



Town of Oak Bluffs
WASTEWATER DEPARTMENT
17 Pennsylvania Avenue
P.O. Box 1526
Oak Bluffs, Ma. 02557
Phone 508-693-0343 Fax 508-696-6035

Commissioner's Meeting Minutes

May 03, 2023

Call to order:

A monthly commissioner's meeting of the Oak Bluffs Wastewater Department was called to order at 2:05 PM, on May 03, 2023 by Gail Barmakian, Chairperson.

Oak Bluffs Wastewater Commissioners present:

Gail Barmakian, Commissioner - Via Zoom

Bill Alwardt, Commissioner

Cassandra Bowler, Commissioner

Oak Bluffs Wastewater Treatment Facility Employees Present:

Patrick Hickey, Facilities Manager

Bridget Palmieri, Administrative Assistant

Guests in attendance: None

Business:

Agenda Item #1: Rate Increase Discussion

Discussion:

Patrick Hickey, Facilities Manager started the discussion by reading the Massachusetts law - Chapter 40N (Model Water and Sewer Commission), Section 9 (Additional powers and limitations) rules, which outlines the powers of the Commission and the limitations. Gail Barmakian added that an important aspect of the law regarding rates is that in addition to holding one public hearing and publication in a newspaper, that the commission should make available to the public and deliver to the council its most recent



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financial statement, proposed schedule of fees and its operating and capital budgets for the next fiscal year. Discussion continued regarding the documents available and what is needed.

Gail Barmakian pointed out that the operating budget will increase as a result of the Wastewater Treatment Facility expansion, especially the electric bill per GHD's assessment, based on the new equipment. Gail Barmakian continued that due to the expansion increases we will need to set a rate structure, as we will not see the effects of the increased rate for a year and it should be done prior to the next billing cycle.

Discussion continued regarding the first year expansion needs and the hiring of additional staff. The commission and Patrick Hickey walked through salary projections and increases in operating expenses. Based on these figures, it was determined increases would be approximately \$150,000 and a 20% increase would be needed. These figures could be used to start the rate modeling. Gail Barmakian said she would first like to see changing the base rate across the board and then changing the usage rate and the difference scenarios and how much each option would raise. Discussion continued that raising the base rate to \$200 across the board would be an option, as it is not dependent on usage. Also, to increase the usage rate on Tiers 1 and 10. Discussion continued on the high users in Tier 10. It was agreed by the commission that this is the correct approach to the rate increase.

Motion:

The motion to move forward to increase the base rate to \$200 per user and to increase the Tier 10 and over rate to \$0.04 per gallon was made by Cassandra Bowler. The motion was seconded by Bill Alwardt.

Roll Call Vote:

All commissioners voted to approve the motion.

Cassandra Bowler -Aye

Bill Alwardt -Aye

Gail Barmakian-Aye

Gail Barmakian wanted to make it clear this vote is just to move forward with the rate proposal, that a formal public meeting must be had before the final vote will be made and it is implemented.

Agenda Item #2: Facilities Manager Update

Discussion:



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No Facilities Manager Update

Agenda Item #3: Commissioner's Update

Discussion:

No Commissioner's Update

Next Steps: The Commission asked Patrick if he would be able to collect the financial documentation needed to move forward with the rate increase from the Town Administrator, to which he replied yes. It was decided that the Commission would meet again next Wednesday, May 10, 2023 at 2pm.

Motion:

The motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Bill Alwardt. The motion was seconded by Cassandra Bowler.

Roll Call Vote:

All commissioners voted to approve the motion.

Bill Alwardt -Aye

Cassandra Bowler -Aye

Gail Barmakian-Aye

Meeting was adjourned at 3:30pm.