

**JOINT MEETING OF THE
NEW SHOREHAM SEWER AND WATER COMMISSION**

Monday: December 21, 2015 at 4:00 p.m.

Town Hall, Old Town Rd, Block Island

PRESENT were SEWER Commission members: Steve Draper (Vice-Chair), Brad Marthens, Martha Ball, Kathy Szabo (Alternate), Terri Chmiel (Alternate)

PRESENT were WATER Commission members: Brad Marthens (Chair), Martha Ball, Steve Draper, Kathy Szabo (Alternate), Terri Chmiel (Alternate)

ABSENT were Commission members: Peter McNerney and Tom Doyle.

For this meeting Terri Chmiel and Kathy Szabo were full voting members due to the absent of P. McNerney and T. Doyle.

ALSO PRESENT were: Sewer Superintendent Chris Blane, Water Superintendent John Breunig, Finance Director Amy Land, Legal Counsel David Petrarca, and Administrative Assistant Kara Stinnett.

With a quorum present the meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by B. Marthens.

WATER AND SEWER DISTRICT

1. Discussion and potential action regarding correspondence from Inn at Spring House request for abatement of sewer usage.

Dave Houseman was in attendance to represent the Inn at the Spring House for Frank DiBiase. He stated that the water service was activated for the sole purpose of watering the lawn. The Zoning, Conservation and Planning Committee's all expressed concern of muddy run off until a lawn was in place, because of this, early watering was done on the property. No sewer was hooked up at this time so there was no actual sewer usage. D. Houseman was asking that the sewer fees be waived. J. Breunig recommended that 33,000 gallons of sewer usage be forgiven. M. Ball also wanted to have on the record that this is a onetime forgiveness.

MOTION was made by S. Draper, based on J. Breunig's recommendation that the Inn at the Spring House is forgiven this one time for 33,000 gallons of sewer usage or \$1,454.64. Motion seconded by T. Chmiel.

**Ayes: 5 (Marthens, Draper, Ball, Chmiel and Szabo) Nays: 0
Abstain: 0**

2. Discussion and potential action regarding the minutes of the November 19th, 2015 monthly meeting.

MOTION was made by B. Marthens to approve the minutes of the November 19th meeting. Motion seconded by S. Draper.

Ayes: 5 (Marthens, Draper, Ball, Chmiel and Szabo) Nays: 0

Abstain: 0

3. The New Shoreham Sewer Commission and New Shoreham Water Commission may vote to move into Executive Session pursuant to RIGL §42-46-5(a)(1) Personnel (Employee Handbook).

At the request of the Commission and legal counsel, this item was passed until a later meeting.

4. Discussion and potential action, announcement and/or vote(s) from Executive Session and/or Open Session concerning proposed Employee Handbook.

At the request of the Commission and legal counsel, this item was passed until a later meeting.

5. Discussion and potential action regarding consideration of a holiday bonus for the employees and or commissioners for their service and hard work during the past year.

Discussion was had about giving the commission and/or employees a holiday bonus. Legal Counsel pointed out that any Commissioner Compensation needed to be voted on by the Town Council. The

Commission did not think it was a good idea. It was decided that they would put it to a vote so it was on the record.

MOTION made by M. Ball that there be no consideration for a holiday bonus for Employees or Commissioners. Motion seconded by T. Chmiel.

**Ayes: 5 (Marthens, Draper, Ball, Chmiel and Szabo) Nays: 0
Abstain: 0**

6. Discussion and potential action regarding Sewer and Water Administrative Assistants request for vacation time rollover.

It was explained that with the recent job switch, not wanting to take vacation time after just starting the job, and not being able to use vacation time during the summer months at her previous employment there was excess vacation time that would not be able to be used by the end of the year. K. Stinnett has asked that any excess vacation time over her two weeks be allowed to be carried over into 2016.

MOTION made by B. Marthens that whatever time K.Stinnett has available at the end of this year (2015) she is allowed to rollover to next year (2016) as a onetime event. Motion seconded by S. Draper.

**Ayes: 5 (Marthens, Draper, Ball, Chmiel and Szabo) Nays: 0
Abstains: 0**

WATER DISTRICT

7. Discussion and potential action regarding financials and aging.

Finance Director Land stated that they have sent out about 40 delinquency notices in the past week to both water and sewer customers. She is still waiting to hear back from the customers in response to these notices. There were a few accounts that had negative balances on them; this was due in part to allocation having been bought after the balances were paid.

8. Operations report.

Water Superintendent J. Breunig informed the commission that The Historical Society had put in a new line for a fire suppression system and is now a new customer. It will not be until next year that they will actually be using the system, so you will not see any fees from them until then. Also the Hygeia has become a new customer, it will no longer be a hotel but will be a rental house for the summer months; A few smaller domestic lines were replaced as well. Meters are down the last couple months but again it has a minimal impact in comparison to the great summer they had. A lot of time was spent working on the RO3; they are now into the plumbing portion of the project. J. Breunig stated that this is an exciting project that most water operators do not get an opportunity to do. Also J. Breunig is

still waiting to hear back about the Memorandum of Understanding for the \$20,000 grant.

SEWER DISTRICT

9. Discussion and potential action regarding financials and aging.

Finance Director Land stated that user fees were up from 76% to 79% and expense is well contained. There was an exit meeting with the Auditors the week prior and the sewer financials show that for the first time in recent years that the operating revenues exceed the operating expenses. B. Marthens had a question about customer #35 who has a large past due and was wondering if it was a standard balance? A. Land stated that yes it had been a recent pattern and has been hard to get payment, and she is actually waiting on a response from the customer to the delinquency letter sent out. Also customer #199 has a large balance, and Amy stated again that it was a traditional pattern of behavior. S. Draper had a question about customer #431 whose bill was high; J. Breunig believes this is a watering issue as well, but has not heard or had any complaint from the owner.

10. Operations report.

Sewer Superintendent Chris Blane pointed out that flows are down about 15% from last year, mainly due to lack of rain.

The new replacement autoclave came in; this piece of equipment is used to sterilize the coliform testing to make sure everything is dead after the testing has been done. A new trash pump was ordered as well.

11. Discussion and potential action regarding the manhole cover update.

Legal Counsel Petrarca noted that P. McNerney has not been able to get a meeting as of yet with the governor. D. Petrarca has been in contact with N. Dodge who has been playing phone tag with Joe Baker of the DOT, she is getting the feeling she is being ignored. D. Petrarca suggests that we send another reminding letter. B Marthens noted that while having dinner in Providence the Governor was seated near him. He introduced himself and briefly told her about the problem and gave her his card and is hoping to get a call back from someone in her department.

12. Congratulations to Steve McDonald for passing the Class 1 Waste Water Operator exam on 11/24/15.

It was discussed and agreed to have a congratulatory letter sent to Steve McDonald.

13. Discussion and potential action regarding Steve McDonalds pay increase due to his new license.

Due to Steve McDonald's new license he is entitled to a pay increase of \$.50. A letter will be sent to finance to inform them of this change.

14. Discussion and potential action regarding the Block Island Power Company's recent usage increase.

There was some discussion about the power bills at the sewer plant being almost double what they have been in the past. C. Blane looked into the issue to see why this was. Blane noticed that the multiplier on the more recent bills had gone up from a 40 to an 80 multiplier. He spoke with Howell Conant who explained that when they put in the new transformer about three years ago they added a larger current transformer, which was at a multiplier of 80. When this occurred they never changed the multiplier on the bill to 80 instead of 40, and they were not getting billed for the correct usage since that change in transformers.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND OPEN FORUM.

20. Commissioners Announcements.

S. Draper had a discussion with a friend of his who owns a house down Coast Guard Road and he is very interested in running an extension down Coast Guard Road. J. Breunig stated that just recently four new wells were drilled down there. It was also noted by

S. Draper and C. Blane that not much came out of those wells and with too much drilling there could eventually be a problem with intrusion. B. Marthens stated if the homeowners down Coast Guard Road wanted to fund the project it would definitely be something to look into. As of now the line ends at the West Side 20 and the line would have to be extended about another mile, which would be a substantial cost to the current customers/rate payers. There was talk about doing another survey, J. Breunig pointed out that the last survey project done by him and K. Stinnett was a lot of work and this would be about 5 times as many landowners. J. Breunig also stated that from doing his last feasibility study for Old Town road/Center Road/Beach Ave there is little likelihood that it would be able to pay for itself, but he is more than willing to do the work if the interested parties would like to contact him to do so, or if there are several homeowners interested in backing the project it would make the project more viable.

21. Public Comments for items on the agenda.

Dave Houseman stated that The Spring House currently has an ice machine that has water coming into it from their well; the water then goes into the machine and a great deal of it is then dumped out of the machine into the two dry wells on the property. Frank DiBiase was wondering if there was a ratio they could work out to adjust the sewer billing to reflect this amount of water that is dumped. J. Breunig did go up and take a look at it to see if a subtraction meter was a

possibility and he noticed that the lines were within the machine; this makes it impossible to add a subtraction meter and without a measurement of volume it is impossible to come up with a number.

22. Adjournment.

MOTION was made by B. Marthens to adjourn the meeting at 04:43 p.m. Motion seconded by T. Chmiel.

Ayes: 5 (Marthens, Draper, Ball, Chmiel and Szabo) Nays: 0

Abstains: 0

Respectfully Submitted,

Kara Stinnett

ACCEPTED: 01/19/16

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

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Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov.