



Town of Oak Bluffs
WASTEWATER DEPARTMENT
17 Pennsylvania Avenue
P.O. Box 1526
Oak Bluffs, Ma. 02557
Phone 508-693-0343 Fax 508-696-6035

Commissioner's Meeting Minutes

January 04, 2023

Call to order:

A monthly commissioner's meeting of the Oak Bluffs Wastewater Department was called to order at 3:05 PM, on January 4, 2023 by Gail Barmakian, Chairperson.

Oak Bluffs Wastewater Commissioners present:

Gail Barmakian, Commissioner

Cassandra Bowler, Commissioner

Bill Alwardt, Commissioner

Oak Bluffs Wastewater Treatment Facility Employees Present:

Patrick Hickey, Facilities Manager

Bridget Palmieri, Administrative Assistant

Guests in attendance: (via Zoom): Cameron Naron, Maura McGroarty

Business:

Agenda Item #1: ATM 23 Warrant Article Submission Discussion

Exhibits:

- ATM 23 Warrant Article Proposal



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Discussion:

Gail Barmakian began the discussion that we have a lot of special warrant articles that appropriate money without a funding source. So we need to find out our potential obligations and create a timeline, so when it comes to fruition and it's owed we are ready. She continued we don't normally utilize retained earnings unless it is absolutely necessary. Regarding the proposed "Deficit" warrant article to protect against emergency repairs and capital replacement in the sum of \$135,000, Cassandra Bowler reminded the group that we were going to do a list so we can ask for COVID relief funds instead of doing an appropriation or pulling from retained earnings. Gail Barmakian added the first request for "MVP" in the sum of \$24,006.25 complies with the resiliency money. Cassandra Bowler added that she believes "Drinking Water" it is the (#1) number one infrastructure they are providing funds to, which Gail Barmakian confirmed it is actually (#)2 number two. Discussion continued that the "Wastewater Stabilization Fund" should be removed. Gail Barmakian said the ARPA funding is the priority and we need to be going after it.

Discussion moved on to the replacement of the hospital pump and the work previously done. Gail Barmakian confirmed that any parts or labor associated with the pump should be paid for by the hospital. She added that we own the pump, however they should be paying for maintenance and replacement as it is on their property (and considered an improvement). Patrick Hickey shared the history on it that they needed a new pump, so he applied for grant funding to replace it. He continued, we paid for the pump, parts and labor upfront, however the hospital has agreed to reimburse us for a percentage of it. Also, the old pump can be reused at another station. There will be more work to be done at the hospital station moving forward. Gail Barmakian added that the hospital, along with the other big users such as the YMCA did not pay a betterment fee when the sewer line was installed, as they are a non-profit and tax exempt. So, this will need to be discussed in preparation for the upgrade and assessing fees.

Discussion continued regarding the process with the town regarding the Resiliency projects. Gail Barmakian added we need to submit our projects to the town ASAP, as there is approximately \$400,000 plus in funding. The Select Board will vote on the submissions.

Patrick Hickey said that Marc Drainville of GHD would like to attend a meeting soon. He continued that we just had bidder pre-qualifications for the facility upgrade and explained the procedure to the group. Also he added one of the categories had only one submission, so it will need to be re-bid. Patrick Hickey confirmed GHD is the Project Manager. February and March will be the bid phase. And we can start working on the cash flow for the construction phase which will show the expected expenditures over time. Discussion continued regarding providing a list of questions to the accountant.



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Agenda Item #2 Budget Discussion

Exhibits:

- FY24 Department Budget Submission
- Flex Budget Reports 01.03.23
- Budget YTD Reports 01.03.23

Discussion:

The group began by reviewing the flex reports and the collections. Gail Barmakian expressed concern as the Betterment fees will be coming to fruition soon. Patrick Hickey added the debt incurred is also coming to an end. Discussion continued regarding the original betterment fee that was assessed and revenue collections. The conversation moved on to the increase in wastewater usage for the FY23 billing cycle which reflects years 2021 to 2022 and the collection of the billing.

The discussion moved onto the Administrative and Department Head salaries. Patrick Hickey said he added \$8K for a seasonal employee that may or not be hired. Discussion continued regarding adding a \$15K contingency in the event of salary mid-year increases, such as hiring more qualified staffing if employees retire. Also, the way the on call stipend and overtime is categorized and the appropriate line item was discussed.

Cassandra Bowler and Gail Barmakian reviewed the expenditures and pointed out that Insurance has gone up. Patrick Hickey said he added a 10% increase to Sludge Disposal, as the cost of fuel has gone up. Discussion continued to the Wastewater Supplies & Chemical line item increases and insuring they are budgeted for properly. Cassandra Bowler said these line items and the building maintenance line item should be increased. Gail Barmakian added we need to have a contingency line item. Discussion continued that the budget is based on a (3) three year average. Cassandra Bowler asked that we check with accounting on the Insurance increase.

Gail Barmakian said she is good with the budget and it will need to be approved to be submitted to the town. Patrick Hickey had the discussed changes made.

Gail Barmakian left the meeting at 4:32PM.

Motion: A motion was made by Cassandra Bowler to approve the FY24 Budget as submitted to be submitted it to the town. The motion was seconded by Bill Alwardt.

Roll Call Vote:



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All commissioners voted to approve the motion.

Cassandra Bowler - Aye

Bill Alwardt - Aye

Agenda Item #3: Rate Increase Discussion

No Rate Increase Discussion

Agenda Item #3: Facility Manager Update

No Facility Manager Update

Agenda Item #4: Commissioners Update

No Commissioners Update

The motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Bill Alwardt. The motion was seconded by Cassandra Bowler.

Roll Call Vote:

All commissioners voted to approve the motion.

Cassandra Bowler -Aye

Bill Alwardt - Aye

Meeting was adjourned at 4:37pm.