**CANAAN/STEWARTSTOWN JOINT**

**SEWER COMMISSIONERS MEETING**

**MINUTES**

**JULY 12, 2022**

1. **Open Meeting** – The Canaan/Stewartstown Joint Sewer Commission July 12, 2022 meetings was opened by acting Chairman Haven Haynes, Jr. Those present at the meeting: Haven Haynes, Jr., Mark Bullard, and Alfred Buckley (Canaan Selectboard), James Gilbert, Dwayne Covill, and Allen Coats (Stewartstown Selectboard), Zachary Brown, and later joined by April Busfield.
2. **Approve minutes – April 12, 2022** - The previous minutes were distributed and reviewed by all commission members. Haven Haynes, Jr. called for a motion to approve the April 12, 2022 meeting minutes, which was so moved by Mark and seconded by Allen. With no discussion the motion carried unanimously in the affirmative.
3. **Additions/Deletions** – No additions or deletions were made to the agenda. At this time Zach notified the commission that April would be arriving late to give her report.
4. **Operator Report** – April reported that there was not much to report and that everything was running smoothly. The new heater is almost completely installed but April is waiting on the electrician to finish installation. All the rusted banisters have been removed. April is currently looking for someone to paint a few areas in the treatment plant. Since this is a hazardous area, she has reached out to Chris Hebert for recommendations. [Received after the meeting, the two contacts April received are Gary at Progressive Painting and Bill Hicks] April stated that she is looking to get quotes from these two along with others and check the budget to see if it is plausible to have done this year. Mark asked if there were any issues and April reported no. Questions of the lagoons were raised, and April reported that she runs them low in the spring/summer to ensure no overflow when it rains. Before April left, Haven asked her what the USDA loan was for and what the amounts were. April reported that the loan was for the Treatment plant and was for the telemetry and assured the commission that both towns benefit. However, she was unsure about the amounts.
5. **Report on Inspection –** Haven reported that he had tried to contact James to do the inspection, but he was unsuccessful. Haven said that he did go down to the Treatment plant and ran a quasi-inspection, by himself. He reported that April had streamlined the process of inspecting with the creation of a new inspection sheet. Little discussion was had on the sheet, however, Dwayne asked if a copy of the sheet could be given to the Stewartstown Selectboard. Zach said that he would have April send them a copy. On a motion made by Allen and seconded by Alfred, to approve the use of the new sheets, it was carried unanimously in the affirmative. Discussion was had to determine when another inspection would be done. Alfred offered to do the inspection at a later date with James.
6. **Other Business –** 
   1. **Agreement between Canaan and Stewartstown –**

Haven opened discussion on redrafting the agreement between the two towns. Haven reported that Canaan had drafted an agreement and has sent both Stewartstown’s draft and Canaan’s to a lawyer, Bill Davies, for review. Haven stated that the lawyer was going to meld the two drafts together. Dwayne asked if this was to just make sure that all the Vermont specific statutes were met. Haven said yes. Allen asked if this would be delayed for another quarter. Haven assured the commission that Davies would have it completed by July 16, 2022 and the draft would be sent to the Stewartstown Selectboard to review and finalize.

Allen wanted to remind both boards that the Stewartstown’s proposed agreement, drafted by Allen, was simply a template of the previously approved Dispatch Area Agreement, with a few modifications. He stated that the commission could have approved this agreement back in March and should have made changes to it then. He wanted to remind both boards that this agreement had a six-year history, and it has worked. Dwayne commented that both boards should wait to see what the Davies produces and go from there. Mark stated that Canaan’s proposed agreement had more legal terminology in it, compared to the other agreement. Allen stated that if there are too many changes made, the new agreement would have to be sent off to the New Hampshire Attorney General for review. Further discussion was tabled until the draft from Davies was created.

* 1. **Quarterly Charges – Loan – Retirement**

1. **Retirement -** Mark opened discussion surrounding Brian’s compensation. Mark said that the State of Vermont requires two licensed operators at the Treatment Plant. The second operator needs to be licensed so that they are the back up. Dwayne and James both replied yes there needs to be an assistant. Allen and Dwayne both commented saying that needing an assistant operator was never in question. Mark stated that at the last meeting discussion was tabled because the Canaan Selectboard didn’t know the right answer. After the April 12, 2022 meeting, April contacted the State of Vermont, and they told her that yes two operators are needed.

Allen wanted to clarify that it was a misstep on his part or the previous minutes that it was believed he had an issue with the wage that Brian was being paid and that there was an issue with whether a second operator was needed. Allen’s issue pertains to the benefits that the assistant operator receives. Allen suggested only paying the assistant operator’s benefits when they were acting in the position of operator, when April was out. Allen also commented that he has no objections to the rate or benefits that April receives.

At this time Alfred, brought up the wages that both April and Brian make while they work in the town of Stewartstown. Alfred believed that the wages Canaan pays the operators should be the amount that Stewartstown pays as well. Allen and Dwayne both stated that is does not have to be the same. Stewartstown is happy to pay Canaan’s wage when they are being shared but not when they are working for Stewartstown solely.

Haven brought the discussion back to the topic of Brian’s benefits. Mark stated that Brian’s retirement is off the table for Stewartstown, as Canaan understands that Brian is more of a full-time employee for Canaan than he is for Stewartstown. From now on, Brian’s retirement will be fully paid for by Canaan. The only point that needs to be discussed is his health insurance. Allen commented, that’s all it’s ever been. Haven and Mark calculated the portion of Brian’s health insurance that Stewartstown is responsible for, and it came out to $17.61 per week. Dwayne commented saying that the Stewartstown Selectboard felt as if they should have been consulted first before Canaan offered Brian health insurance. The Stewartstown Selectboard should have had the opportunity to discuss it and vote on it. Dwayne said that if they were to pay for the health insurance, Stewartstown would have to bring it to the budget and plan for that expense.

Questions were raised about how the hours are broken down between the two towns. Allen was not sure if there was a different way to record the hours while Brian was working at the Treatment Plant. Mark asked for Allen to clarify whether he wanted the hours to broken down as hours worked for Canaan and hours worked for Stewartstown. Mark also raised questions about the mileage for Brian and April traveling to the Stewartstown pump stations. Dwayne stated that Stewartstown pays for that mileage. Mark commented that he believed it would be too difficult to split the time at the Treatment Plant.

Haven commented that in total Brian works about 19 hours per week at the Treatment Plant. At this time all members reviewed a breakdown of Brian’s hours for 2021. After reviewing, Mark asked what should we do from here? Table the discussion or are you not willing to pay at all. Dwayne stated that his opinion on the matter is for the little amount per week, it should be paid. We should pay to keep good help, but the rest of the board needs to vote. James stated that he didn’t have a stance on it and would need to look at the budget. Allen said it should have been voted on and he doesn’t agree with paying Brian’s health insurance.

At this time April came to give her report and so Alfred asked to table the discussions. Once April left, Haven reopened discussion and Allen called for executive session.

On a motion, made by Allen and seconded by James, to enter executive session for the purpose of general discussion, the motion carried unanimously in the affirmative. Executive session began at 6:08 PM. At 6:18 PM the session ended with no action being taken. (Motion to end executive session was not relayed to minute taker.)

1. **USDA Loan Repayment** – Discussion was reopened by acting Chairman Haven Haynes, Jr. Discussion was pertaining to Stewartstown’s portion of the USDA loan. The Stewartstown Selectboard requested that all information pertaining to the loan be forwarded to them so that they could review it. A question was raised on whether the loan was utilized to fix the ramp at the Treatment Plant. Haven stated that this was fixed using a surplus from a previous USDA loan. Allen stated that the Stewartstown Selectboard would have to review the paperwork for the loan before they would pay for it. He stated that the Stewartstown Selectboard never signed off on the loan. And for them to be liable for the loan they should have had to sign something. Haven stated that he believed it had been taken out in Canaan’s name, so no Stewartstown signatures were needed. However, he believed it had been approved at a past meeting.

7. Adjourn Meeting – On a motion made by James and seconded by Dwayne to adjourn the July 12, 2022, Canaan/Stewartstown Joint Commission Meeting. Acting Chairman Haven Haynes, Jr. adjourned the meeting at 6:30 PM. The next quarterly meeting will be October 4, 2022.