

# NEW LONDON-SPRINGFIELD WATER SYSTEM PRECINCT

## Commissioners Monthly Meeting Minutes

February 5, 2024

PRESENT: Kenneth Jacques (Chairman), Rip Cross (Commissioner), Rob Thorp (Superintendent) and Rhonda Gauthier (Office Manager) Absent: John MacKenna (Commissioner)  
Others in attendance: Rich and Karen Epstein, Bill Helm and Janet Kidder.

The meeting started at 4:00.  
Chairman Jacques opened the Budget hearing at 4:00. Jacques explained that the Commissioners will go through a few administrative items then will go through Budget line items.

The Board reviewed:

- Income and Expenditure report for fiscal year to date.

The Board approved:

- Accounts payable and payroll
- Rip made a motion to accept the minutes of January 8, 2024, Commissioner's meeting, Ken seconded the motion. All in favor.
- A request to the Town of New London for ARPA funds was signed for \$3,754.21 paid to Underwood Engineers for the Main Street water main replacement and Water supply investigation. This payment represents the last payment of the ARPA funds (112,750.75) from the Town of New London.

- Chairman Jacques went through the Proposed Budget for 2024.
- Salaries, Benefits, and tax increase mainly due to 3% cost of living increase and the rise in health insurance premiums.
  - Maintenance stayed at 35,000 even though we overspent last year. There were factors beyond our control.
  - Pump and Tank Maintenance went down from 47,000 to 35,000. This line is for the two pump stations, tanks, and wells. Includes painting, ladders, and communications. Looking to replace the roof on the pump station this year.
  - Meter maintenance increased from 7,000 to 10,000 due to the price of the meters.
  - Property and Liability insurance increased from 13,559.00 to 15,445.00.
  - Administration increased from 13,000 to 15,000 to pay the rise in dues and subscriptions and office equipment.
  - Audit line went from 5,000 to 15,000. The Precinct's accountant resigned and led the Precinct into having to hire a large firm for the yearly audit.
  - Payment in lieu of taxes paid to the Town of Springfield increased due to the town's tax increase. Chairman Jacques suggested him and Rhonda meet with the town to negotiate the payment.
  - Other line items stayed the same.

Chairman Jacques went on to speak about the Main Street Project. Jacques informed the public that the Precinct opened 5 bids for the Main Street Project at 2:00 this afternoon. Underwood Engineers took the bids back to their office to be sure all bids were calculated correctly. The Commissioners will get the results on Thursday February 8, 2024, at 12:30 by a Teams Meeting with Underwood Engineering at the Precinct's office.

Jacques went over the proposed warrant articles: Article 1 - Election of Officers. Article 2 - Replacement of Main on Main Street in New London. Jacques explained that the Commissioners are still unsure how they are raising the money and will know more after the meeting with the Engineers. Article 3 - operating budget of \$673,506.00. Article 4 - Future Water Supply - this is for the next phase of supplemental water. This is for the engineers to evaluate Lon-1 and Lon-2 of the groundwater resource assessment report prepared by Emory & Garrett Groundwater Investigation in May of 2023. Mr. Epstein asked what type of water and what is the next step. Rob informed Mr. Epstein that this is looking into Bedrock Wells. It is a 6-phase process and will cost up to 11,000,000. Article 5 is the Report of the offices for the upcoming year. At 4:21 PM Ken explained that the Commissioners still need to finalize some things in the budget so they will need a continuance. Rip made a motion to continue the meeting until February 12, 2024, at 4:00. Ken seconded the motion. All in favor of continuing the Budget Hearing.

Ken Jacques informed the Public that Charles Hafner has resigned as Moderator. Jacques said that Bob Bowers has interest in the position. Rip made a motion to appoint Bob Bowers as Moderator until the 2024 election on March 19, 2024, Jacques seconded the motion. Bob Bowers will be notified of his appointment.

The Board reviewed the Superintendent's report.

The Bond Hearing opened at 4:30PM. Ken reported that there were 5 bids for the Main Street Project. If the low bid is accurate, the Project will be under five million dollars. Ken explained that they are waiting on the bids then will look at financing options. Looking at local banks as well as surrounding counties. Might end up with a bond. The Precinct doesn't like to go with the bond because it can't be paid off early. Looked at grants but they are mainly based on quality of water not quantity. The Precinct recently applied for a revolving loan but was denied. Janet Kidder asked what the time frame was for the project. Ken explained it is a 3-phase project lasting up to 9 months with a start date may end of April. The Bond hearing was recessed at 4:45PM and will be continued next Monday February 12, 2024, at 4:15PM at the Precinct Office at 73 Old Dump Road in New London to finalize the warrant article wording and amount.

Next Commissioner's meeting is scheduled for March 4, 2024, at 4:00 PM.

The next Budget Hearing will be held on February 12, 2024, at 4:00 PM.

The bid review for the Main Street project will be on Thursday February 8, 2024, at 12:30 PM

The meeting was adjourned at 4:55 PM.

Respectfully Submitted, Rhonda L Gauthier