

May 20, 2020

The regular monthly meeting of the Trustees of the Auburn Water District was held by Zoom, on May 20, 2020 at 4:00pm.

Members present: Dan Bilodeau, Robert Cavanagh, K. C. Geiger, Stephen Milks, President and Mayor's Representative, Jason Pawlina, Mary Sylvester and Andy Titus, Treasurer. Also present: Mayor Jason Leveque, Sid Hazelton, Superintendent and Tanya Dunn, Finance Manager.

Condolences to Mike.

**APPROVE MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING of April 22, 2020 –**

On motion of Andrew Titus, seconded by Jason Pawlina, it was unanimously voted: **To amend the minutes to include the March meeting was cancelled due to COVID-19.**

On motion of Mary Sylvester, seconded by K.C. Geiger, it was unanimously voted: **To accept the minutes, as amended, of the Regular Meeting of April 22, 2020.**

**FINANCIAL REPORT UPDATE –**

Metered income is down approximately \$13,000 and gallons sold is down 6% year to date. Expenses overall are favorable \$11,000. We are still under a no disconnection order due to the State of Emergency. Friendly past due reminders are being sent and the number of accounts meeting lien criteria has increased. Cash on hand at the end of April was \$922,000.

As suggested last month, we investigated setting up a line of credit. Androscoggin Bank recommended going with a revenue anticipation note (RAN) rather than a line of credit if a revenue shortfall occurs. The RAN is for public entities with lower interest rates and no processing or closing fees and can close within approximately 30 days. Sid will verify the District can legally borrow money this way by reviewing the charter and include on the June agenda.

**RATIFY PAYMENT OF BILLS –**

On motion of Robert Cavanagh, seconded by Mary Sylvester it was unanimously voted: **To ratify payment of bills in the amount of \$208,996.64 as shown on the printout dated April 1, 2020 – April 30, 2020.**

**PUBLIC OPEN SESSION –** Auburn's Mayor Jason Leveque thanked the Board for doing a difficult job during a difficult time. Mayor Leveque spoke of the CARES Act money the State of Maine has received for businesses and possibly municipalities for lost revenues, PPE and increased operational costs.

**ACTIVITY REPORT –** Main replacement projects are underway on Holly, Fern and Josslyn Streets. The Taylor Pond seasonal main is on. Central Maine Community College is relocating the water main that crosses their property. Spring hydrant flushing is underway and the night flushing is almost complete. The docks are in at the Lake and the trails are being maintained.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**STATUS OF OPERATIONS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC –** On May 4<sup>th</sup> all staff returned to work fulltime. The District is providing appropriate PPE, all employees have been asked to ride in separate vehicles to jobsites when possible and to wear PPE when it's not possible. The building is being sanitized daily and staff is asked to disinfect their workstations daily.

May 20, 2020

Before the office reopens to the public the sliding glass window in the entry way will be replaced with a full stationary window that has a document slot at the bottom and a voice hole to minimize staff/customer contact.

**CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT GRANT APPROVAL** – The Environmental Protection Agency requires public drinking water suppliers to update their emergency response plan. The Maine Drinking Water Program has solicited for Grants not to exceed \$14,500, this Grant requires matching funds. The District qualified and must have approval of the Board before the Grant can be awarded.

On motion of K.C. Geiger, seconded by Robert Cavanagh, it was unanimously voted: **To accept the Capacity Development Grant, not to exceed \$14,500, to update the emergency response plan.**

**AUBURN MAYOR REQUEST FOR PAYEMNT IN LIEU OF TAXES –**

Motion made by Dan Bilodeau, seconded by Stephen Milks, to pay the City of Auburn \$66,000, which was requested by Mayor Leveque.

Motion made by Mary Sylvester, seconded by Stephen Milks, 6 in favor 1 abstention: **To allow Mayor Leveque to speak.**

Mayor Levesque explained his request of \$66,000 from the Auburn Water District in lieu of property taxes due to the State of Emergency and the monetary shortfall it has caused the City. The Mayor spoke of the disparity between the rate increase for customers versus fire protection charges and suggested \$66,000 as the difference between a 15% and 20% increase. There are two public entities in Auburn that do voluntarily make a payment in lieu of taxes to the City, also known as a 'hosting fee': Maine Waste to Energy and Auburn Housing Authority.

There are over 1,200 acres of land around the Lake that is tax exempt, which is a revenue loss for the City.

Mary Sylvester reminded the Mayor that the land around the Lake is not owned by the District. It is Lake Auburn Watershed Protection Commission property. The Mayor responded that it is a voluntary payment, not a payment in lieu of property taxes.

On motion of Stephen Milks, seconded by Andrew Titus, it was unanimously voted: **To close open session.**

A few questions that must be answered before a decision can be made:

- What would it take to change the law regarding public fire suppression fees?
- What are hosting fees?
- Do other utilities pay hosting fees?

On motion of Mary Sylvester, seconded by K.C. Geiger, it was voted 4 in favor, 3 opposed: **To table to motion on the table until the July 2020 meeting.**

May 20, 2020

**FILTER PLANT FUNDING** –There is no funding available for filter plants like there is for high schools. Two filter plants that are currently under construction in Maine, Saco and Brunswick and neither have been awarded grants or principal forgiveness loans.

**MDOT REQUEST FOR LAND DONATION** – MDOT has asked the District to donate the triangular piece of land between Martin, Fair and Center Streets for the Route 4 road reconstruction project.

Motion made by Mary Sylvester, seconded by Robert Cavanagh: **To donate above mentioned land to MDOT.**

Motion made by Stephen Milks, seconded by Dan Bilodeau, 6 in favor, 1 opposed: **To table the above motion.**

**WATER QUALITY UPDATE** –Lead sampling will be starting in June with tier 1 homes which include those built between 1982-1987. The Consumer Confidence Report will be completed and available 7/1/2020. Water quality is good.

**PROJECT UPDATE** – Projects were covered in the activity report.

**DISPOSAL OF SURPLUS EQUIPMENT** – The District has a 1993 skid steer with a broom attachment that is not used any longer. A request for proposals was put out the high bidder was Curtis Flat Works Concrete for \$8,001.50.

Motion made by Bob Cavanagh, seconded by Jason Pawlina, it was unanimously voted: **To accept the high bidder.**

**OLD BUSINESS -**

Future agenda item – apportionment study for potential major capital improvement projects shared with the Lewiston Water Division.

**TRUSTEE OPEN SESSION –**

Mary is willing to compile information and generate a report on operational cost sharing with the Lewiston Water Division.

Dan Bilodeau, LAWPC Representative would like a subcommittee to review LAWPC bylaws.

On motion of Andrew Titus, seconded by Dan Bilodeau it was unanimously voted: **To adjourn.**

Respectfully submitted,

  
Tanya Dunn

Approved: June 17, 2020

A true record:

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_

  
Clerk