

**PRELIMINARY MINUTES**

**VILLAGE OF LUDLOW  
WATER COMMISSION**

**REGULAR MEETING**

**5:00 PM**

Tuesday May 4, 2021

**ZOOM Public Informational Meeting Link:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83171935503?pwd=b21FTVZKdktlaFhraUU3V2JaZm4zUT09>

**Meeting ID:** 831 7193 5503

**Passcode:** 583569

**Dial by phone:** +1 929 436 2866

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**Passcode:** 583569

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

David Rose, Chairman

George Abraham

Ron Bixby

**STAFF:**

Scott Murphy

Chuck Craig

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Bob Brandt

Richard Bean

Eric Chatterjee – OV TV

1. **Call to Order**

- A. David Rose called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m., all members present. He advised the Electronic Meeting Guidelines had been posted in the minutes from the meeting on April 7, 2020 and will still be followed.

2. **Consideration of any Changes, Additions or Removals to the Agenda**

- A. Scott Murphy advised that no changes are needed.

3. **Approve Minutes from Previous Meetings**

- A. David Rose advised the minutes to be approved are from the regular meeting of April 6, 2021.  
B. **MOTION by Ron Bixby and seconded by George Abraham to approve minutes from the meeting of April 6, 2021 as submitted. Motion passed unanimously.**

4. **Comments from Citizens**

- A. There were none.

5. **Possibly Consider Rates for Black River Overlook Development Water Hook-On**

- A. Scott Murphy advised that the Black River Overlook development is looking into the possibility of tying into the Ludlow water system. They would build a line to attach to our system. They had approached Chuck Craig about the possibility. They are having difficulties with their water system. Our hook-on fee is \$1,500. They are hoping that we may be able to give them a discount.  
B. David Rose asked where they would hook on.  
C. Chuck Craig said they would tie into the new High Street lines.  
D. David Rose asked if they would go down Dug Road.

- E. Chuck Craig said yes.
- F. David Rose asked Scott Murphy if they have had any provisions for this.
- G. Rick Bean, property manager for Black River Overlook said that they have 22 units
- H. David Rose said that we have never done this (given discounts) before.
- I. Rick Bean said that they have a new well, which cost \$60,000 and the cost to run it per year is about. \$35,000 to \$40,000 per year and the water quality is poor
- J. George Abraham asked what they were looking for as a reduction.
- K. Rick Bean said he had no idea; we are just looking into the possibility. He added that their existing water is just about bankrupt.
- L. George Abraham asked if there had been any other places in the Village where this board has reduced fees.
- M. David Rose said no. He said that if this moves forward, Black River Overlook will be responsible for the cost to bring the water down there.
- N. George Abraham asked where Black River Overlook would get the funds for this.
- O. Rick Bean said Windham-Windsor Land Trust or Housing Vermont.
- P. David Rose asked Scott Murphy if he is aware of any discounts for water fees.
- Q. Scott Murphy said he has heard of discounts for water with regular rates. He asked when Mr. Bean needs an answer.
- R. Rick Bean said they are just starting into this process. They will have to go to the state and Windham-Windsor.
- S. Scott Murphy said he will check around and bring information back next month.
- T. David Rose said that the board will have to consider setting a precedent. He added that this is the largest affordable housing development in Ludlow. He invited Mr. Bean to come to the June meeting.

6. **Possibly Consider Changing the Warrant Order Signatures Back to Pre-COVID Status**

- A. David Rose said that this is about returning to pre-COVID requirements for signatures on Warrant Orders. He said that Town Hall has reopened.
- B. **MOTION by Ron Bixby and seconded by George Abraham to return to requiring 2 signatures on Warrant Orders for the Village of Ludlow Water Commission. Motion passed unanimously.**

7. **Review RFQ Requirements for Future Projects**

- A. Scott Murphy said that they had received a response from Wayne Elliot regarding the wording on the RFQs. He said that for the High Street project, they were not specific with the language as to the project. This was allowed by the state. They can still use this RFQ and use Wayne and Elliott. The board may also put out a new RFQ and still possibly use American Rescue funds.
- B. David Rose said he would feel better with more than one price. He would like to see competitive pricing
- C. Ron Bixby agreed that he would like another RFQ.
- D. Scott Murphy said that he will put together a preliminary draft RFQ for their next meeting. They need to determine the projects.
- E. David Rose said that they would consider continuation of the High Street project.
- F. Scott Murphy said they can combine projects.
- G. David Rose said they could roll in the Pleasant Street Extension project.
- H. Scott Murphy said that combining in both projects would drive up the cost of the preliminary study, but also save time. They would be able to separate out the projects later on.
- I. David Rose said the Pleasant Street Extension project would be a Water project and extending the High Street project would be shared with the Village Trustees.

8. **Possibly Consider Water Service Rate Increase Effective July 1, 2021**

- A. David Rose asked when the last time we increased that water rates was.
- B. Scott Murphy said they increased the rates 10% last year.
- C. David Rose noted that there is only \$43,310 in their capital account and a projected \$70,000.
- D. Scott Murphy said that revenue is \$402, 100 and expenses are projected at \$331,534.
- E. David Rose said there is \$70,566 for other projects and asked if the surplus rolls over into Capital.
- F. Scott Murphy said yes.
- G. David Rose asked if they raise the rates 5%, what would be the additional amount.
- H. Scott Murphy said about \$20,441 in combined residential and commercial. He said that it would be \$40,882 if they raised rates 10%. We still are among the lowest rates in the state.

- I. David Rose said we have projects to do and need to start to fund them. He is okay with a 5% increase.
- J. George Abraham said that raising the rates 10% two years in a row would be bad optics, considering we pushed the High Street project.
- K. David Rose said we have to pay for projects and we will have to pay for the High Street project.
- L. Scott Murphy said that is built into next year's budget.
- M. Ron Bixby said that 5% is plenty.
- N. David Rose said that a 5% increase is plenty.
- O. **MOTION by Ron Bixby and seconded by George Abraham to increase water rates 5% effective July 1, 2021 for residential and commercial properties. Motion passed unanimously.**
- P. Scott Murphy said that the rate increase will go out with the July bills.

9. **Municipal Manager Updates**

A. **Water Tanks**

- i. Scott Murphy said that the Godfrey tank is working fine, but the Strong Tank needs to be cleaned. It will run about \$3,000 (estimate from M&K). We have written results on the Godfrey tank and it has no deficiencies. It will be cleaned and inspected every 5 years.
- ii. Chuck Craig said M&K looked at putting a mixing process in the Godfrey tank to stop the icing, possibly a bubbler or pipes to turbulate.
- iii. David Rose asked how they would clean the tank.
- iv. Chuck Craig said with hose and vacuum. A diver, with a disinfected suit, will go down to vacuum. There is 1 to 2" of silt.

10. **Other Business**

A. **Assistant Water Operator Position**

- i. Scott Murphy said that this board has discussed this before, but we did not put it in the budget. He would like to put out an ad in the papers and run it for about 2 to 3 months. Ideally, we would find someone with experience. He said that applicants with experience are hard to come by. We may be able to find a hard worker and get them certified in about 2 years.
- ii. David Rose asked about putting "license" in the ad.
- iii. Scott Murphy said he would hate to limit the applicant pool. We may get someone with plumbing or wastewater background who may be a good worker. If we put "certification" in the ad, someone who may be a good worker may not apply.
- iv. David Rose said it would be good to have the 4<sup>th</sup> person.
- v. Scott Murphy said he would place the ad in the next couple of weeks.

B. **Springs**

- i. David Rose asked how the springs are running.
- ii. Chuck Craig said they are picking up and now at about 2:1.

C. **Fire Hydrants**

- i. David Rose asked if they would be flow testing the fire hydrants
- ii. Scott Murphy said later in the summer.

D. **High Street Project**

- i. David Rose asked how the project is progressing.
- ii. Scott Murphy said that we signed the contract and are waiting for the contractor to return his signed copy.

11. **Set Date for Next Meeting**

- A. Next regular meeting - June 1, 2021 at 5:00 p.m.
- B. George Abraham asked if it would be in-person.
- C. Scott Murphy said hopefully.

12. **Possible Agenda Items for Next Meeting**

- A. Review possible projects.

13. **Sign Warrant Orders**

- A. David Rose said he signed the warrants last week. He said that this week they go back to 2 signatures.

14. **Possible Executive Session/Personnel/Contracts/Legal Issues**

- A. Scott Murphy said that an Executive Session is for Contracts 1 VSA § 313 (a)(1) to discuss Municipal Manager Contract.  
B. **MOTION by Ron Bixby and seconded by George Abraham to enter in to Executive Session to discuss Municipal Manager Contract. Motion passed unanimously.**  
C. Board entered into Executive Session at 5:25 p.m.  
D. Board exited Executive Session at 5:40 p.m. No action taken.

15. **Adjourn**

- A. **MOTION to adjourn by Ron Bixby and seconded by George Abraham. Motion passed unanimously.**  
B. Meeting adjourned at 5:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisha Klaiber  
Recording Secretary

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David Rose, Chairman

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Ron Bixby, Vice Chair

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George Abraham, Clerk