.5 parts per trillion. These values are below the current guidance level of 20 parts per trillion. The source of PFAS at Riverside is likely the river itself as there are no other obvious sources of contamination near the wells. One part per trillion is about 30 seconds in a million years.

Sawyer noted that LD 1911 passed. This means that sludge disposal costs will increase. LD 1569 also passed. This created a statewide study of Maine's water. No one knows what the outcome of this study will be at this point.

At 18:31 Mike Payne reviewed financial statements with the Board.

YTD water revenue was \$1.1M, expenses of \$0.84M (3% under budget). Water cash at the end of the month was \$2.2M. YTD sewer revenue was \$0.9M, expenses of \$1.1M (3% under budget). Sewer cash at the end of the month was \$2.1M. YTD stormwater revenue was \$1.06M, expenses of \$0.6M (4% under budget). Stormwater cash at the end of the month was \$1.7M.

At 18:34 Keith Luke explained that there is a property at 36 Bridge Street that was acquired by the City for non-payment of taxes in 2020. The City is planning to sell the property to South Parish Congregational Church for \$10k. There is a \$357 lien on the property for unpaid stormwater fees owed to the District. Luke asked if the Trustees could release the lien to make the transfer of the property clear via a quit-claim deed. Corey noted that the District's lien remains viable. Corey noted that if the City was selling the property for less money than it was owed for back taxes then the District would likely write off its lien. However, if the City was owed only \$5k in back taxes and collected \$10k in the sale then the additional sale proceeds should be used to pay off the District's liens. Luke will determine whether or not the City is collecting more from the sale than it is owed and bring that information to the next meeting.

At 18:39 Knight asked for public comment. There were no members of the public in attendance.

At 18:39 Sawyer moved to enter executive session pursuant to Title 1, Chapter 13, Section 405 6 D to discuss a labor contract. The motion was seconded by Munson. The motion passed unanimously.

At 18:46 the board returned to the regular business meeting.

At 18:46 Sawyer moved that this body stand adjourned. It was seconded by Corey. The motion to adjourn was unanimously approved.