

Edward Farrar Utility District
April 8, 2020
Minutes

Present:

Commissioners: P.H. Flanders, L. Sayah, C. Parks, R. Finucane, N. Sherman all by phone,
B. Woodruff, W. Shepeluk, K. Petrovic staff; A. Imhoff, public, A. Johnson RW

Chairperson Flanders called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

Public: No comment

Consider Modification to the agenda: Request from Chair P. Flanders to add items to the agenda. Discussion of parking lights at 51 South Main to be added after discussion of Dog Park. Discussion of alternative communication options for meetings such as ZOOM to be added to the end of the agenda. **L. Sayah made a motion to approve the agenda with amendments, N. Sherman and C. Parks seconded the motion; a vote was held and passed unanimously.**

Consider postponing the EFUD Annual Meeting, elections and reports to July 8, 2020: C. Lawrence has advised W. Shepeluk that the meeting can be postponed as a result of COVID-19. Elected officials terms would be continued until the date of postponement. **R. Finucane moved to postpone the Annual Meeting until July 8, 2020. C. Parks seconded the motion; a vote was held and passed unanimously.**

Consider whether the Dog Park is or should be closed during the restrictions for COVID-19: A. Imhoff spoke on behalf of Waterbury Unleashed, it is their recommendation the park should be closed until further notice. Waterbury Unleashed will take care of locking all gates. **L. Sayah made a motion to close the Waterbury Dog Park until further notice. R. Finucane seconded the motion; a vote was held and passed unanimously.**

Parking Lights at 51 South Main Street: According to local resident the parking lot is not well used at this time and wondered if EFUD could see a cost savings to having the street lights off during late night hours. B. Woodruff confirmed the lights are on photocells and the cost to install timers could exceed any potential savings. No action was taken.

Consider whether to have any bid construction plans prepared in anticipation of possible Federal or State economic stimulus options. W. Shepeluk and B. Woodruff stated design plans are already completed for the 10" water line replacement from Blush Hill reservoir through Ashford Lane down behind the Best Western upgrading to a 12" (Grenier Design). Design plans also have been completed for Route 100 from Howard Ave South to East Wind Drive (Stantec Design). B. Woodruff has spoken to Dean Salvias to confirm his interest if expansion on Blush Hill were to continue allowing for the Oakwood increased pressure zone project to connect to his infrastructure on Kimberly Lane. **C. Parks made a motion to go forward with final design of Oakwood Estate Increase Pressure Zone project with Dufrense Group. L. Sayah seconded the motion; a vote was held and passed unanimously.**

R. Finucane made a motion to authorize staff to begin the permit process for all projects when the design work is completed. C. Parks seconded the motion; a vote was held and passed unanimously

***see end of minutes for additional notes**

Consider establishing a “Public Institutions” base charge for water and wastewater capacity and applying it to all buildings owned by Federal, State and local governments and all public school buildings.

R. Finucane made a motion to establish a new class of customers defined as “Public Institution” for both water and wastewater. This class will be applied to all Federal, State, local government and public schools. The Public Institution charges will not be waived in the next billing quarter due June 20, 2020. C. Parks seconded the motion; a vote was held and passed unanimously

Consider waiving sewer base charges for bills due June 20, 2020: W. Shepeluk presented the Commissioners with an idea to waive the sewer base charges for the upcoming billing scheduled to take place May 20, 2020. This is in response to COVID-19 and designed to provide relief to residence and business owners who may be suffering financial losses. The wastewater department cannot afford to lose the revenue that the water department can so the Commissioners were asked to consider a borrowing option. Wastewater base charges will be waived to customers however the wastewater department will borrow the lost revenue from the UDAG fund and repay the funds over time. The Manager and Commissioners hope landowners will pass this savings along to any tenants in the spirit it was done. **N. Sherman made a motion to waive the sewer base charges for all but Public Institutions and loan \$95,000 from the UDAG fund to the wastewater department to cover the loss of revenue for a 5 year term at a rate of 1.85% as recommended by the Manager. C. Parks seconded the motion; a vote was held and passed unanimously.**

Consider 2020 operating budget: W. Shepeluk presented the Commissioners with final drafts of 2020 operating budgets for Water and Sewer Departments. **R. Finucane made a motion to approve the Water operation budget for 2020 in the amount of \$1,066,500 C. Parks seconded the motion; a vote was held and passed unanimously. R. Finucane made a motion to approve the Sewer operation budget for 2020 in the amount of \$879,100 C. Parks seconded the motion; a vote was held and passed unanimously.** The final budget to consider is Fund 15, Property Management. **R. Finucane made a motion to approve a Property Management operation budget for 2020 in the amount of \$14,550 to be presented at the Edward Farrar Utility District Annual Meeting on July 8, 2020. N. Sherman seconded the motion; a vote was held and passed unanimously.**

Department Reports and updates: W. Shepeluk spoke to the Commissioners about establishing a “Donated Sick Pay Bank”. There are a number of employees who have limited amounts of sick time available to use during this time of COVID-19. There are also a number of long term employees that have possibly an abundance of available sick time. W. Shepeluk created a concept that would allow optional participation in the “sick pay bank” with 20% compensation, not to exceed \$2,500 to the lender. There was a lengthy discussion of other known concepts and situations. In the end **C. Parks made a motion to approve the proposed “Donated Sick Pay Bank” as presented by the Manager. N. Sherman seconded the motion; a vote was held and passed 4-1.**

Consider waiving water base charges to the Duxbury Moretown Fire District #1, due June 20, 2020, if the Fire District waives the base charges to all its “like customers” to which the waiver would apply of the properties were located in Waterbury: By consensus if the DMFD#1 would like to waive the \$40.80 water base charge to their pool of customers then EFUD will also waive it to the district. K. Petrovic would need to know by May 15, 2020

Alternative Communication options for meetings: P. Flanders would like EFUD and/or the Town to consider the use of other technology to hold public meetings. Suggestions of Zoom or Microsoft Team have been made. W. Shepeluk stated other options would be investigated.

Minutes: C. Parks made a motion to approve the joint minutes of March 30th, 2020 as written. L. Sayah seconded the motion; a vote was held and passed unanimously.

C. Parks made a motion to adjourn. L. Sayah seconded the motion; a vote was held and passed unanimously.

* Missing is the discussion of the North Main Street Water and Sewer line replacements. B. Woodruff had given them a probable cost from Stantec and the general consensus was to seek out a reasonable price from an engineering firm and have the water and sewer design done. With water and sewer sharing cost of this.

It is about 900 linear feet of sewer and 400ft of water both replacements of existing piping. When the design is complete to seek out the necessary permits for the project.

<u>Projects</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Company</u>
Oakwood Increased Pressure Zone	Needs Design and Permits	Dufresne Group
Blush Hill Reservoir/Ashford Lane	Already Designed needs Permits	Grenier Engineering
Route 100 Howard Avenue South/ East Wind Drive	Already Designed needs Permits	Stantec
North Main Street Water/Sewer	Needs Design and Permits	????????????????

**Edward Farrar Utility District
Commissioners Meeting**

Wednesday April 8, 2020

4:30 pm at Steele Community Room

28 North Main St

Waterbury VT

Agenda

**This meeting is available through Teleconferencing. Please call 1 (302)202-1118
At the prompt enter this Conference Code: 201533**

- 4:30 pm Call to Order: Under the general restrictions concerning the health concerns for COVID-19 the commissioners and public are encouraged to call in for the meeting.
- 4:31 pm Public
- 4:36 pm Consider postponing the EFUD annual meeting, elections and reports to July 8, 2020, as allowed by recent legislation.
- 4:45 pm Consider whether the Dog Park is or should be closed during the restrictions for COVID -19.
- 4:55 pm Consider whether to have any bid construction plans prepared in anticipation of possible Federal or State economic stimulus options. Possible options: Blush Hill Upgrade-Extension, Extension Rte. 100 south to Cabot Annex, others projects?
- 5:10 pm Consider establishing a “public institutions base charge” for water and wastewater capacity and applying it to all buildings owned by federal, state, and local governments and all public school buildings for the February-May, 2020 billing period and for all billing periods going forward.
- 5:20 pm Consider waiving sewer base charges for bills due June 20, 2020
- 5:30 pm Consider 2020 operating budgets
- 5:45 pm Department Reports and Manager’s Updates.
- 5:55 pm Consider waiving water base charges to the Duxbury-Moretown FD #1, due June 20, 2020, if the Fire District waives the base charges to all its “like customers” to which the waiver would apply if the properties were located in Waterbury.
- 6:00 pm Minutes
- 6:05 pm Adjourn

To: EFUD Commissioners
From: W. Shepeluk, Manager
Date: April 7, 2020

RE: Meeting Materials for 4/8/2020

I'll try to give you as much info here as I can about the agenda items for Wednesday's meeting. See my notes and recommendations under each agenda item below. I'll use **bold font**.

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4:30 pm Call to Order: Under the general restrictions concerning the health concerns for COVID-19 the commissioners and public are encouraged to call in for the meeting.

Expect an all call in meeting except for Karen and me.

4:31 pm Public

?

4:36 pm Consider postponing the EFUD annual meeting, elections and reports to July 8, 2020, as allowed by recent legislation.

Recommend as above.

4:45 pm Consider whether the Dog Park is or should be closed during the restrictions for COVID -19.

Recommend signage- "Only one person with dogs allowed at all times until further notice". This will allow people to exercise their animals, but will insure keeping social distancing. If we find the rule not being obeyed, we'll close the park.

4:55 pm

Consider whether to have any bid construction plans prepared in anticipation of possible Federal or State economic stimulus options. Possible options: Blush Hill Upgrade-Extension, Extension Rte. 100 south to Cabot Annex, others projects?

The design of the Rt 100 south to Cabot Annex is complete, except for the possible cross-country route (Stantec). Also have a design in place to replace the 12" main to the reservoir on Blush Hill (Grenier Engineering). Please note in budget discussion below, water department has budget of \$105,000 for engineering this year. This is an average of \$52,500 for design projects including the proposed high pressure zone to Oakwood Estates (Dufresne Group) and a design of a new water main on N. Main Street. If there are budgetary concerns, one or both of these could be delayed as we have two projects (almost) ready to go.

5:10 pm

Consider establishing a "public institutions base charge" for water and wastewater capacity and applying it to all buildings owned by federal, state, and local governments and all public school buildings for the February-May, 2020 billing period and for all billing periods going forward.

At the meeting you held on March 18th, you agreed to waive the all the water base charges for the May billing that has a June 20th due date. That effectively gives away about \$119,000. I recommend you establish a new category of water AND sewer base charges for "public institutions". We can define that as properties owned by federal, state or local governments and school districts. The billing rate for these new charges can stay just as they are now--\$40.80 for water and \$46.20 for sewer. The commissioners should also vote to apply these charges to all future billings, including the May billing. This will allow the departments to bill the state complex, town owned buildings and the school. The water department will collect about \$15,000 of the \$119,000 given away by the vote held on March 18th.

5:20 pm

Consider waiving sewer base charges for bills due June 20, 2020

I want to talk about waiving sewer base charges for the next billing as well. Looking at the attached billing report that we looked at back in March, you will note that sewer base charges total about \$109,295 per quarter. If the commissioners agree to establish the new "public institutions" base charges for sewer customers, a little more than \$14,000 of that "give away" can be saved. In March I told you that we could not waive base charges for sewer customers as the department need the revenue. You will see in the budget that I have increased the revenue line "loan proceeds" by the \$95,000 this waiver allows. I propose the sewer department "borrow" that \$95,000 from the UDAG fund at 1.85% per annum. It can be paid back in a 3-5 year time frame to be determined at a later date.

There has been some continuing questions from RW representing the business community wondering whether short term loans can be made to businesses to help with cash flows. In my mind, it will not be easy to set up criteria that can be analyzed in a fair manner to determine which business get loans and which don't. There are about 170 businesses that are in properties connected to our water system—including those in Waterbury Center. If we gave them all loans they'd each get a loan of about \$3,300 and all of UDAG's \$560,000 of liquid assets would be gone and how much would realistically be paid back? If EFUD through a loan to its own sewer fund gives away \$95,000 of sewer

base charges to its customers in addition to the \$105,000 that I'm recommending be given away in water base charges, that will help out all of EFUD's customers (except the state, town and school) to some degree. For customers with significant allocations who have multiple base charges, it will help a great deal. This also allows EFUD to keep cash available in the UDAG Fund should other loan requests arise.

Also, there is enough money in the UDAG Fund that a loan could be made to the water department as I am recommending for the sewer department. Given the cash and investments the water fund has on hand, however, "giving away" the base charges won't hurt too badly. It's the commissioners' choice, however.

5:30 pm

Consider 2020 operating budgets

I have attached a document that includes the water and sewer budgets for 2020. The spreadsheet shows 2019 budget and actuals, the first of "Preliminary" budget I presented on March 11th—It was dated March 4th so that is the heading in that column. The column headed "Proposed Budget 2020" is a revised budget that I have worked on with Woody, Scott and Pete. You'll see that both water and sewer budgets show reduced revenues and expenditures from that originally proposed. The revenue in the sewer department is down by only \$10,000 as the base charge "waiver" is picked up with the loan from UDAG.

Water: Cut spending from \$1,183,675 to \$1,086,500

The pay line in water dept is down, reflecting the vacancy that will continue until at least July 1st. We have decided we can get by without hiring a summer PT employee. Health insurance decrease due to vacancy. Retirement & Social Security, clothing allowance down for same reasons. \$105,000 for engineering—N. Main Street and High pressure to Oakwood Estates. Neither are a "must do", but they'd be nice to have. I have increased Professional Services a bit to reflect costs of audit plus a contractor from "Hydrus" that Scott has a need for (I'm sure Woody can explain this), plus \$4,000 estimated payment to sewer to pay for time sewer employees are helping out a water plant to cover vacancy.. The Equipment Maint-Blush Hill is reduced by \$9,000. Will not do work of inspection and cleaning of the tank by Underwater Solutions this year. Minor adjustment to Equipment Maint-other, Building Maintenance and Grounds Maintenance. I cut heating fuel and gasoline as a result of large drop to date in fuel costs. The Water Main Distribution line item has been cut in half. We'll plan to do little in the distribution system except for our expenses for Main Street Reconstruction. The new Pick-Up Truck for \$40,000 will be pushed out to 2021.

Sewer: Cut spending from \$951,775 to \$854,100

Pay line drops a bit. No raises as scheduled and a conscientious attempt to avoid OT. Some of the time being spent here is at water plant to cover for the vacancy. The \$4,000 coming from water department will post to "Admin Service Fee-Water" in the sewer budget. You'll note it is \$4,000 lower than the preliminary budget. No PT summer help. Social Security and Retirement down accordingly. Engineering cut to reflect some projects originally considered will wait til next year—line replacement out in back of Hope Cemetery. Will still

spend engineering money to design new drying beds. No construction of them until 2021 at earliest. Minor adjustment to Telephone budget. Minor cuts to “water”, :Grounds Maint” and “Building Maint”. Heating fuel and gas reflects price decreases. Admin fee-water, see above. Sewer Main Replacement-only Main Street. Will suspend other projects for a year. Aeration system—had some damage due to ice this late winter and need to repair/replace units. Phosphorus engineering-I had forgotten to include the \$2,500 for inspection/trouble shooting by representative from the Co-Mag manufacturer. Did not come in 2019, expected this year.

5:45 pm Department Reports and Manager’s Updates.

I have been thinking about whether the town and EFUD might offer a “sick bank lending plan” allowing those of us with a great deal of sick time to “sell” a small percentage of it to the town or EFUD for cash and to donate some to be available to other employees who don’t have much. I have attached a pretty large and rather complicated spread sheet that presents an option. **The town select board thought this was a reasonable idea after hearing about it Monday evening at their meeting. They did not approve it, awaiting comments from EFUD Commissioners.** I’ll have to “walk you through it” over the phone—sorry.

5:55 pm Consider waiving water base charges to the Duxbury-Moretown FD #1, due June 20, 2020, if the Fire District waives the base charges to all its “like customers” to which the waiver would apply if the properties were located in Waterbury.

Have made numerous attempts to talk to members of the Prudential Committee. Karen has now e-mailed them trying to get a response. If this were to happen, they need to tell us before May 20th billing date—I’d recommend by May 8th.

6:00 pm Minutes

6:05 pm Adjourn