

**RYE WATER DISTRICT
MEETING MINUTES**

Wednesday, December 7, 2022 – 9:00 a.m.
Water District Office – 60 Sagamore Rd.

Commissioners Present:

**Arthur Ditto, Chair
Ralph Hickson
Scott Marion**

Others Present:

**Arik Jones, Superintendent
Dyana Ledger, Business Manager
Chris Berg, Wright-Pierce
Selectman Phil Winslow
Resident Rose Drakatos
Resident Steven Borne**

I. Call to Order

Chair Ditto called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.

II. Approval of Minutes

- November 10, 2022

**Motion by Ralph Hickson to approve the minutes of November 10, 2022 as presented.
Seconded by Art Ditto. Vote: 2-0-1 Abstained: Scott Marion**

- September 15, 2022

**Motion by Ralph Hickson to approve the minutes of September 15, 2022 as amended.
Seconded by Scott Marion. Vote: 2-0-1 Abstained: Art Ditto**

- November 6, 2022

**Motion by Scott Marion to approve the minutes of November 6, 2022 as amended.
Seconded by Ralph Hickson. All in favor.**

III. Chris Berg, Wright-Pierce – Project Updates

Chris Berg, Wright-Pierce Engineering, gave an update to the Commissioners regarding ongoing RWD projects. Wright-Pierce continues to work with New England Backflow to coordinate the backflow testing in a timely manner. There are about 60 to 70 cross connection surveys and about 110 devices that will be tested. Mr. Berg is working on the submittals for the Strategic Planning Grant, which is due December 9th. There are number of projects that are being submitted for the concept plan for the combined treatment plant. The grant is a \$50,000 no match for each project. This is a good opportunity for RWD to get some grant funds to advance some of the projects.

Wetland delineation information has been collected for the ongoing water source investigation. The draft letter to the Conservation Commission and NRCS is almost ready to be submitted to RCC for review. The Garland well improvements is about complete. The final disbursement for the loan will be submitted within the next few weeks. Work on the Wallis main replacement has stopped for the winter months. Wickson Construction has removed the equipment from the site and work will resume in the spring.

The tank painting project and soil characterization is in progress. As discussed, there will be a hold on bidding to at least 2024 in order to get through some of the more pressing projects. Condition assessments for the facilities will begin next week for the asset management project.

IV. Superintendent's Monthly Report, Pumping Chart, and Data Report, and Bacteria Tests for November

Superintendent Arik Jones explained the chlorination process for members of the public who were present. Steven Borne and Rose Drakatos expressed concerns about the chlorine levels, dosing, and residual levels. Superintendent Jones spoke about the chlorine and dosing levels, which are set by NH DES. He also noted that the chlorine smell is stronger when it is first introduced to the system.

Rose Drakatos expressed concerns about PFAS and the public health. Superintendent Jones spoke about history sampling periods and values. Rose Drakatos suggested that RWD hold a public meeting to educate the public and address their concerns. Chair Ditto explained that a public meeting is being planned to discuss RWD's level of service and what residents who are served by RWD would like to see in the future. Prior to that meeting, a survey will be sent to households in the Rye Water District asking for their input so those topics can be addressed and discussed at the public forum.

Superintendent Jones gave his monthly report:

- The pumping totals are up from this time last year. This is due to the draining and filling of the Breakfast Hill tank. It will probably take another week and a half to refill the tank.
- December water samples have been pulled but the results have not yet been received.

- The concern of arsenic that was driven by 6 Random Road is being addressed. About eight or nine samples have been pulled throughout the system in various areas; (new build, old build, always on the RWD system, and well then converted to RWD). The results have not yet been received. Those samples will be checked for lead, copper, bacteria, heavy metals, nitrate, and nitrite.
- Quarter four chemical samples will be pulled in the next couple of days.
- Lee Arthur from the Sewer Department contacted the Water District because she saw an increase in pumping to Portsmouth from Adam's Trailer Park. The water meter at the park has just recently been updated and daily usages were reviewed. From October 13th to November 9th the usage for the trailer park doubled. This was during the boil order time period. There should be a 5,000 to 6,000 gallon a day track. During that time period, the usage jumps up to 10,000 gallons per day and drops back down after November 9th. The owner of the park was contacted and updated on the matter. The cause of the increased usage is unknown.

Motion by Ralph Hickson to approve the Superintendent's report for the month of November. Seconded by Scott Marion. All in favor.

V. Cash Flow Reports for November

The Commissioners reviewed the cash flow reports for the month of November. There were no issues or concerns. The next billing will be going out the end of December, which will be the final bills for 2022.

Motion by Ralph Hickson to accept the cash flow reports for November. Seconded by Scott Marion. All in favor.

VI. Correspondence

- **Mindi Messmer letter/email of Nov. 11, 2022**

Chair Ditto noted that an email was received from Mindi Messmer in November. The email asked for a meeting in November; however, the Commissioners were not meeting until now so that could not be scheduled. He also noted that the letter asked RWD to analyze samples collected on a monthly basis for total coliform and also E. coli.

Superintendent Jones confirmed that RWD does this twice a month. Referring to the letter, he pointed out that it says this will expedite the process and notification to the public should the boil order advisory be reinstated. He explained that when the samples were detected with E. coli, within four hours the public knew. Samples are collected, processed, and analyzed, which takes time.

Mr. Borne stated that what he heard before is that tests are done for coliform. If it's positive, a test is then done for E. coli. What he just heard is that a sample is taken and it's tested at the same time, so there is no lag. He thinks this is where the confusion comes in.

Superintendent Jones explained that routine samples are taken and then tested. It's either absent or present for both coliform and E. coli. If there is a hit for coliform, triggered samples are pulled. Samples are taken downstream and upstream from the site that got the hit of coliform. The source wells are also checked for plate counts. If the samples come back positive for coliform, the system is pushed into a Level 1 or Level 2 assessment. If there's E. coli, it puts the system immediately into a boil order. He confirmed that the samples are tested for both E. coli and coliform.

Superintendent Jones read from the letter: "Analyze samples for heterotrophic plate count monitoring in the distribution system as requested by NH DES in the 2020 sanitary survey." He explained that as of December 2020, the District has been doing that. Heterotrophic plate counts, on a monthly basis, have ranged from no detects to a limit of 30/50 on an average. DES doesn't get concerned about heterotrophic or plate counts until it gets to 2500. Right before the boil order, there was an elevated count in the Breakfast Hill tank and that is what drove it to be taken out of service. No E. coli was detected at that time. There was just an elevated count. He continued to read from the letter: "Resample if required upon receipt of total coliform within 24 hours as specified by EPA." Superintendent Jones explained that he got results on the 7th in an email that there was total coliform in the routine monthly samples. The resampling is required within 24 hours if acceptable to do so. The labs are not open on the weekends or holidays. In this particular situation, the samples were received on the 8th, which was a weekend. That Monday was a holiday, so the samples were taken on Tuesday the 11th.

In regards to notifying the residents within 24 hours of receipt of monthly samples through notification system, Chair Ditto noted that there's a link on RWD's website that goes into the DES data base to show samples that have been taken. The samples are sent to DES by the lab. DES posts the samples and then it comes back to Rye Water. He doesn't think they want to send a notification every month to everyone because they won't understand what is being received. RWD can try to make it easier to access the information on the website.

Commissioner Marion stated he worries that if they push something out every time a result is received, when there is a real emergency, people won't understand.

Chair Ditto commented that RWD has been doing what is being asked in the letter. What can be improved is how to access the information from the State.

Commissioner Hickson noted that an email was also received from Paul Goldman questioning root cause investigation. Superintendent Jones gave a very detailed response. This email should be included with this month's correspondence.

VII. Old Business

a. Grove Road lf, sampling MW 102

Chair Ditto noted that he spoke with Craig Musselman, CMA Engineers, who thinks it would be a good idea to increase the sampling of MW 102. To increase the sampling is going to cost money. Sampling a monitoring well is more involved than taking a sample from a tap. It's more

costly to take those samples. The question becomes how the cost going to be shared with the Town. RWD will need to speak with the Town about doing this. Chair Ditto stated that samples should parallel the sampling that RWD does, which is quarterly, so the results can be compared. He is going to speak with Mr. Musselman about the costs for sampling and then the Commission can discuss how to proceed.

b. Draft Irrigation Policy

Commissioner Hickson noted that Planning Administrator Reed submitted the draft irrigation policy to the Planning Board, as written by Chair Ditto. Town counsel reviewed the policy and changed it to include the entire town. Someone raised the issue of how building permits for irrigation systems can be enforced for residents who are on Aquarion or the City of Portsmouth. The town attorney is rewriting the policy and it's going to be in the building code. The policy is going to require a N.H. licensed plumber to install the system. The policy is being rewritten for the January 3rd meeting of the Planning Board, which is being held to review the proposed zoning amendments and building code changes. There will also be a public hearing on January 17th to meet the requirements for the March ballot.

Chair Ditto explained that by requiring a building permit for irrigation systems, the Building Department would issue the permit and send that person to RWD. The District would give them the requirements for irrigation systems in the Rye Water District. The District will require the latest technology with water sensors to optimize water conservation. The question is how can the town be telling Portsmouth how to run their water department or Aquarion?

Commissioner Marion commented there could be a townwide irrigation policy restricting watering to certain days.

Chair Ditto suggested a change to say a building permit is needed for installation of an irrigation system. The construction of that system has to be in accordance with the water purveyor for the property. This would take the town out of the loop and lessens the burden on the Building Department for inspection of the irrigation systems. The intention is not to have the Building Department doing the inspection for irrigation systems within the Rye Water District.

After discussion, Selectman Winslow agreed to speak with the Town Administrator about how RWD should proceed.

VIII. New Business

a. Workman Supervisor Position

Motion by Scott Marion to promote Greg Vaillancourt to the position of Workman Supervisor effective January 1, 2023. Seconded by Ralph Hickson. All in favor.

b. 2022 Encumbrances

Asset Management Project – Request to encumber \$98,026.00

Motion by Ralph Hickson to encumber \$98,026 for the asset management project. Seconded by Scott Marion. All in favor.

Water Source Investigation – Request to encumber \$60,643.43

Motion by Ralph Hickson to encumber \$60,643.43 for the water source investigation project. Seconded by Scott Marion. All in favor.

IX. Town Zoning and Planning Minutes

Commissioner Hickson noted that the development for the Ciborowski property has been submitted to the town’s planning department. Planning Administrator Kim Reed was not aware that at a public meeting it was told to the Selectman that Rye Water District could not support the water for that project (RWD minutes of July 6, 2022). He commented that he is going to send Kim Reed a copy of the minutes. Arik Jones will also have to make comment on the department head sheets that have been submitted to RWD for the project. Planning Administrator Reed would like the minutes or something in writing to give to the Planning Board, as the project is going before the Board as a conceptual proposal.

X. Other Business

The Commissioners briefly reviewed the proposal from John Guilfoil Public Relations for public relations services for the District. It was agreed that this would be beneficial for RWD and should be discussed further at a future meeting for next year’s budget.

Adjournment

Motion by Ralph Hickson to adjourn at 11:08 a.m. Seconded by Scott Marion. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dyana F. Ledger