

SEELEY LAKE SEWER DISTRICT
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
June 28, 2021

Tom Morris	President	PRESENT	Pat Goodover	Director	PRESENT*
Beth Hutchinson	Vice President	PRESENT**	Cheri Thompson	Director	PRESENT
Jason Gilpin	Director	PRESENT	Felicity Derry	Secretary	PRESENT
Jean Curtiss	Manager	PRESENT	Kim Myre	Missoula Co	PRESENT

**Left the meeting at 8:03pm

Public Attendance - Appendix A

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order by Tom Morris at 6:38pm, immediately following the adjournment of the public hearing. The meeting was held at the Barn and remotely via Zoom.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Pat Goodover moved to approve the agenda. Jason Gilpin seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Tom Morris	Aye
Beth Hutchinson	Aye
Pat Goodover	Aye
Jason Gilpin	Aye
Cheri Thompson	Aye

PRESIDENT’S COMMENTS:

Tom Morris noted that there were a lot of people that were not happy about the assessment. The Board would do better and had big plans moving forward.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Aaron Neilson (Appendix A)

This item would be addressed under the General Counsel agenda item.

Becky Anseth, TSEP (Appendix B)

This letter was responding to the District’s letter regarding the unused TSEP grant funds.

Bridger Christian (Appendix C)

This email would be addressed under the Interim General Manager agenda item.

MINUTES:

May 20, 2021

Beth Hutchinson moved to approve the May 20, 2021 minutes as presented. Jason Gilpin seconded the motion. The Board requested that Felicity Derry review the minutes to ensure that the minutes reflected that the public hearing could be held in person also. There was no further discussion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Tom Morris	Aye
Beth Hutchinson	Aye
Pat Goodover	Aye
Jason Gilpin	Aye
Cheri Thompson	Aye

FINANCIAL REPORTS:

Invoices

Tom Morris noted that the updated invoice sheet included the liability policy payment, which would not be invoiced until July, so as to include the payment in the 2021 budget. There would be no lapse in coverage.

Jean Curtiss added that her invoice would be submitted to be paid in July.

Beth Hutchinson moved to pay the invoices. Tom Morris seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Tom Morris	Aye
Beth Hutchinson	Aye
Pat Goodover	Aye
Jason Gilpin	Aye
Cheri Thompson	Aye

April & May 2021

Nathan Bourne noted that the May financial report showed \$95,000 of unspent income for the year in the budget and questioned if that would be used to pay bills. Felicity Derry noted that there was currently approximately \$100,000 in the Missoula County account after the May invoices had been paid and \$25,000 in the reserves.

John Richards questioned if those funds could be used to offset the assessments and discussion with the Board followed. It was concluded that another public hearing would be needed to change the assessment amount; however, the excess funds could be used to offset the 2023 budget.

Reserve Funds

Felicity Derry reviewed the reserve spreadsheet and how much money was currently in the reserve, noting that at the end of the fiscal year, when the financials and the budget had been closed out, the Board could then transfer what funds they deemed appropriate to the reserve.

MANAGERS REPORT:

Jean Curtiss thanked the Sewer Board for the opportunity to work on the project. It had been a learning experience and the District had accomplished a lot. GWE had completed the final design for the SBR and Phase 1 collection system, both of which had been approved by RD & DEQ. The final design for the Phase 2 collection system was completed, but once the bond election failed was not submitted for approval. All of the necessary easements for the project had been acquired. The District's rules & regulations were adopted. The Board had educated themselves on financing options, put general obligation and revenue bonds on the ballot, which had failed. The District had prevailed on two lawsuits. The elevated nitrate level in the groundwater remained and \$10.57million of grants were gone. The discharge permit had been terminated and DEQ would be sending the official notice shortly.

All outstanding project bills had now been paid. The Dorsey & Whitney and GWE invoices were paid in full with WRDA and RRGL funds.

The DNRC easement had been released, as it would not be used for the purpose of the easement. The LOR funds were returned as required. The designed and approved project had been shelved.

Jean Curtiss reviewed upcoming costs and what affect they would have on the budget. Also noting that there were various agreements that would need to be updated or created.

Tom Morris thanked Jean for her service and hard work for the community and the District.

OLD BUSINESS:

Action Plan for 2021-2022

Tom Morris noted that Cheri Thompson had reworked the document that had been presented at the previous meeting. Beth Hutchinson felt that summarizing the goals and tasks was not functional and was not beneficial to task analysis and management. Cheri Thompson and Beth Hutchinson discussed Cheri Thompson's revision of Beth Hutchinson's original document and the need to craft a document to steer the District's path forward and to be able to communicate those goals to the public.

John Richards questioned what goals and plans the Board had for the upcoming year and suggested that they be communicated to the community. Tom Morris noted that the draft action plan

proposed improving communication throughout the District, gathering and sharing data, creating a library of wastewater systems, information and options, how to fund it, monitor testing results and evaluate new opportunities.

The Board discussed making the action plan functional for the Board, whilst also being community friendly. The Board reviewed how to share thoughts on the action plan while being transparent. The Board discussed the action plan further and moving this item to the next meeting.

Tom Morris moved to move this item to next month's agenda, again, and that we be prepared to put together a final edition at next month's meeting. Cheri Thompson seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was carried.

Tom Morris	Aye
Beth Hutchinson	Aye
Pat Goodover	Aye
Jason Gilpin	Aye
Cheri Thompson	Aye

Discussion followed with John Richards regarding draft board minutes, what is posted on the District's website and the role of Missoula County and special district boards.

Interim General Manager

Jean Curtiss reviewed Bridger Christian's email, which indicated that Montana law strongly suggested that the manager and secretary be two different people and gave the District time to search for the right person. Discussion followed on the possibility of obtaining a waiver to operate without a manager for a while and that a waiver was probably not needed.

Tom Morris felt that if the secretary was asked to do managerial work, they should be compensated at a higher level. The Board discussed if there would be any managerial work to be performed in the short term and if there had been any interest in the position.

The Board discussed whether the job description should be discussed further at this meeting.

Cheri Thompson moved to make the next meeting more of a working meeting and we can go over the action plan and the general manager job description and qualifications. The Board discussed holding a special meeting for this item. Beth Hutchinson expressed her frustration that the rest of the Board was not prepared to review this important item. The Board discussed whether to schedule a special meeting for this item. Tom Morris proposed that the Board have discussion on the job description. Beth Hutchinson again expressed her frustration at the lack of progress with this item and left the meeting. Cheri Thompson withdrew her motion.

Nathan Bourne commented that the job description seemed to hamstring the manager from doing their job by requiring Board permission to perform their duties. Most managers did not need Board permission to talk to the press.

Tom Morris reviewed the Montana code covering the duties of the general manager, which were much wider and more sweeping than this job description.

Tom Morris moved that we do not accept this interim general manager job description and that we follow the code. Discussion followed on the skills that a manager would need and differentiating between qualifications, responsibilities, duties and a job description. The job description was reviewed and discussed.

Discussion followed on what items that had been discussed at this meeting would be on the July agenda. Tom Morris noted that numerous people had approached him regarding dissolving the Sewer District. Discussion followed on whether or when this item should be placed on the agenda. The Board agreed that they should be prepared to discuss the job description at the next regular meeting.

Tom Morris withdrew his motion. **Tom Morris moved to move the general manager discussion and action to July's regular meeting.** Jason Gilpin seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was carried.

Tom Morris	Aye
Beth Hutchinson	Absent
Pat Goodover	Aye
Jason Gilpin	Aye
Cheri Thompson	Aye

NEW BUSINESS:

General Counsel

Tom Morris noted that Aaron Neilson had started his own firm and was willing to be the District's general counsel. Christian, Samson & Baskett were also willing to continue as the District's general counsel. The fees for both companies were reviewed and found to be comparable. The Board discussed the pros and cons with either option.

Cheri Thompson moved to go with Neilson, Swanson and Dietrich. Pat Goodover seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was carried.

Tom Morris	Aye
Beth Hutchinson	Absent
Pat Goodover	Aye
Jason Gilpin	Aye
Cheri Thompson	Aye

Cheri Thompson amended her motion to add that that Tom Morris will sign the contract and Jean Curtiss will write an endorsement letter. Pat Goodover seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was carried.

Tom Morris	Aye
Beth Hutchinson	Absent
Pat Goodover	Aye
Jason Gilpin	Aye
Cheri Thompson	Aye

Jean Curtiss clarified that she would write a letter to be included with the contract that Tom Morris had signed and they would be sent via email.

NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING: July 15, 2021

AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING:

Tom Morris noted that the agenda items would be: Interim General Manager Job Description and Qualifications, the Action Plan and Karen Miske, CRC. Discussion followed on whether to hold the July meeting via Zoom. The Board agreed that in light of tonight's minimal attendance the July meeting would be held via Zoom and that Cheri Thompson would run Zoom.

ADJOURNMENT OF BOARD MEETING:

Tom Morris adjourned the meeting at 8:37pm

Attest:

Tom Morris, President

Felicity Derry, Secretary