

**Newington Sewer Commission 9/16/2020      APPROVED MINUTES**

Meeting called to order at 9:04 am.

**Present:** T. Cole Chairman, R.Stern, T.Hazelton, Commissioners. D.Messier, J.Tolman, Utility Partners. J.Mercer, Wright-Pierce Engineers. J.Emery, property owner

**Minutes:** Minutes from 8/19/2020 reviewed. Motion by R.Stern to approve, seconded by T.Hazelton. All in favor, approved. Minutes from 8/24/2020 reviewed. Motion by R.Stern to approve, seconded by T.Hazelton. All in favor, approved.

**Public Comment:** Property owner John Emery joined the meeting at 9:26 am. J.Emery addressed the board to ask questions on how sewer rates are calculated, who calculates the rates, and rates for residential properties. S.Cole explained how the wastewater treatment plant is self-sustaining and D.Messier added that all users of the system are billed the same, there are no separate rate structures. He further explained how rates are calculated using Portsmouth Water Department data. Sewer rates increased in 2018 when the plant began paying back the loans for the EPA mandated upgrade. In addition, there will be an impact from the forcemain project, several leaks in the past few years necessitate that this be replaced now to avoid potential fines if there is another leak. The Sewer Commission sets the sewer rates and is actively looking at the cost impacts for rate payers. J.Emery asked if residential users were free would that increase the rates for other users and was advised it would increase the cost for all rate payers. R.Stern added that we have a very small system, with less than 80 accounts, if there were more users on the system the rate would be lower for all, the structure is set up to be fair to all users based on water usage. J.Emery inquired if he could put septic systems on his properties and D.Messier advised he would check. Sewer rates will be set in March or April of 2021. J.Emery expressed concern that the cost of sewer, which his tenants pay, would cause his tenants to move out and would lower his property value. R.Stern advised that in consideration of sewer rate charges the Commissioners extended the loan repayment schedules to less than impact. In addition S.Cole advised that the Commission has received 1 million dollars in loan forgiveness over the repayment schedule of the SRF Loan and we've received \$100,000 in loan forgiveness for the first phase of the forcemain project. The Sewer Commissioners are doing the best they can to minimize costs.

**Treasurer's report:** Enterprise Account balance for June was \$943,866.11. Operating Fund ending balance for June was \$956,900.42.

**Manifest Approval:** Motion made to approve the 9/16/2020 manifest by R.Stern in the amount of \$52,128.24. Seconded by T.Hazelton. All in favor, approved & signed.

**Plant operators report:** Flows are down from last year, sludge as billed. Preventative maintenance was performed per manufacturers recommendations and schedules. Major preventative maintenance performed on all 3 generators.

**New Business:** Preconstruction meeting was held on 9/9/2020 at 9 am. Contracts were signed. The Forcemain Phase II project may begin as early as the end of this month. Discussion ensued on the bid specs and videotaping of one section of the forcemain. Videotaping was included in the contract, but it is the contractor's choice if they perform it or not. They are responsible for what they find if they choose to not to.

Letter to rate payers in regard to COVID-19 and 2021 sewer rates was reviewed. Letter will be sent out with Fall bills.

**Old Business:** 2021 draft budget reviewed. D.Messier advised he removed \$50,000 out of the Engineering line to offset some costs. Letter from Selectmen in regard to budget was reviewed. Meeting with the Selectman to review the budget on October 5, 2020.

**Adjournment:** 9:48 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Klanchesser