

Tisbury Sewer Advisory Committee Meeting
Zoom Meeting
November 8, 2023
Meeting Minutes

Committee Members: Jeff Pratt, Daniel Seidman, Chris Scott, Connie Alexander, John Best

Staff: Jared Meader, Melinda Byers, Mike Alberice, Eric Alexander

Guest: Melinda Loberg

Jeff Pratt: Calls meeting to order 3:06pm

Wastewater Superintendent's Departure:

Jared Meader: My last day is Nove 17, 2023. Beginning Monday Nov 20, 2023, I will start my new position as the Superintendent of the Mashpee Wastewater Dept.

I have been working with Mike Alberice who is currently the chief operator at the plant and the best wastewater operator on the island. We have support in place for him. His brother-in-law is the Water Superintendent, his sister works in the accounting office.

I have discussed the transition with Bob Rafferty and Bob agrees to help support Mike with any help he needs. I reaffirmed that with Jay Grande yesterday, as well. Bob will be more available to come to the island to help Mike until decisions are made regarding posting the position, the timeline, and things like that.

Jeff Pratt: Will you be the interim superintendent?

Mike Alberice: That appears to be the plan. It appears at least interim and transition.

Jeff Pratt: If you were offered the position, would you accept it?

Mike Alberice: Yes

Connie Alexander: How long have you worked for this towns Sewer Dept?

Mike Alberice: I have been here since 2014, and just passed my 9-year anniversary.

John Best: I am personally in favor of this but wonder if it is appropriate to recommend him for anything else bust interim superintendent.

Jared Meader: I agree with you. Maybe we recommend Mike fort the interim and then when the position becomes available, there is another meeting held to submit a letter of recommendation again for Mike, from the board.

Connie Alexander: If there is someone else out there that is a good candidate, we wouldn't want to appear that there is favoritism. We would also not want to discourage anyone from applying.

Dan Seidman: When the Superintendent position is posted, we can say there is a strong in-house candidate that we recommend.

All members agree.

Dan Seidman: Motion to recommend that Mike Alberice be the interim superintendent.

Jeff Pratt: Seconds

Vote:

Dan Seidman: (aye)

John Best: (aye)

Chris Scott: (aye)

Connie Alexander: (aye)

Jeff Pratt: (aye)

Motion passed: (5-0-0)

Jeff Pratt: Are there plans in place to fill Mike's position, if he applies and accepts the Superintendent position?

Jared Meader: We interviewed a candidate yesterday, that has a strong lab background in wastewater. They will leave the posting a bit longer to seek other applicants. Eric Alexander is on the path to becoming a Chief Operator, possibly within the next 3 years. He is very eager to learn and been a quick study.

Mike Alberice: Some revisions have been made to the language of the job posting to make it more attractive. Eric Alexander could have his grade 6 license by next summer at the rate he is going.

Jeff Pratt: Mike your current position is a union position, correct?

Mike Alberice: Yes

Jared Meader: So, we are figuring out what the pay scale will be. When Chris left the Water Company, we paid James \$2.00 more an hour in the interim. I would like to see Mike be paid my salary. We are hoping that the town move forward and actively hire to fill the position.

Article IX

Jared Meader: Article IX was submitted months ago to the lawyers for clarification on verbiage. The public hearing will not be completed until December. We were being asked to write in something that was not supported by town by law. It felt like we were trying to circumvent the system and that is why I disagreed.

Jeff Pratt: We struggled over who was in on the percentage and who wasn't.

Connie Alexander: We wanted to be stronger than a 40B requirement. There was some truth to the fact we were overstepping our purview. As projects come forward there will be other review systems to ask for affordable housing components.

Jeff Pratt: How can we help Mike and ourselves getting Article IX passed?

Jared Meader: It has been a long process to get it passed. I have been frustrated with the amount of time the attorneys have taken to review the specific verbiage we asked about. They have already reviewed the entire document. The wording that we voted on is in the draft that the attorneys have. My recommendation is to get rid of the two parts under the 40% for housing because we can't reference them in the town by laws. It is about the Sewer Dept better managing our flow and should not be used as an enforcement tool.

Maybe this board should draft a letter to present to the Select Board, urging them to review and pass the policy.

Jeff Pratt: I will work with Jared on drafting a letter that we can provide to the Select Board.

Connie Alexander: I want to let you everyone know that I did file a letter of disclosure with Town Hall because Eric is my son. I cannot have anything to do with hiring or firing Eric. I can make other recommendations for other employees. I spoke to the ethics commission to make them aware that this board has nothing to do with hiring people or deciding compensation of any kind. I can remain on this board even though Eric is working at the plant.

Discussion of Reimplementation of Wastewater Commissioners

Jeff Pratt: Melinda Loberg is with us. There is discussion of having Sewer Advisory Board to reassume the previous position of advisors.

Melinda Loberg: I am excited for Mike because I remember when Mike was hired. I thought at that time he had great promise.

There was a DPW Board, that was an elected board for many years. I believe around 2014, the Town decided that having two centers of decision making, was not in the Town's best interest. We eliminated

at a town meeting vote, the DPW board which oversaw wastewater, roads, and stormwater. There was a volunteer board appointed by the Select Board that took their place for a while. Also, the Sewer Advisory Board was created. We then started to realize; we may have made a mistake by disbanding the commissioners. There is such a specialist knowledge about the sewer and wastewater collection system. Maybe we need a commission to help guide this specific area. It is a board that is only concerned with the sewer.

There are two ways to create it.

The simplest is to have a town meeting. There could be a town vote. The Select Board could put it on the Town Warrant. Mass General Law talks about 3 commissioners. They would have a standard year of service. They would have the same authorities and responsibilities for carrying out the oversight of the sewer as the select board would for carrying out their realm. There is another section of Mass General Law that concerns itself with the Public Works Commissioners. That has a lot more powers that are inferred to do with roads and stormwater. They can build and bond.

Jared Meader: Currently we are under the DPW. The one option would be to go back to the DPW Commissioners. I am championing for Sewer Commissioners, under Chapter 40N. It is like the Select Board that controls only wastewater. They have the right to enter contracts and to borrow money. I have spoken to Jay Grande about this topic. He wants The Master Plan and the CWMP to advise this. I believe everyone is on board.

We are currently under the DPW which is a blessing and a curse.

John Best: Do you share anything with the DPW like equipment, vehicles?

Jared Meader: We have mostly everything of our own. The only thing we share is the secretary.

John Best: I personally feel that if we have a Water Superintendent that is not under the Select Board, why wouldn't we have the only other utility in town to be separate also. I think it makes sense to split from the DPW. I think this Board could continue to be an advisory to independent Sewer Commissioners.

Jared Meader: Initially the Select Board would choose the first 3 commissioners.

Melinda Loberg: Edgartown has an independently elected Sewer Board. In addition, for the minutes, MGL part 1 title 7, chapter 41, section 63 is where this regulation resides.

Jeff Pratt: Connie, Dan, John and I are all in favor of this.

Mike, will you ask Melinda Byers to send your contact info to all the board members?

Jeff Pratt: Motion to adjourn 4:03pm

John Best: Seconds

Vote:

Dan Seidman: (aye)

John Best: (aye)

Chris Scott: (aye)

Connie Alexander: (aye)

Jeff Pratt: (aye)

Motion passed: (5-0-0)

Next meeting is Wednesday December 13 , 2023 @ 4:00pm via Zoom

