

NEW SHOREHAM SEWER AND WATER COMMISSION
Special Meeting
Wednesday • May 27, 2015 • 2 p.m.
Town Hall, Old Town Road, Block Island

PRESENT were SEWER Commission members: P. McNerney (Chair), Brad Marthens, Martha Ball, Tom Doyle, Terri Chmiel (Alternate)

PRESENT were WATER Commission members: Brad Marthens (Chair), Tom Doyle (Vice Chair), P. McNerney, Martha Ball, Terri Chmiel (Alternate)

ABSENT were members: W. Battey, S. Draper

ALSO PRESENT were: Town Manager Nancy Dodge, Finance Director Amy Land, Legal Counsel David Petrarca, Administrative Assistant Mona Helterline, BI Water Employees Jordan Ryan and Thom Burney, BI Times,

With a quorum present the meeting was called to order at 2:07 p.m. by P. McNerney.

JOINT WATER and SEWER DISTRICT

1. Discussion and Potential Action regarding Employee Handbook

The Commission reviewed two draft handbooks that had been originally presented to the Commission in January of 2014. Draft #1 had been created by J. Breunig and was a compilation of specific policies currently in place combined with the Town's Collective Bargaining Agreement. Draft #2 was a template found online personalized by the temporary sewer/water clerk at that time. The Commission agreed that Draft #1 was a great starting point. They also noted that Draft #2 had a lot of information or sections that they would like to see added to Draft #1:

- Hours of Work Schedule
- Attendance and Punctuality
- Conduct
- Customer Relations
- Dress Code
- Appearance
- Work Area
- Telephone Courtesy and Use
- Safety Policy
- Outside Employment
- Acknowledgement Form

Further discussion centered on how much tolerance there should be for not passing licensing exams and what was already addressed through state (Department of Health) law.

Other comments/suggestions:

- Instead of re-stating things that were already addressed in detail in the O&M manual- such as safety procedures, the employee handbook could reference the manual.
- Smoking policy.
- Vacation rollover policy: consider going back to calendar year.

T. Chmiel departed at 2:50 pm.

2. Discussion and Potential Action regarding Staff Policy: Operator Compensation

The Staff Policy regarding Operator License Compensation was last amended in 2007. Discussion continued regarding the hourly starting wages, the types and compensation for licenses and the consideration of cross training.

Commissioners stated they would like to see a longer range plan, a career path that offered employees the ability to continue to move forward even after all available licenses had been obtained. Commission agreed that the scope of current compensation policy was too narrow and that the starting wages were too low.

It was questioned whether this policy could be changed after the Commission had just adopted the budget. It was suggested that a goal be set to have all revisions in place before the FY 2017 budget cycle.

Cross training was discussed at length.

- When the Staff Policy: Operator Compensation was originally developed, cross training was required.
- P. McNerney would like the Commission to consider the reinstatement of cross-training.
- Cross training is beneficial to both the employees and employers.
- Reinstatement of the cross training requirement needs to be decided at the Commission level.
- J. Breunig stated that acquiring a license in the "other" field would require a certain number of hours "on the job", equivalent to 2 years full time (520 work days).
- P. McNerney stated he spoke to someone on the state level himself regarding this issue and there seemed to be some flexibility in how the "experience" requirement could be fulfilled.

Clerk M. Helterline stated that from an employee standpoint it was unclear what rules or guidelines employees were following. A brief look at past minutes had proven that this was not the first time the issue had been brought up. Helterline requested that since a fully functional employee handbook would take a while to develop, and since there would be a new employee starting at the Sewer Plant, that the Commission make a statement that clarified or re-stated what was being followed in the meantime. P. McNerney agreed that the language addressing this in the past was ambiguous at best, but that historically, in most cases, the Commission mirrored or closely resembled the Collective Bargaining Agreement. For now, the statement of the Commission from June 8, 2004 (*The Sewer Commission intends to mirror benefits and certain other provision of the current New Shoreham Employees Association contract listed below with salary issues being determined yearly by the Commission.....adhere to the provision of the current Employee's Contract with respect to benefits, vacation time, sick days and holidays, and the provisions of the 457 Plan administered by the Town*) D. Petrarca stated, basically, if there was not a policy spelled out, refer to the statement of June 8, 2004, if the topic is not addressed, then it is subject to management rights.

3. Discussion and Potential Action regarding proposed FY 2015 Sewer Grant Application

With the proposed FY 2015 Sewer grant/loan being offered at 3% Grant, it was decided that the Commission would not pursue the offer.

MOTION by B. Marthens that the Commission decline accepting the 2015 Sewer Grant Application. Seconded by T. Doyle.

Aye: 5 (McNerney, Marthens, Ball, Doyle, Chmiel) Nay: 0. Abstain: 0.

The Commission requested that A. Land pursue some of the other options for financing projects that would have been completed under the proposed 2015 Sewer Grant.

4. Discussion and Potential Action regarding Commission approval of proposed letter to Town Council regarding Town Councilor presence and conduct at meetings of the Commissions

This item was postponed.

5. Adjournment.

MOTION to adjourn at 3:30 p.m. by P. McNerney. Seconded by B. Marthens.

Aye: 5 (McNerney, Marthens, Ball, Doyle, Chmiel) Nay: 0. Abstain: 0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mona Helterline

ACCEPTED:6/15/15

The New Shoreham Sewer and Water Districts are an equal opportunity provider and employer

If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov.