

DENNIS WATER DISTRICT

Board of Water Commissioners

Minutes of Meeting held

October 27, 2022

A meeting, having been duly posted, was held this date at the Stone Hearing Room, Dennis Town Hall, 685 Route 134, South Dennis and called to order by Peter L. McDowell, Vice Chair at approximately 10:03 AM. Water Commissioners Paul F. Prue, Chair (attending remotely) and Robert M. Perry were present. Also present were David Larkowski, Superintendent and Sheryl A McMahan, Treasurer.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Public Information: None

Status of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grant applications with Town of Dennis and Barnstable County.

Mr. Larkowski advised the Board that the Town of Dennis Select Board has denied the District's application for ARPA funding for a well cleaning project. The request was for approximately \$76,000.

He further reported that the District's second request for ARPA funds had been with Barnstable County. The County has about \$10 million for grants to all of the Cape towns and for anyone wanting funding for small grants up to \$500,000. He described the County's desired qualifications of awarding a grant to an applicant. The District's application was for the a little over \$300,000 for the tank project. He reminded the Board that part of the funding for this project was a borrowing authorization. He explained that ARPA money is geared toward water infrastructure specifically. The County informed the District that it would not be proceeding to the next round of the application process. He reviewed the reasons why applications did move forward and with the exception of a regional application, as water departments on the Cape are not regional therefore none would qualify under this goal. The Superintendent recommended contacting Jon Ohman as Dennis' representative to the County and ask him to better identify the reasons why the District did not move forward. Vice Chair McDowell asked for the list of approved grants and their funding amounts that did go forward.

Reserve Fund Request: to cover \$2,500 deductible for approved insurance claim.

Ms. McMahan reminded the Board that at their last meeting the Board had adjourned to an Executive Session to discuss a cybersecurity incident and potential claim. She advised that the Tokio Marine, underwriter of the policy, has approved the District's cybersecurity claim in the amount of \$16,300. The policy has a \$2,500 deductible. She requested that the Board approve a Reserve Fund transfer to charge-off the loss. Mr. Perry asked, if the matter of culpability in this case would be pursued. Ms. McMahan said that she was providing additional information to the insurer so that they may subrogate against another party. ***A motion was made by Robert M. Perry to approve a Reserve Fund Transfer in the amount of \$2,500 to cover the cybersecurity loss claim deductible. The motion was seconded by Peter L. McDowell. The Vice Chair declared the vote UNANIMOUS having called for the roll call vote which was as follows:***

Robert M. Perry "aye"

Paul F. Prue "yes"

Peter L. McDowell "aye"

Superintendent's Report

Mr. Larkowski reported that the District power washed the Hokum Rock Tank the previous week. Typically, every other year a tank is power washed. Last fall it was the Route 28 tank, but due to its height, it was done by a contractor. The Old Bass River Tank is due to be rehabbed next spring so it was not cleaned.

The Superintendent advised that the contractor that will be doing the work on the Old Bass River Tank may mobilize from Marlboro to Dennis to bring equipment and setup scaffolding this fall in anticipation of the work to be done next spring. He also advised that District personnel have doing work at the tank site making it ready for the contractor. An electric pole will be relocated. Shrouding will not be done before the work is ready to begin.

Mr. Larkowski advised that the State had raised the drought status from Level 3 to Level 2. He said that they are not pumping a lot of water now and people are not watering their lawns anymore. The month of October, so far, has seen 8.13" of rainfall as there had been several days of rainfall in excess of one inch. For the year it has been about 35 inches. The average is about 52 inches. If the rest of the year is average, we should see a total of about 42 inches that being about 7 inches below normal. He had distributed to the Board members a copy of the new USGS monitoring website home page. The site has been updated. The rainfall of late has made it to the water table but what happens this winter and next spring will be determining.

Treasurer's Report

Ms. McMahon reported that the water lien commitment transferred 10 water accounts totaling \$8,332.05. With the exception of one lien that was for a water service replacement in excess of \$3,000, the average lien is \$566.49. By statute, water liens must be committed to the Assessors by December 31st following the year in which they were due. Bills that came due in 2021, have to be submitted by December 31, 2022. It doesn't mean that every account that owes for 2021 is committed, these are accounts that are not making any payments. Accounts that are committed include amounts that were also due in 2022, which means they are essentially reset to a 'zero' balance. Ms. McMahon was advised that the Town was seeking to set the real estate tax rate soon. She advised that, as the Accounting Officer, she signs the commitment. Vice Chair McDowell asked at what point the water might be shut off. Ms. McMahon advised that the most of these accounts have already been through the shut-off process and are still off. Some are in estates and the estate is not been settled or being held in foreclosure by banks. Mr. Perry asked when the water lien becomes a lien on the title. She explained that if water liens are not paid to the Tax Collector when they appear on the tax bill, they are then committed to the Treasurer as tax title until such time as the Treasurer files it as a tax foreclosure which is a multi-year process. She said about 80% of the water liens are paid on the tax bill, the rest move through the tax title process. She reported that she has multiple years of prior water liens uncollected.

Ms. McMahon reported that following an extensive Request for Proposal process, she has selected and awarded contracts for new Utility Billing Software System and for E-Bill Presentment and Payment Collections. She reminded the Board that the current water billing system is resident on the District's server and it is way past its useful life. It is not possible to integrate it with such things as online payments, etc. Credit card payments are possible in the office currently, but it is cumbersome and doesn't always work. Ms. McMahon advised that she has awarded the contract to Muni-Link which serves more than 400 utility billing entities across the country with 70 employees. The cost is approximately \$71,000 for the first year. She checked the references provided and one was Bourne

Water District which also had the same system the District has currently. Bourne was overwhelming pleased with the transition to the new software, training and transfer of the data. Ms. McMahon said the goal is to be online for the February 2023 water bills. Invoice Cloud, will be providing the ebill presentment and payment collection. This will all be cloud-based and will no longer be on the District's server which will eliminate security issues such as ransomware and malware. To access the program it requires three things; and device such as a tablet, phone or PC with an internet connection, a browser and user permissions. Her goal is to have all the history be transferred to the new system. She said that the customer interface will be generations from where we are now. She explained there will be phone access and quick links to accessing and paying a customer bill by sending the customer a text message directly from the call. The cost of Invoice Cloud will be about \$4,500 the first year. The cost difference between issuing a paper bill and an ebill is approximately \$.75 per bill. An example of savings would be if 20% of District customers sign up for ebill, the District will save about \$2,100 in printing and postage costs. Yet to be decided is whether to continue with the work order module with PeopleGIS which makes tablet access available. Mr. Perry asked about the annual maintenance. She advised that it will be about \$52,000 annually which is admittedly much higher than it was. In fact, she has not paid for maintenance in two years because the person was not really providing any service. She said this is a very precarious position to be in as there is no one to access the code if there is an issue. For FY 2024 the maintenance will be pro-rated for the budget.

Minutes of September 22, 2022

A motion was made by Robert M. Perry to accept the minutes of September 22, 2022. The motion was seconded by Paul F. Prue. The Vice Chair declared the vote UNANIMOUS having called for the roll call vote which was as follows:

Paul F. Prue "yes"

Robert M. Perry "yes"

Peter L. McDowell "yes"

Adjournment

A motion was made by Robert M. Perry to adjourn the meeting at approximately 10:38 AM. The motion was seconded by Paul F. Prue. The Vice Chair declared the vote UNANIMOUS having called for the roll call vote which was as follows:

Paul F. Prue "yes"

Robert M. Perry "aye"

Peter L. McDowell "aye"

Respectfully submitted,

Sheryl A McMahon, Clerk