

## **Plainfield Water/Waste Water Commission**

### **Meeting Minutes for October 17, 2016**

Present: Mary Lane, Tim Phillips, Greg Chamberlin, Carol Smith, Jim Jamele

6:04 PM - Meeting called to order.

Agenda was created and approved.

Minutes for 9/26/2016 meeting were approved

### **Clerk's Financial Report**

- Carol is buried in work around the upcoming elections.
- when Carol has a first-draft of the budget ready, she will send it to the Commission members. Jim is interested in doing a preliminary review as he has done before. Carol doesn't expect to work on this until after the election.

### **Begin WW Budget, Planned Projects for FY17/18**

- Greg and Tristan are trying to identify Waste Water issues. There are more critical issues in the Water system. Greg will email a list to the Commission later on.

### **Tim's Report On Training**

- Tim attended 3 hours of classes on financing small water systems on Oct 3, 2016 and 8 hours on October 4<sup>th</sup>. The bullets below are interesting facts from those classes.
- Danville bills based upon business type
- Vermont League of Cities and Towns does a rate survey
- Irisburg has 10 RVs connected to homes around their system. More are being set up each year. These are not being billed as apartments...but they are causing a water-usage increase. The Commission discussed briefly and felt that an increased fee for increased water usage was an adequate "response" at this time.
- setting fees based purely on water usage is causing problems with drought conditions.

- although there really are not grants around for funding projects, loan rates are still very very low. If a system needs improvements, now is an excellent time to bond and do them.

- is our treatment plant infrastructure in the flood zone? Anything we want to do to "harden" things. Greg says the plant is within the 100 year floodzone. No real way to harden anything. If the river comes up enough, it will take the plant out.

- USDA can fund solar panel installations for water/waste water systems

- ideas for how much reserve money to keep on hand

a) pay for replacement of the most expensive equipment

b) cover operating expenses for 2 months without income

c) cover capital improvement plan

- some systems are including a comparison of the bill for water with the average bill for Internet, electricity, bottled water or Patriot tickets.

- asset management was discussed. You can take a 4-day class on this. It clearly is something you can spend a LOT of time doing if the interest is there. Up front, I think a simple spreadsheet with four columns might be enough for us. For the larger components of the system we need to know

a) what the component is

b) how much life remains before we expect to have to replace that component

c) how expensive that replacement will be

d) how critical is the item

This basic information is needed to populate the more complicated systems that you can buy or download. Just having this spreadsheet will be a step forward.

- it may not be legal to charge someone less if they are poor

- monthly billing was suggested because you can catch water-leaks by more frequent water-meter readings and people are accustomed to monthly bills...so non-payments go down. The Commission discussed this. Right now, going to a monthly bill would create a work-load Carol could not cope with.

## **Communications with Goddard**

- Greg doesn't see a change. He would like an ongoing dialog with Goddard so issues can be more easily/completely addressed. The Commission decided to send a letter to Scott Blancard (head of Maintenance at Goddard) inviting him to attend our next meeting. Tim will draft this letter

## **Water lines by Hollister Hill Apartments**

- Greg is concerned as plans he viewed showed new planned lines cross over our existing lines. Greg has talked with Don Marsh (the engineer creating these plans) and things are being changed. Greg will attend planning meetings to try to forestall problems. The current plan is to replace the sewer line to Maplefields. This line is older so this is a good thing.

## **Chief Facility Operator's Report**

- working on a list of critical equipment

- spring-house walls are failing. Pre-cast concrete cover is what the state wants installed. Pipes from the springs are 4 to 5 inches below the road's surface so access with heavy equipment is very difficult. Greg is seeking a long-term solution that won't break infrastructure installing it.

- our waste water flows are very low. Some of this is due to the leaks that have been repaired...so we are seeing a lot less infiltration. The lower flow rates are causing problems with the processing. Greg is seeing phosphorous levels twice what we have in the past. On the positive side, Greg thinks the present flow would work very well with the new treatment process Greg is investigating.

## **Other Business**

- Mary has seen a water fountain for filling reusable water-bottles that keeps track of the total fill bottles (so you have a record of how many bottles have been reused).

The warrants were signed.

The date of the next meeting is November 21, 2016

The meeting adjourned at 7:35PM

Submitted by Tim Phillips