

**MERRIMACK VILLAGE DISTRICT
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
JANUARY 22, 2024
MEETING MINUTES
(approved February 26, 2024)**

A regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners was conducted on January 22, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. at 2 Greens Pond Road, Merrimack, NH.

Chairman, Donald Provencher presided:

Members of the Board present: Kenneth Ayers, Vice Chairman
 Wolfram von Schoen, Personnel Liaison
 Erin Clement

Members of the Board Absent: John Lyons

Also in Attendance: Jill Lavoie, Business Manager
 Kristen Maher, Finance and Human Resource Director

At this time, it was noted that Superintendent R. Miner was excused from the January meeting.

FINANCE/HUMAN RESOURCES REVIEW

A. Analysis of Revenue and Expenditures Report

Kristen Maher, Finance and Human Resource Director, informed the Commission that having completed the month of December, Merrimack Village District (MVD) is 50% through the fiscal year (FY '24). Currently, the revenue is roughly 53% of the budget, and the expenses are at 36% of the expense budget (this is roughly \$830,000 under budget). The largest reason for the expenses being so low is the chemical budget. Due to all of the rain, there has not been demand for as much water and therefore not as many chemicals used. Maher noted that overtime is currently overbudget due to certain projects but stated that this will balance out as the fiscal year moves on.

Maher informed the commissioners that the Unrestricted Fund Balance is currently at \$22M. It was noted that the numbers presented to the commissioners now include the final audit numbers.

B. Capital Reserve Balances

K. Maher informed the commissioners that she did highlight some accounts in yellow because they included pending projects that she was unsure would take place in 2025. Commissioner von Schoen, noting that one of the projects was the storage tank repainting at Parker Drive, expressed that he would like to see how much money has been put into the Parker Drive storage tank over the years, despite not utilizing it, except as a backup tank. The commissioners asked if Maher could pull out that information. They noted that it did not have to be an exact dollar amount, but a rough estimate would do. The commissioners explained that they would like to have more information before embarking on a \$500,000 project. It was noted that this was slated for 2026.

REGULAR SESSION

1. Board of Commissioners to officially approve 3% increase in the Salary Schedule.

At this time, Director Maher reminded the commissioners that in the first budget session, the commissioners had provided some guidelines for COLA and merit raises. She reminded the commissioners that they had stated that they would like to stick to the 3% COLA increase that they had agreed upon. Maher informed the commissioners that she needed an official vote in order to make the change on the official Salary Schedule. It was noted that the suggested COLA was 3.2%. It was explained that the Salary Schedule is the range of possible compensation for a specific role. This 3% increase is not to the individual's salary, but rather to the salary schedule. The only increase to an individual's salary will be in the form of merit. It was explained that the salary schedule will increase 3% and the budget for the Merit increases will increase 3.5%.

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER W. VON SCHOEN TO APPROVE THE SALARY SCHEDULE OF THE MVD BY 3%, ON BOTH THE MINIMUM AND MAXIMUM AMOUNT FOR EACH POSITION

MOTION SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER E. CLEMENT

A Viva Voce Roll Call was conducted, which resulted as follows:

Yea: Donald Provencher, Wolfram von Schoen, Erin Clement, Ken Ayers

4

Nay:

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MOTION CARRIED

4-0-0

2. Board of Commissioners to hear from Kristen Maher to answer any questions on the Springbrook Software handout for billing, finance and work order system.

Director K. Maher stated that she had provided a long presentation on the Springbrook Software and was hoping to answer questions at this time. Commissioner von Schoen stated that due to a lack of time, he did not have questions prepared, but his concern is that they don't have good control during the project and then they end up looking at the expenditure at the end of the project and recognizing that they might need an interface that is costly and complex to operate. Director Maher shared that she had actually spoken to a current customer of Springbrook's, one that has been using the software for seven years. This particular customer expressed that he is very happy with the software and found that it has streamlined his ability to work. Director Maher informed the commissioners that Amy had spoken in depth with this customer and asked very specific questions. The answers she received left her very at ease. It was noted that the current software presents some struggles. Director Maher stated that this software would essentially combine QuickBooks, UMS, Harper's Payroll, Elements, and Excel. Commissioner von Schoen asked what the underlying database is. Director Maher answered that she believed it to be SQL. Chairman D. Provencher noted that the services agreement was substantial, at twelve pages long. Commissioner von Schoen stated that this was also a concern he had. Chairman Provencher asked if Maher felt that anyone, in the sense of legal counsel, should review it. Maher answered that she did not feel that was necessary. She explained that the first part of the quote was for the software purchase, and the second part was from the third party who handles the money and customer information.

Commissioner von Schoen asked how this will tie into the current HR software / customer portal. Maher answered that there is no current HR software, but there will be a new portal. All of the same forms will be available.

It was explained that Maher is looking for the go-ahead from the board to move forward but is not looking for an actual vote at this time. MVD is looking to move this project forward in the next fiscal year, but a contract would need to be signed in the current fiscal year in order to make it on their schedule. There was some concern expressed from the commissioners upon finding out that Elements would still need to be used for work orders, despite the new software. It was noted that an interface between both systems may need to be implemented. It was decided that a further conversation would happen at a later date. The implementation cost, which was priced at a worst-case scenario for time needed, would be \$186,000. This money would come from trusts. The annual software maintenance costs were factored into the new budget. Commissioner von Schoen stated that he was okay waiving this through but would like to request a more in-depth conversation.

3. Board of Commissioners to discuss ESR #76 Well 6 Treatment Evaluation with Underwood Engineers, Inc.

At this time, the Board of Commissioners discussed ESR #76 *Well Treatment Evaluation*. Business Manager J. Lavoie informed the commissioners that this is the same proposal that they had previously seen but explained that there is now a value placed on it. The cost is \$25,000. Peter Pitsas, of Underwood, noted that there is not a schedule listed on the ESR, but he imagines it would be in the three to four month range. He also shared that he can modify the ESR to add the schedule if the commissioners wish to approve it. Chairman Provencher explained to the public that this discussion is about Well 6, which is an existing MVD well, and this is all preliminary work to determine if this project makes more sense compared to the other source alternatives that MVD has evaluated. He further explained that Well 6 was taken offline in the mid-80's for VOC contamination. He noted that the well has 1,4 Dioxane as well as PFAS. This scope of work is to determine what kind of treatment can be implemented and the approximate cost. Commissioner von Schoen noted that Well 6 is on the same aquifer as Wells 7 & 8 and asked if permitting Well 6 would impact the permitting for Wells 7 & 8. Chairman Provencher answered that he recalled Jamie Emery having mentioned that Well 6 had no influence on the pumping of Wells 7 & 8. Pitsas also noted that Wells 7 & 8 are not being pumped at full capacity.

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER W. VON SCHOEN TO APPROVE ESR #76, DATED JANUARY 22, 2024, FOR WELL 6 TREATMENT EVALUATION, WITH FUNDS TO COME FROM THE ENGINEERING BUDGET

MOTION SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER K. AYERS

A Viva Voce Roll Call was conducted, which resulted as follows:

Yea: Donald Provencher, Wolfram von Schoen, Erin Clement, Ken Ayers

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Nay:

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**MOTION CARRIED
4-0-0**

At this time, the board wished to amend the prior motion to include a 4-month completion schedule.

**MOTION BY COMMISSIONER W. VON SCHOEN TO AMEND THE PRIOR MOTION TO
INCLUDE A FOUR MONTH COMPLETION SCHEDULE
MOTION SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER K. AYERS**

A Viva Voce Roll Call was conducted, which resulted as follows:

Yea: Donald Provencher, Wolfram von Schoen, Erin Clement, Ken Ayers

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Nay:

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MOTION CARRIED

4-0-0

4. Board of Commissioners to discuss draft Budget and Warrant Articles for the 2024 Annual Meeting.

At this time, the commissioners gathered to discuss the draft Budget and Warrant Articles. Commissioner von Schoen proceeded with a motion, noting that the budget had been discussed quite a bit and was well prepared by staff.

**MOTION BY COMMISSIONER W. VON SCHOEN TO APPROVE THE DRAFT BUDGET
FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2024-2025, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$6,281,356
MOTION SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER K. AYERS**

A Viva Voce Roll Call was conducted, which resulted as follows:

Yea: Donald Provencher, W. von Schoen, Erin Clement, Ken Ayers

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Nay:

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MOTION CARRIED

4-0-0

At this time, the commissioners discussed the Warrant Articles for the 2024 Annual Meeting. Vice Chairman K. Ayers asked if the time had passed for the public to present a Warrant Article. Business Manager J. Lavoie answered that there was still time. It was noted that the Warrant Articles are pretty standard from years past. It was noted that the \$20,000 contingency fund has been removed from the Warrant Articles. Commissioner W. von Schoen stated that he was really glad that was removed, because it shows the Board is listening to the customers. Chairman Provencher asked for confirmation that the numbers associated with articles 6 and 7 would not be cause for a rate increase. Director Maher confirmed that these dollar amounts were already factored into the budget and would not be cause for a rate increase.

**MOTION BY COMMISSIONER K. AYERS TO APPROVE WARRANT ARTICLES 4-7, AS
WRITTEN**

MOTION SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER E. CLEMENT

A Viva Voce Roll Call was conducted, which resulted as follows:

Yea: Donald Provencher, W. von Schoen, Erin Clement, Ken Ayers

Nay: 4
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MOTION CARRIED
4-0-0

It was explained that Article 1, is for the two commissioner seats that are up for 3-year terms. The seats are currently held by Chairman Provencher and Commissioner W. von Schoen, both of whom are running for reelection. Article 2 is for the seat of another commissioner, Erin Clement, who had been appointed to the position. At this point in time there are two years remaining on that term. It was noted that Erin Clement is running for the position.

5. Board of Commissioners to review updated Odd/Even Water Policy Supplement to reflect changes per the December 18, 2023 meeting.

Business Manager J. Lavoie informed the commissioners that all of the changes that have been discussed over the last few months have been reflected on the MVD [website](#). She noted that this agenda item is to change the policy to reflect what the website says. Business Manager Lavoie noted that Amy had done some reformatting and included RSA information. Chairman D. Provencher stated that he had read it and thought it was perfect. Business Manager Lavoie informed the commissioners that they needed an approval for the supplement to the policy revision. A few grammatical errors were pointed out by the commissioners.

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER E. CLEMENT TO APPROVE THE WATER RESTRICTION POLICY, AS AMMENDED
MOTION SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER K. AYERS

A Viva Voce Roll Call was conducted, which resulted as follows:

Yea: Donald Provencher, Erin Clement, Ken Ayers, Wolfram von Schoen
4
Nay: 0

MOTION CARRIED
4-0-0

6. Board of Commissioners to review the minutes from the December 18, 2023 regular BOC meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Board of Commissioners Regular Meeting December 18,
2023

No amendments were offered.

**MOTION BY COMMISSIONER K. AYERS TO ACCEPT THE MEETING MINUTES OF THE
DECEMBER 18, 2023 BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS REGULAR MEETING AS PRESENTED
MOTION SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER E. CLEMENT**

A Viva Voce was conducted, which resulted as follows:

Yea: Donald Provencher, Kenneth Ayers, Erin Clement

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Nay:

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MOTION CARRIED

3-0-1

Commissioner W. von Schoen abstained.

7. Board of Commissioners to review Action Items from previous meetings and those to be added from this meeting.

The Commissioners reviewed the list of Action Items, removing tasks that have been completed, and making necessary additions. It was decided that the next Salt Mitigation Committee Meeting should be targeted for March 2024.

8. Old Business

Business Manager J. Lavoie informed the commissioners that the fencing grants that were applied for at Mitchell Woods and at Wells 4 & 5 were approved by the state. MVD now needs to do an updated certificate and vote of authorization to go along with the grant agreement. That will need to be signed first, and then Superintendent R. Miner can sign the grant agreement. The grants are \$20,000 each for fencing. It was noted that the grants are being combined into one grant agreement.

Chairman Provencher stated that he was looking on the website at the PFAS graphs and the mineral graphs, and he believes they need to be updated. He suggested updating the website quarterly when the data comes in.

9. New Business - None

10. Superintendent's Report

Business Manager J. Lavoie informed the commissioners that there will be four tankers on site at Wells 2 & 9 on January 30th for a media changeout. When they return the media, they will also pick up the media from Wells 7 & 8. Combining trips will hopefully cut some costs. The return should take roughly two weeks. At this time, it was discussed whether or not Wells 4 & 5 required a media changeout. It was determined that the confusion came from a typo that read that the next changeout should take place "May 2023," and should read "May 2024."

Commissioner W. von Schoen asked if the new company had provided any information regarding arsenic, to which Business Manager J. Lavoie answered that Superintendent R. Miner would have to answer that question. It was also noted that there was quite a bit of water flushed to waste when dealing with the iron and arsenic with Evoqua's GAC media at Wells 7 & 8. Commissioner von Schoen asked if there was any compensation offered. Business Manager J. Lavoie explained that Superintendent R. Miner would need to answer that question as well. Commissioner von Schoen requested that an action item be added to back track how much water was wasted during that time and if there was any compensation. If there was not, determine how this would be prevented in the future. Business Manager J. Lavoie noted that Superintendent R. Miner has been discussing this in-depth with the new company and would have the answers for the commissioners. The action item that was added is to assess the cost of the flushing water wasted at Wells 7 & 8, and to seek restitution if deemed necessary. Commissioner W. von Schoen suggested that he would like to see:

1. An executive summary of what happened – which contaminants were faced and had to be flushed out at Wells 7 & 8
2. A summary of the financial damages due to this, and whether there was any financial compensation
3. Whether or not there are any preparations for upcoming deliveries with the new supplier to prevent this loss in the future

Business Manager J. Lavoie informed the commissioners that they are looking into security cameras for the Turkey Hill Booster station due to bullet holes being found in the side of the building. It was determined that there were two different guns used and were being fired from the road. MVD did reach out to the neighbors, who had initially not heard anything, but have contacted Superintendent R. Miner on two separate occasions to notify him that they had heard gunshots. The street sign at the end of the street has also been targeted. It was noted that a solution will need to be found because there is no internet at the Turkey Hill Booster. MVD will continue to look into security cameras and pricing will be brought to the board. The police have been notified. The board expressed concern for the safety of MVD employees and expressed support for security cameras, here, and at all of the well houses. It was noted that the shootings are taking place at night. It was suggested that MVD share a press release.

11. Questions from the Public/Press - None

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER K. AYERS TO ADJOURN
MOTION SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER W. VON SCHOEN

MOTION CARRIED
4-0-0

The January 22, 2024 meeting of the Board of Commissioners was adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Submitted by Amanda McKenna, Recording Secretary