

# WAYLAND WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT COMMISSION MEETING

January 10, 2024

**Board Members:** Remote Participation: Mike Gitten and Darrin Bock

**Absent:** All Present

**Other Attendees:** Remote Participation: Tom Holder, DPW Director; Jared Cotton, Wastewater Operations Manager; Abby Charest, Town Engineer and Sarah Pawluczzonek, Wastewater Administrator

**Public via Zoom:** None

**Meeting Location:** Zoom

## Minutes

**7:31 Mike: Call to order and reading of Zoom information**

### Public Comment

None

### Monthly Operating Report

Jared: The computer at the plant died completely and a laptop with Windows 10 was set up by Tighe and Bond with updated SCADA. They are still waiting on a new PC. The actuator valve has been getting stuck and it had to be repaired but it will be replaced with an inexpensive and reliable alternative. The anoxic mixer rail came loose and was repaired.

The Membrane Emergency:

Jared: The SCADA numbers were looking bad and Membrane #1 kept shutting down because the membrane pressure was too high. Whitewater and Tighe and Bond came out and pulled out each membrane rack. Kubota lent a cleaning machine which they used to deep clean after they scraped off the sludge, and then they put them back in place. Membrane #1 has been running well ever since. This was two full days of work. There had to be a lot of pumping because the valve to isolate each membrane basin was not seated properly, and so they could not use it to isolate one side. They had to draw both tanks down and pump down some of the EQ tank as well. They also tried to tighten the valve, but it will need replacing to be able to operate properly.

Tom: Whitewater, Regan, Tighe & Bond, RH White, Kubota, Jared, Abby and Tom were all out there. It was a significant effort but orchestrated well. Sarah will talk about how to potentially fund this \$55k estimated cost.

Abby: Everyone was chipping in giving a huge effort. Both YES Electric and the Water Department pitched in. There is concern about airflow issues and the diffusers, but it won't be certain until they pull up the other tank's membranes and compare one to the other. They will take out the membrane from tank #2 and wash those racks in the deep cleaning machine from Kubota. The isolation valve will then be replaced as well.

Mike: Asked if the valve and the diffuser was replaced a year ago during the membrane replacement process. Abby: Answered no, that just the membranes were done. Jared: Added that the valve in fact worked a year ago during said replacement. Darrin: Asked if this was a design issue, installation issue, or parts failure. Abby answered that they are not 100% sure. The valve has lived its service life and although it was talked about, the valve was not replaced because it was working at that time. Some diffuser heads are broken and they are not sure if they can just replace the broken pieces, or if it needs to be the whole diffuser, which is original to the plant. There is no final answer until they see the other tank. The membranes themselves look good now, no tears, and the quality is holding up.

Tom: This has been an awakening as to the vulnerabilities of the plant. It was very fortunate that one train was running and could keep up with operating the plant. It is important that these vulnerabilities are measured as the consideration for additional flows and customers comes up. Abby added that there may be a need for additional processes or treatment at the plant.

Mike: Noticed that the Pump Station across from Russell's was in alarm recently. Abby: Explained that the duckbill needs more pressure from the pump station to open when the river gets higher. Jared: The duckbill prevents the river water from back flowing into the pump station, so that it doesn't end up pumping river water up to Alta. It needs a lot more pressure to be enough to discharge to the river with it being so high, and so it built up to a high pressure level alarm, but it is not a problem. Mike: Asked what the flows levels are. Abby: Answered about 30,000 gpd. Tom: Even though the pressure was very high and caused the alarm, it was able to push out and level off. Abby: It is something to think about as far as when a high river mark becomes concerning.

Darrin: Is Alta still at 88%? Jared: Thinks so, but has not gotten a monthly update on it.

Abby: The plan is to wash out Membrane #2 the first week of February. Mike: How long will Wayland have the washer from Kubota for? Abby: It is here for a month. Darrin: Is this type of cleaning something that should be done routinely to extend the life of the membranes? Tom: Abby has expanded the small capital list to add more information and it is now more of an asset management plan. Small capital is tied to the privilege fees. There was a meeting with Mike McCall and Brian Keveny to go over this plan. In the February board meeting there will be a request for support on how this will affect future operating budgets. Abby: Washing the membranes is not a standard practice because there are other ways such as using chemicals to clean them. In this case, the chemical washes were not working but once the issues are fixed, it is expected that they will work in the future.

#### Update on closing out Administrative Consent Orders (ACO's)

Abby: There are two orders. The old one required that the Town to do some groundwater discharge, and the newer one was remedied by the Alta project. The new one is dismissed. The old one is tied to the design flow and proposed actual flows, as well as showing that the treatment facility and effluent disposal would be more than able to handle those proposed flows. They are currently editing the proposed flows spreadsheet to make it clearer. Also waiting for the new computers to be installed so that more timely data can be captured. Mike: So with good documentation, that old ACO could go away as well? Abby: Yes.

#### Monthly Finance Report (MFR)

Sarah: Shared the MFR on the screen. 50% of the way through the year. Re-evaluated the year-end forecast columns. The sludge expense prediction went down due to some incorrectly posted expenses that should have been charged off to the High School Treatment Plant account. Prediction was skewed due to some recent months having 3-4 pickups but that was because of the membrane issue previously discussed. A comfortable prediction is 2.5 pickups per month for a cost of \$3400 per month, which then equates to an on target amount of approximately \$40,000 for the year. The highlighted yellow rows are sources of funds to be used to pay for the membrane issues. These expenses will be tracked separately from operating expenses by using the contingency line and pulling any surplus money available from pipeline maintenance, professional services, and potentially some energy lines. There is an expense placeholder of an estimated \$55,000 for this emergency.

Darrin: Suggests that the placeholder figure is increased in case more work is to occur related to the membrane emergency.

Sarah: Agreed, and known costs so far are approximately \$20,000. YES Electric is expected to be about \$3,000, dumpster removal \$200, and RH White will be significantly higher than the partial days' work of \$7,000 in an original estimate, since they spent two long days there. The planned work in February will increase the costs as well.

Sarah: The user charges look right on target at 50%. Quarter 2 was just billed making it the 3<sup>rd</sup> bill cycle to be coming due in this fiscal year. It is due January 26<sup>th</sup>. The Interest in Savings revenue line is very unpredictable and has been trending high with a year-end prediction of \$30,000. The Finance Office did recommend using a \$20,000 figure for planning for FY25. Liens are completed and the first half of them billed, but the tax bill is not due yet. There are two privilege fees collected totaling \$55,807. No other requests for new or increased sewer use currently.

Darrin: The net operating income prediction is \$55,000? Sarah: Yes

Mike: Is the total lien only approximately \$7,000? Sarah: Yes, we were able to get our uncollected down from \$20,000 to that \$7,000 figure. Darrin: At least 95% collected now. Tom: Phone calls were made to request payments. Sarah: Yes, and remaining owed is primarily the residences who were not called for lack of a phone number, but who did get two demand notices (via regular mail).

### Request for Service

Mike: A resident emailed asking if they had access to wastewater and Sarah determined that they were outside of the coverage area. The MBTA is proposing to allow the density of housing in Wayland's wastewater service area to increase. Tom: The property adjacent to the treatment facility could be a site for expansion someday. The Town does not currently own that property which is currently the parking lot behind ACE hardware, but it would be the desired location to expand the facility.

Mike: Has the Council on Aging (COA) broken ground yet? Tom: No, not that the Department has been made aware of yet.

### Approve Minutes for December 13, 2023

Mike: Did the F.O.G. issue at Alta resolve itself? Jared: No, not yet. Tom: It is still on their radar screen. Mike: How far into the wastewater system is it getting? Jared: Just a slow buildup at the Alta pump station.

**8:27 Mike: Motion that with the correction of the spelling of Darrin's name at the adjournment note, to approve the minutes. Darrin second. Approved 2-0**

Topics not reasonably anticipated by Chair 48 hours in advance of meeting  
None.

### Calendar: Upcoming meetings, events and hearings

Sarah: Next meeting is February 14, 2024 at 7:30pm. Proposed meeting dates for March 13th, 2024 and April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024.  
All: New dates agreed upon.

**8:30 Adjourn: Mike: Motion to adjourn. Darrin second. Approved 2-0.**

### Attachments

*December 2023 Monthly Financial Report*  
*December 13, 2023 Minutes*