

NVC Utilities Committee
Trustee Meeting
Community Hall and by Zoom link
Friday, January 6, 2023
2:30 p.m.

Trustees Present: Brady Brim-Deforest (by Zoom), Jeffrey Wilt, Judy Metcalf (by Zoom),
Casey Brown (by Zoom)

Staff: Bill Paige, Jim Mays

NVC Officials: Janae Novotny, Wendy Huntoon

Trustees Absent: David Crofoot

The January meeting of the NVC Utilities Trustees convened at 2:40. Utilities chair, Jeffrey Wilt called the meeting to order.

Approval of November minutes: Judy Metcalf moved (seconded Casey Brown) The motion was unanimously adopted.

Community Member Comments: Johana Knott reviewed plans for construction on her property and reminded the Trustees that 4 water lines (the Knotts and 3 neighbors) run through her property. She further reminded the Trustees that no utility easement is in place relative to those water lines. The Knotts expect to begin construction in April. EDITORS NOTE: Installation, upkeep, and relocation of water lines from a house to a NVC water main are the respective home-owners' responsibility.

Rachel Rosa shared findings on a research project looking at changes in the number of 12-month utility customers and how other systems in Maine structure sewer rates.

Superintendent's Report: In Richard McElhaney's absence, the Trustees reviewed his report for November (see attachment). During the reporting period there were no exceedances.

Superintendent Transition: Brady provided an update his review of options for moving forward in our superintendent search. In casting a wide net, we have learned there are very few options. Brady interacted with Maine Rural Water and Olver Associates, Inc. (firm working with Belfast). Olver recommended contacting Water Quality Compliance Services an engineering company in Wiscasset. The firm, headed by Charles "Chuck" Applebee, employs 22 professionals. We expect a formal proposal on Monday (January 8, 2023) to manage our water and wastewater systems for 12 months.

A special Utilities Trustees meeting is scheduled for January 10 at 5:00 p.m. in person in Community Hall and by Zoom to review the WQCS proposal.

It is important to have a licensed provider in place by January 15, 2023.

Bayside resident, Mike Lannan, has offered to assist the Utilities Department in the transition. Mike is a licensed engineer and is willing to serve as the Village's temporary license operator. The Utility Trustees expressed their thanks for Mike's generous offer.

In other transition business, the Trustees will ask Richard McElhaney to provide historic data reflecting his years as superintendent.

Casey Brown requests a dialogue with any future provider to request that they provide access to the water and sewer data that is collected in the form of online digital data and include visual presentation of data in monthly reports (if not onerous [costly] to do so).

Wastewater (Sewer) Department Financial Update:

The NVC Finance Committee requests considering a different strategy for repaying \$65,000 "due to" general government. The Finance Committee believes the proposed 4-year payment plan approved by the Trustees and Overseers in December places too much burden on the general government reserves.

Options considered include borrowing from a commercial lender, borrowing from Water Department reserves or implementing a special assessment on current sewer department customers.

Utility Trustees encouraged general government support of the sewer department as the department is a critical component that benefits the entire community. There is a historic precedence for a Village subsidy.

Trustees discussed borrowing additional funds to cover not only the "due to" balance but also \$29,000 to fund the automatic chlorinator approved in the 2023 budget.

Judy Metcalf moved (seconded by Brady Brim-Deforest) the sewer department accept a \$94,000 loan from Water Department Reserves at 4% over a 5-year term. Approval is contingent on verification that a loan is allowable under PUC rules. The motion was unanimously adopted.

Revisions to Wastewater (sewer) Department Budget: Trustees discussed the need to update the department budget in light of superintendent transition. Budget revision will be discussed at the February meeting.

Page 3

January 7, 2023, Minutes

Other Business: Trustees discussed the need to clearly communicate the 2023 sewer rate increase. A letter to utility customer will be included in the March 2023 billing. In addition, the Trustees will host a “donuts and dialogue” discussion in the summer.

The next meeting of the Trustees is a **February 10, 2023, 2:30 p.m.**, Community Hall and on-line (<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82961508196?pwd=ekpzTlIZcmI3cnJEZmlHRmlwR3ZSZz09>).

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeffrey Wilt, Chairman