

Municipal Board Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, March 31, 6 pm

A conference call was held in place of an in-person meeting, due to Covid-19, the agenda with call number was posted on the Village of Skaneateles Website so that any member of the general public could “attend” in addition to the committee members.

I. Role Call:

In attendance: Chair MaryEllen McQuaid, Members: Gregg Palmer, Walter Blackler, Marc Angelillo, Tom Rhoads

Electric Superintendent: Peter Reap

Skaneateles WWTP Operator: Adam Twitchell (joined meeting at 7 pm)

Liaison: Carol Stokes-Cawley

Others: Dennis Dundon and Duane Wiedor

II. The Minutes of February 25, 2020 Municipal Board Meeting including

Electric Superintendent: Peter Reap’s e-mail follow-up was approved by all members with no comments or additions.

III. Utility response or considerations in terms of Covid-19 and utility updates

Electric: Peter reported the following:

“The Electric Dept. is following MEUA and State guidelines for Covid19 awareness and social distancing. I have advised Allan the he should not enter a customer’s premises except in dire emergency. Further, I have advised him that the Electric Dept. will handle emergency work only as this Pandemic deepens.

I have kept in touch with Black and McDonald regarding the bank testing at Fennell St. Due to a customer emergency near Albany, they will be here next week to begin testing. They have not shut down but they are hampered by the social distancing etc. Then we can proceed forward if this virus will let us.

A new lineman will start 6 April. Due to the virus we will social distance with him in the other office here and he will be starting the inventory booking into CPR, with definite phone contact with Palumbo.

That is about it. The virus is deepening in all communities so we will not be storming ahead, until this is passed.”

In addition, Peter mentioned:

- the outage last week on East Lake Road was caused by a tree limb.
- O’Connell is working on the asset inventory and they have collected 1000 pages of data to be input into the CPR.
- The transformer is scheduled to be tested next Wednesday.

- If all goes to plan the substation will be energized in late August or September

Carol mentioned that pursuant to Governor Cuomo's State of Emergency the PSC requested all NYMPA members to not turn off electricity or collect late payment fees during this coronavirus pandemic. NYMPA is complying with this request. Therefore the Village will not collect any new late payment fees or penalties during the pandemic.

Sewer: Marc updated the municipal board on the WWTP (Adam who arrived late to the call because of a mix-up with the starting time, also filled the board in on a few other items, which are included here). Marc's report included the following highlights:

- GHD, who has familiarity with our WWTP, was tasked by the VB (at the Mayor's request) to investigate options for the meeting the SPDES permit limit for ammonia and total residual chlorine. The permit currently requires an engineering report that lays out these options by May 1, 2020.
- Adam, Marc and Carol met with three representatives of GHD on March 13, 2020. One of the first requests by GHD was to extend the deadline for the report from May 1 to July 1. Marc drafted that letter with an extension to August 1. The Mayor sent out a letter requesting the deadline extension to August 1. (Although Adam has had some positive phone calls with NYDEC, neither Marc nor Carol have seen a formal response from NYDEC re: the date change.)
- Adam also took the GHD representatives on a tour of the plant.
- Marc would like to ensure the MB gets to review the draft GHD report and have the opportunity to weigh in.
- RE: Covid-19. Gregg Palmer and Tom both mentioned that sewage by its very nature is always contaminated with viruses and pathogens and that it is critical that WWTP staff have and take advantage of their PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) when working in the plant, especially prior to the RBCs. When Adam arrived he said that he is aware and vigilant about wearing his PPE.
- Tom mentioned that as long as the effluent is meeting its chlorine limit there should be no viruses in the discharge.

Water: Marc updated the MB on happenings of the Water Department.

- The City of Syracuse is currently the operator on record for the Skaneateles Water Department (specifically Mike Lynn of the City).
- In addition, Shaun Rush of the State Health Department, is to test Abbott and Dries on site (unclear when that is happening).
- Abbott, Dries and Twitchell are also scheduled to take the D class and Test in May (for water distribution, unclear if the training will take place). Angelillo mentioned that currently Twitchell goes to the water plant daily to take samples. Lynn fills out and signs the report as the operator of record.
- Tom Fleet, who currently is the backup operator at the WWTP does currently have a D license.
- The long-term goal is for Adam to be the Operator on Record for the Water Plant, but he needs a year working within the water department, so most likely this will not happen until next spring.

- Re: Covid 19, Gregg mentioned that with respect to our water treatment processes, that the UV system will inactivate any live viruses and our chlorine disinfection system kills viruses. So there should be no concern for active viruses in our portable water.

Water Line Improvement Project: Carol updated the board on the Water Line Improvement Project.

- Villager has submitted a Health & Safety Plan that includes a very substantial supplement concerning Covid-19, of note that in addition to ensuring the work man will practice social distancing, there will be hand-washing stations on site.
- Villager will be on-site starting April 6, digging a test hole on Onondaga and locating sewer laterals
- Sewers and laterals are scheduled to be installed beginning April 20th.
- At this point the project should be completed and road milled and paved by early September.
- MaryEllen asked if the sidewalks were included as part of the completion of the project. Carol followed up with Dick Perkins, who is the Village Staff person who will be the “man on the street” for the project. His answer is in italics here “ *the sidewalks will be handled the same as they were on Griffin street. Whatever Villager disrupts is their responsibility, the rest will be done on a unit pricing by Villager or their sub-contractor. So in answer to your question they will be replaced.*”

IV. Utility Finances

Carol had forwarded Clerk/Treasurer Couch’s Bank Balances and 2021 Sewer Fund draft Budget expenditures to the MB on Monday. There is currently no Electric budget and the water budget according to Mayor Hubbard will not change significantly from last year.

Members Angelillo and Blacker were asking about the VB’s approval of the utility budgets and Liaison Stokes-Cawley mentioned that the VB now only approves the General Fund budget

Member Rhoads expressed some concern of the funds currently in the Sewer Fund bank balance (approximately \$9K) and that the sewer budget for FY 21 does not include funds that might be needed for the design of the option chosen from the GHD SPDES report. At this point G; 1440.4 includes \$30K for the engineering report only.

V. New Business

Covid 19 communication: The MB suggested that information related to the Village’s utilities as they relate to Covid-19 should be put on the Village’s website. Carol will work on summarizing some of the information from this meeting, send it to the MB to fact check and ask the Office staff to post it on our website.

Utility Bill Payments: Tom Rhoads brought up the suggestion that the Village might want to consider some type of payment option, so that the office staff does not need to handle checks or cash. He mentioned that in Chemung County they are presently using Muncipay. Tom followed up through e-mail with the “This is a service for municipal on line and credit card payments. Fees are all on the customer. The transaction fees are not bad either, so most citizens will not have a problem electing this option if they want to use a credit card. No fees to the municipality for transactions. Not an expert in this, or a salesperson, but they use it in Chemung county with success.

<https://www.municipay.com/questions-and-answers/>”

(Please note: I forwarded Tom’s suggestion to the Office Staff and received the following from Deputy Clerk Karlik:

*“The Village of Skaneateles has had an online bill payment setup for several years now (<https://villageofskaneateles.epayub.com/Account/Login?ReturnUrl=%2F>). This payment portal is directly connected to our utility billing software. There is an option for customers to pay with a credit card (3% or \$3.95 processing fee) or they may set up recurring payment from a checking or savings account (**no fee**).” The office staff plans to send out notices again re: this option and hope more folks will take advantage of it)*

Introduction of Duane Wiedor. Duane introduced himself. He “attended” the meeting as he has an interest in joining the MB. Duane recently retired as Senior VP of R&D from HillRom and has an interest in public service. Duane will be sending a letter of interest to the Mayor.

Final Statement by Chair. Chair McQuaid said that it was to be her last meeting. Her department statement follows: “It’s been my pleasure supporting this team, though my appointment is concluding it is not without wanting to continue.... Going forward, in this difficult time the Municipal Board appreciates the efforts of our Village Operations Leadership team; Adam Twitchell, for our Waste Water, and Peter Reap for Electric. And specific acknowledgement for Alan Abbot’s all hours support of the electric system among the many other assignments. Municipal Board brings expertise to the Village’s Electric, Water and Sewer Utilities and per the MB Charter is committed to providing the business perspective on current events (ie covid) and future trends both regulatory and project management. My best to this team”

MB members thank her very much for her service to both the MB and the Village of Skaneateles.

VII. Next Meeting and 2020 Board meeting dates:

- The Board would like to continue meeting the last Tuesday of each Month at 6 pm
- The Next meeting will be Tuesday, April 28 at 6 pm