

TOWN OF RICHLAND WATER DEPARTMENT

1 BRIDGE STREET PULASKI, NY 13142

MINUTES OF THE RICHLAND WATER ADVISORY BOARD

Date: August 1, 2023

Kind of Meeting: Regular monthly water board meeting

Place: H. Douglas Barclay Courthouse Jury Room

Water Board Members Present: Doug Schwalm, Chairman
Ken Moonan
Krista Fox-absent
Robert Jeffery
Tim Crouch

Others in Attendance: Water Supervisor Ron Novak
Town Supervisor, Kern Yerdon
Mary Yerdon, Water Clerk
Jacob Hershberger

CALL TO ORDER: Tonight's meeting was called to order at 6:00pm with Doug Schwalm leading the Pledge of Allegiance. Tim Crouch made a motion to approve the July 27, 2023, water board minutes. It was seconded by Ken Moonan. All were in favor.

1. Jacob Hershberger was the first order of business. Mr. Hershberger has a vegetable farm operation (about 8 acres) currently receiving municipal water. He used approximately 250,000 gallons of water last summer but used under the minimum in the winter months. He has been in communication with the Cooperative Extension in Mexico who advised him to come to the town with some changes he would like to see in the Agricultural exemption. Currently a farmer with 25 head of cattle pays the full rate (currently \$3.80 per 1,000) for the first 73,000 gallons of water used each year. After that the rate is half of the full rate (\$1.90 per 1,000 gallons). Supervisor Novak informed Mr. Hershberger Sandy Creek would have to agree to any changes in our rate structure, since we have an intermunicipal agreement with Sandy Creek requiring their consent to make changes to the rate structure. He further stated if a new exemption were to happen there would have to be stipulations on the size of the farm, etc. The Cooperative Extension suggested showing receipts for gross retail sales of \$10,000 to qualify. Mr. Novak noted there was a recent change in NYS law regarding cleaning vegetables for sale: for final wash, you must use municipal water or have the other water supply (ponds or wells) tested. Richland has about 4 larger farms in the area. Mr. Hershberger said he had about \$10,000 just in strawberry sales. It was noted that everyone in the water district would have to make up the difference if water is sold at a discount. **A motion was made by Tim Crouch to have the town board look into providing an exemption for vegetable farmers. Rob Jeffrey seconded the motion. All were in favor.** Chairman Swalm reminded Mr. Hershberger it could take a few months to give him an answer. It was also noted that if/when it is drafted it should be drafted in consultation with Cornell Cooperative Extension to make sure the town is complying with Ag/Markets Laws.
2. The water tank inspection is complete. The 314,000-gallon tank had an issue with anodes, panels (26) sealants, screens and non-skid flooring (top of dome). Screens keep out rodents, birds, etc.; anodes provide rust protection. Overall, the tank is in really good shape. A \$4200.00 quote was given by Statewide Aqua Store to replace overflow screen, gravity vent screen, nonskid panels and reseal gusset covers on top-(1.5 days for 2 workers). The bid was accepted and will be scheduled. After discussion with the company, we can hold off on the anode replacement until the next inspection. That will cost about \$12,000. It includes divers, materials and everything needed. Possibly consider lowering the inspection time to 3 years. Once the anodes are gone, they just stop working to protect the tank from rusting.
3. The new meter has been installed at Schoeller. The meter was required to be replaced at the Town's expense. It is a 6" compound ultrasonic meter. 75,000,000 gallons of water has gone through that meter. You lose accuracy when that much

goes through it. It was completed with full cooperation from Schoeller, and it took about an hour. The ultrasonic meter with all parts was about \$2500.00. Schmidt Sales is the only company in the area that sells Badger meters. Supervisor Novak looked into rebuilding the removed mechanical meter. A brand new mechanical one would cost \$8,000. The rebuild the old one it would be close to \$5000. There would be no sense rebuilding it when you can purchase a new ultrasonic one for \$2500.00.

4. Cell tower update: It is still in the negotiations phase. Things to be looked at are the airport across the road, power lines, terrain, clearing roads, plowing etc. The company liked the idea of placing it near our chemical building-the area would be plowed and someone is always around to check on it. The original proposal was for \$900.00 a month for 25 years. After Supervisor Yerdon negotiated a tentative agreement is for \$1500.00/month. That income would go to Water District #2 since they own the Schoeller wellsite. Engineers still have to look at it and verbiage has to be written. It will help cell phone reception in that area. Aqualogics said it would not interfere with our SCADA system.
5. Recent taps requested include three 2" commercial taps; one-4" tap (Canningfactory Rd park), one 2" tap behind the old Trust Nursery for the cabins and a 1" tap on NYS 3 to install (low bidder was North Country). We still have a 2" tap near Deer Creek to install (waiting on the DEC permit). We used NY Underground for all other tap installations that were the long side. Eight taps total have been paid for-two have not been completed. Water district 5 ext.1 required two taps. One at Rural & Migrant Ministries (NY Underground completed this) and the other was the Kurtz residence on Towne Road (House Gravel & Excavating completed this).
6. Only one new hookup was installed in water district 5-now there are 77 out of 221 EDU's. B&L is looking into the WD #5 EDU charge. Supervisor Novak as well as B&L feels there could be an error somewhere.
7. The generator at the Schoeller wellsite is here and waiting for installation. Hopefully this week that will happen. The intention is to move the old one to the highway barn to auction off-subject to Town Board approval. The Town Board has agreed to have Scriba Electric replace the new entrance pole at the Schoeller wellsite. A completely new safety disconnect feature will be installed to use as needed. A couple years ago, during a storm we had several electrical lines down and a fire in the field. Should a situation similar to this occur again, we will be able to easily and safely disconnect power to run on the generator until it is resolved. We can manually disconnect safely in case National Grid has a brown out and thus preserve our pumps. The bid from Scriba is \$31,214. ARPA money will be used for this.
8. There is still a problem getting some parts. Once ordered it takes 33 weeks to receive 18" meter pit extensions. We have two-meter pit extensions in stock. We have thirteen 3/4" meter pits in stock. The new rate for meter pits may be in excess of \$1,000.00 and order time is 30-36 weeks. Blair has extended our meter pit price to stay at the current price until December 31, 2023. We currently do not have a 1" meter pit. One was ordered in February but it's still not in. Sandy Creek does not have one either. During the discussion on pit size, it was questioned why the campground permitted on Town Road can have 2 campers and 2 cabins and only have a 3/4" meter. The one on NYS 3 has been required by the DEC to have a 2" meter. Supervisor Novak said this is a planning board and DOH question.
9. Alarm mode occurs when there is a system upset. There is one dialer, and it activates when the system has an upset. The dialer calls Supervisor Novak, if no response after 2 minutes it calls Chief Water Operator Hicks if no response after 2 minutes it then calls Operator Joe Sikora. On July 3 it went into alarm mode; the dialer called, and no calls were received. The next morning when checked, there was no dial tone-the phone signal was not there. The lines were broken (possibly by a mower). This turned into an emergency. As a result of this we had two empty tanks. A second dialer has now been installed using Spectrum. The first one is hooked to Frontier. In future cases, if one service of the two stops working the other one will take over. This provides us with a backup. These two dialers are also used by the Town of Sandy Creek. Sandy Creek has now installed it's own dialer. This incident had left our Bishop Road tank empty as well as Sandy Creek's tank.
10. Water Department Staff. When we originally hired summer staff helper, Gabby Waite, it was on a NYS payroll program. An error was made and after several calls the worker was turned over to a county program. The County program was supposed to be a 6-week program which ends August 18. The County said there is usually money left over that could carry her for an extra 2 weeks. She is currently working with employee, Zack Masuicca. They weed wacked, painted, and serviced 20 hydrants today. There are times when highway workers weed wack hydrants. The Richland fire chief called and said their fire department is going to grease and weed wack all the hydrants within their fire district. Hydrants from the end of the town on CO RT 41 to within 5 hydrants of US 11 have been painted and greased by summer help. We expect to have all of water district one finished and a fair amount of water district 2 finished by the end of summer. Chairman Schwalm said from what he has seen, the summer help is doing a great job. Several valve boxes need extensions, and they will be installed and painted

to make them visible. Valve boxes are reusable, old ones will be replaced and painted and reused. Gabby hopefully will be eligible to work for the town next year after graduation.

11. On July 3, six alarm radio repeaters lost all communication and visibility. Operator Sikora was working when alarms went off indicating a significant problem. He went home and notified no one that the system was in distress. Operator Hicks received a call from someone with low pressure. He checked the well site and saw all the alarms going off and then called Operator Sikora to check and see if there were alarms going off when he did the morning water test. Operator Sikora said they were, but he thought Supervisor Novak and Operator Hicks were taking care of that. Chief Operator Hicks then asked Operator Sikora to go reset the alarms. Operator Hicks then turned on all pumps and opened all valves to fill the tanks. When the radio was reset (after Operator Hicks opened the valves), there was 0.5' left in the 150,000-gallon tank and 1.2' in Sandy Creek's tank which is a 170,000-gallon tank. As a result of disciplinary action, Operator Sikora will be transferred to the Highway Department and no longer work for the water department as of August 2. This left us short a "D" operator. We are in the process of getting a couple "D" operators to cover the next 10 weeks after which time, Chief Operator Hicks and Supervisor Novak will have completed the "D" operator course. We are working to get the Village of Pulaski operators to cover us during this time. Town Supervisor Yerdon said we were very close to a dangerous situation. He notified emergency preparedness and fire control. In case of a fire, hydrants would not be available until pressure was restored. Operator Sikora, as a licensed operator, was legally obligated to take action and he did nothing.
12. The recent water survey had a low response rate. Only 30.2% of the roughly 524 that were sent out responded. Only 52 (34.7%) of the 150 responses were in favor of water. The Town Board has to make a decision but obviously the public has spoken. We will get a final more detailed report later. Many property owners on Town Road from Richland and Albion have spoken to Board member Tim Crouch about receiving municipal water from Richland. Supervisor Novak advised him to have them petition Richland and possibly they could enter as an extension to water district 5. It's complicated and each case is different. There has been some discussion with Albion about receiving water. It's a matter of getting Richland Town Board and Albion Town Board to sit down and discuss this. It's quite simple to get the people on the Albion side of Town Road water, but the process has to start with Albion property owners interested in Richland water, going to their Albion town board and have the Albion town board contact Richland town board.
13. The village of Pulaski recently had an issue with their water tank, and they had to empty it. Running it by their pumps only did not work so we had to open the emergency interconnect to provide the village of Pulaski with water. This was just for an inspection. Sometime later this year or next year, we may have to provide them with the needed water when they perform the repair work.

The next meeting was scheduled for September 5. After discussion it was decided to skip the September meeting unless something major comes up and then we can schedule it at that time.

At approximately 8:00 pm a motion was made to close the meeting by Tim Crouch and seconded by Robert Jeffery. All were in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Yerdon
Town of Richland Water Clerk