

**APPROVED MINUTES**

**SARATOGACOUNTYSEWER COMMISSION No. 1**  
**MINUTES OF JULY 9, 2020**  
**3:00 PM at the Treatment Plant**

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:** Howe, Bisnett, Doyle, Hotaling Keegan, Loewenstein, Thompson

**COMMISSIONERS EXCUSED:** Cannon and Fillion

**ALSO PRESENT:** Dan Rourke P.E., Executive Director; Anne Gorman, Confidential Secretary; Assistant Chief Operator, Gene Hutchings; William Bills, Maintenance Manager; Andrew Marsden, Assistant Maintenance Manager; Michael P. Naughton, Assistant County Attorney

Chairman Howe welcomed everyone to the July 9, 2020 Saratoga County Sewer Commission meeting.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Led by Commissioner Hotaling

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None

**CHAIRMAN’S COMMENTS:** Chairman Howe informed there was a copy for each Commissioner of the Erastus Corning, 2<sup>nd</sup> Achievement Award for Intermunicipal Cooperation that was received in June for the Regional Biosolids Facility project. He said SCSD #1 was awarded an award along with Albany County for their significant contribution to advancing the Albany and Saratoga County Regional Biosolids Facility. Chairman Howe said while his name is on there, it really was Executive Director Rourke who did the majority of the work along with the Albany County Water Purification District and their Executive Director Angelo Gaudi, the way Dan and Angelo worked to bring this together for both communities is just incredible. Chairman Howe said he was proud to have his name on the same award as Dan and he thanked him for that.

Executive Director Rourke said he appreciated that. The Commission applauded. Chairman Howe said although Commissioner Cannon was not present, he does sit on that Committee as well and he will pass that information on to him.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES of June 4, 2020.** *Commissioner Doyle made a motion to approve the minutes of June 4, 2020. Commissioner Bisnett seconded the motion. No discussion. The minutes of June 4, 2020 were approved. 5 Ayes, 1 Abstain, 3 Absent, 0 Nays.*

Chairman Howe informed we were going to move down in the agenda to 2020 Capital Projects WW COVID Testing as Arcadis’ Rob Ostapczuk was on the phone via conference call. Executive Director thanked Chairman Howe and said he would get us started and then have Rob chime in if there are any questions.

Commissioner Thompson entered the meeting.

**Contract Quadrant Biosciences for WW Covid Testing** – Executive Director Rourke said he sent an email out to the Commission on June 30<sup>th</sup> about this opportunity with a brief summary regarding testing the RNA

for COVID-19 in wastewater. He informed the presence of the virus can be seen in the wastewater as people start shedding the virus prior to showing symptoms. It can actually be detected in the wastewater one (1) to two (2) weeks prior to a possible positive testing diagnosis. So in that regard, this is a helpful tool for the Public Health Department. Executive Director Rourke said he has had conversations with the County Health Department Director, Cathy Duncan. He said he also presented a status update to the Public Health Committee yesterday on where we are at with this testing through two (2) minor contracts. One (1) is with Quadrant Biosciences and the second is with Arcadis. Executive Director Rourke said both contracts are \$15,000.00 or less right now. He said he thought it was good to begin this testing now to get a good baseline throughout the County and we have sectioned off nine (9) portions of the collection system:

1. WWTP
2. Halfmoon
3. Riverside (Stillwater)
4. Ushers (Clifton Park)
5. Saratoga Lake
6. Northline/Milton
7. Ballston Spa Meter Pit
8. Saratoga/Geysers
9. Wilton

Executive Director Rourke said with these different areas we are able to locate if there will be a hotspot should there be any increase in cases prior to diagnostic testing. It will also allow for contact tracers in the Public Health Department to know where to focus their efforts. For example, yesterday at the Public Health meeting they gave an example of what it was like in March to contact trace. In March when asking people how many people they were in contact with it was approximately 4 to 5 people. In the most recent set of cases, which was approximately 13 in the last week, every person said it was closer to 70 or 80 people that they were in contact with due to the reopening. Executive Director Rourke said that is a lot of people to call to inform and takes a lot of effort and this testing would focus that effort. Executive Director Rourke said the recommendation he was bringing forward is to award a contract with Quadrant Biosciences at a cost of \$200/per sample. If we maintain these nine (9) catchment areas the cost is approximately \$14,500.00/month and six (6) months of testing equates to approximately \$90,000.00. He said we can put a not to exceed number on this contract for now. Quadrant Biosciences is working with SUNY (ESF) College of Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF), Syracuse University (SU) and SUNY Upstate Medical University and Arcadis to develop this program. He informed we are on the leading edge of this science and other counties are looking at it, as well as the state. Rob Ostapczuk with Arcadis added Quadrant Biosciences' \$200/per sample comparatively is much cheaper than other options out there that cost approximately \$1000/sample with a 7-10 day turnaround vs. Quadrant Biosciences' \$200/per sample and 48 hour turnaround. Executive Director Rourke said he would like to recommend a motion.

Commissioner Loewenstein said he had two questions. Have we started testing already and do we have any preliminary results that can be shared and have we found anything? Executive Director Rourke said we have started testing under those two (2) minor contracts. Testing is being done twice a week. The first 2-3 samples were all zeros and the last testing we saw a qualitative hit in three locations. It wasn't quantitative but it was present in the wastewater in three of the catchment areas last week. Executive Director Rourke said the science works which is good. We are at a point right now where we are not getting quantitative data because the number of cases in the County is relatively low still.

Commissioner Loewenstein inquired what happens now that you know there may be a hotspot. Where does the Public Health department take it from there? Executive Director Rourke said he doesn't consider it a hotspot yet as it was such a small amount from three (3) samples and only one (1) came back positive. Part

of this too is learning how we want to use the data and what the data really means. The other part is testing those samples to get into crAssphage which is another virus that is found in our body. Executive Director Rourke said the hope is that we can do a population equivalent that can be drawn between the COVID RNA and the crAssphage. We are not there yet but when we are the hope would be to share that data with the Public Health department. The ultimate goal would be to continue testing for 5-6 months with a dashboard to keep internally until we feel confident enough with the information to share it with others. Executive Director Rourke reiterated that would be the ultimate goal but again it will take some time to get there.

Commissioner Doyle said for a tourist area it makes good sense. With people coming to Saratoga Springs and people coming in with racehorses to Saratoga it is a way to identify a problem early.

Commissioner Hotaling said there is probably a good chance that we could be reimbursed for some of the costs. Executive Director Rourke said he would hope so, whether it's through a FEMA reimbursement or New York State if it decides to take this forward, outside our position, it would allow us to be part of that program earlier since we have already begun sampling. That would be the hope but again; Executive Director Rourke said he thinks we are seeing a lot of federal money going towards programs to help with COVID-19 so he would hope that would be the case.

Commissioner Bisnett said if we do not get some form of reimbursement and costs that are being incurred end up in the rate structure, how much are we willing to absorb before we start to question what we are spending? In essence we are helping the County Health Department but we are a self funded entity. Anything we spend we have to get back through rates. Executive Director Rourke said that is correct. Commissioner Bisnett added if the County thinks this is a really great thing, why aren't they willing to split the cost or provide some means of reimbursement? Executive Director Rourke said he did not have an answer at this time as Deputy County Administrator Cooke was not present but he would say that in his email he said right now currently we are at good spot revenue wise as a sewer district; we are not going to take the hit that the County would with sales tax revenue. Executive Director Rourke also added we are self funded but keep in mind we are only self serving the people that are connected to the sewer district, we are not serving the rest of the County with this program.

Commissioner Keegan inquired if this takes off and we end up getting stuck with the whole thing, he doesn't see why we couldn't apply for a prorated distribution from entities that are connected to the sewer district to help offset the cost. Executive Director Rourke asked Commissioner Bisnett to elaborate for him, did he mean the towns? Commissioner Keegan said yes. If there are nine (9) catchment areas that we are testing and these towns are hooked to the sewer district, can we get a prorated distribution from them to share in the cost because they are the ones who are going to benefit. He said the Sewer District doesn't really benefit, the Health Department does and the whole County does. He added if they could divide the cost or even a portion of it that would help. Executive Director Rourke said he agreed with that. He added he wanted to bring to the table a couple of things, one in particular that we are going to be taking advantage of and that is, the Public Health Department is applying for grant funding through COVID to get GIS software called ESRI which is an international supplier of geographic information system software. We are going to benefit from that and be able to login and utilize that data not just through COVID but forever. He said he gets that it is grant funded and not necessarily coming out of their budget but they are going to share it with the Sewer District. Executive Director Rourke said so there is some give and take on a day to day basis between departments and he is not opposed to trying to find another revenue stream and talking about it. He said he thinks it would be smart to set a not to exceed cost for three months, four months, even five months and then go back to County Administration if this is proving worthwhile and see if we can get some reimbursement.

Commissioner Loewenstein said lets face reality and the unknown, until there is a vaccine were going to continue testing. This is for six (6) months and will get us to the end of this year. It's conceivable for another 6-12 months that we could continue it, so you're looking at approximately \$300,000.00 a year that we have to build into our operating budget and maybe we have to raise rates a couple of dollars to account for it. Executive Director Rourke said we could, that's a reality. He said he would also say we are doing nine (9) catchment areas now but we may be able to reduce that amount in six (6) months when the science is firm.

Commissioner Thompson said he had not heard of anyone else testing wastewater and felt it was a waste of time and money going through the Sewer District as it is viral.

Chairman Howe said anything we can do in these times to promote good health and protect the environment he is in favor of it. He said before any further discussion he would like to entertain a motion.

*Commissioner Doyle made a motion to forward a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors to authorize an agreement with Quadrant Biosciences, Inc. in the amount not to exceed \$90,000.00 to conduct lab testing of wastewater samples at a cost of \$200/per sample for the presence of COVID-19 RNA. Commissioner Hotaling seconded the motion. Further discussion involved six (6) month timeframe and possible funding and possible amendment to the Arcadis contract. Motion passed: 6 Ayes, 2 Absent, 1 Nays*

Chairman Howe thanked everyone for their comments and discussion. Executive Director Rourke said good discussion and thanked everyone. Rob Ostapczuk with Arcadis thanked the Commission for their time as well and ended the conference call.

## **2018 CAPITAL PROJECTS**

**Regional Biosolids Handling Facility** – Executive Director Rourke said there are a couple of motions with this item today. Attached to the packet is the engagement letter for Bond counsel. He informed we need to hire bond counsel for the Regional Biosolids Facility and we also need a Bond resolution to increase the bond amount for the Joint Regional Biosolids Facility by \$7.5M and a copy of the Bond resolution is also attached to the agenda packet. Executive Director Rourke said we did the resolution to approve the expenditures for that project but had not requested the bond resolution yet. So for this project Executive Director Rourke said we would need two (2) motions. The first motion is to revise bond resolution 171 of 2018 resolution to increase the bond amount for the Joint Regional Biosolids Facility by \$7.5M.

*Commissioner Hotaling made a motion to forward a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors to approve and revise bond resolution 171 of 2018 to increase total required bond amount of the Joint Regional Biosolids Facility project by \$7,500,000 to \$56,000,000 increasing Saratoga County's 50% share by \$3.75M. Commissioner Loewenstein seconded the motion. No discussion. Motion passed: 7 Ayes, 2 Absent, 0 Nays*

The second motion is to hire Bond counsel for three (3) capital projects we will be looking to bond that add up to approximately \$65,000.00. The three (3) projects are: the Regional Biosolids Handling Facility, Interceptor Rehabilitation and the Ammonia Upgrade project. He added the Bond firm Schoeneck & King PLLC was recommended by Fiscal Advisors and they performed the bond issuance work for the County's public safety building.

*Commissioner Bisnett made a motion to forward a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors to authorize an agreement with Bond Schoeneck & King to act as bond counsel for all Sewer District bonds for capital Projects in the amount of \$65,000.00 for three (3) Sewer District capital projects: the Regional Biosolids Handling Facility, Interceptor Rehabilitation and the Ammonia Upgrade project. Commissioner Loewenstein seconded the motion. Discussion involved clarification that this recommendation does require County approval and the reputability of the bond firm. Motion passed: 7 Ayes, 2 Absent, 0 Nays*

**Ammonia Related WWTP Upgrades** – Executive Director Rourke reported the pilot continues to show promising results. We are working through some last efforts to ensure efficacy and should have a Basis of Design report to review in early August for a late August submission.

**Interceptor Rehabilitation Design** – Executive Director Rourke reported we have met with almost all of the municipalities but still have to meet with the Town of Stillwater. He said we will do that in parallel and answer some questions for some other municipalities that may have had some public meetings but we can do that in parallel as we finish the design. He said he is expecting a final set of design end of July to review. Executive Director Rourke said he will be reaching out to both Fiscal Advisors and our bond counsel regarding this project. The goal is to be out to bid this fall or early winter so we are going to have to make sure our funds are in place. He added we are going to also do another resolution like we did for the Regional Biosolids Facility for our capital project expenditure approval in the next 30-60 days but the plan is to still go out to bid this fall for this project.

Commissioner Loewenstein inquired what the bond amount would be. Executive Director Rourke said the total project cost is estimated at \$29M. He said we will get into our capital reserve funds a little later due to where we are at health wise but it is between \$28M - \$29M and that is an engineer's estimate so depending on where that bid comes in at, it could be less. Executive Director Rourke said he is hoping to get some scale savings there since it is another 14 miles so he is hoping some efficiencies would go up and increase by bidding it all as one. Commissioner Loewenstein said with the issuance of \$30M and \$54M dollars in bonds, is the County okay with that and will it affect their bond rating and has it been built into our rate structure through the tool that we have. Executive Director Rourke said the County is okay with the bond issuances, he has discussed that with the County Administrator's office and we did use the tool and we are building it into the rate structure. Our original plan of raising the rates approximately \$12.50 for the next four (4) years covers that. We will revisit the budget in October, especially with this COVID thing, there have been delays and is there an opportunity to maybe forgo rate increases in 2021, we can talk about that but it has been looked into. Commissioner Loewenstein thanked Executive Director Rourke.

## **2019 CAPITAL PROJECTS**

**Knox Woods (HM) and Riverside #1 (ST) Pump Station Upgrades** – Executive Director Rourke reported contracts are currently out for execution with the contractors. Once contracts are fully executed we will set up a kick off meeting and get that project going.

**Interceptor Rehabilitation Phase VIIA** – Executive Director Rourke reported this project is 100% complete. We are just looking for the final payment to get executed. The total project cost was approximately 5.97M and the original contract amount \$5.94M. He said remember we had some change orders with the trail damage from the winter but he considered the project a success with the budget amounts and where it came in with the change orders.

## **2020 CAPITAL PROJECTS**

**Environmental Benefit Project (EBP)** – Executive Director Rourke informed he is working on refining the task order with the schedule of values and hoping to get the order executed in the next 30 days so they can begin hiring subcontractors and procuring the PV equipment for the solar panels.

**Storage Building/HVAC and Roof Replacement Design** – Executive Director Rourke informed contracts and insurance are being finalized currently. We are awaiting a date for a kick off meeting but the consultant, GPI has began to look at asbuilts for this place so that we can get the HVAC system designed, hopefully bid and built prior to next summer. That really is the goal because we are not going to be able to fix the AC this summer as the lead time on the coil is (12) weeks so it doesn't make sense to spend \$25,000.00 to \$30,000.00 as by that time it will be cold again. That is why you see the portable units in here. But for timing to work we need to dive into that HVAC design first and now so that the install with all lead time can be prior to it getting hot again in 2021.

Commissioner Hotaling said on that, Pace started making a lot of different air filters, and asked if that was being looked at. Executive Director Rourke said that was a great question and when we have that kickoff meeting he will bring that up but a great question.

**Fund Balance Appropriation for Emergency Repair Work** – Executive Director Rourke said at the last meeting he touched on a couple of the emergencies we have run into, one being the pipe repair on Route 236 in the Town of Halfmoon and the other being this admin roof being in really bad shape. He said you will see that the next item on the agenda is a motion to award to the roofing contractor. That bid came in at \$279,000.00 and the pipe repair there is a budget number of approximately \$500,000.00 and so Executive Director Rourke said he would like to only appropriate from the fund balance once for both of those projects and request approval to appropriate \$779,000.00 from our un-appropriated fund balance to our 2020 budget to be able to pay for these items.

Chairman Howe informed we have to move forward with these repairs. Executive Director Rourke added that our current fund reserve is \$18,000,866.00; this would decrease our reserved funds to \$17,221,866.00.

*Commissioner Hotaling made a motion to approve the request to the Saratoga County Board of Supervisors to amend the 2020 Saratoga County Sewer District fund balance for re-appropriation of capital project funds in the amount of \$500,000.00 to pay for an emergency repair to a forcemain in the Town of Halfmoon. Commissioner Bisnett seconded the motion. Discussion involved Commissioner Hotaling's comment on the pipe repair in the Town of Halfmoon saying hats off to our staff here. He said our guys were out there the entire time and it was a job well done. He said Kubricki did a great job, it was a big job, it went quick, the place was cleaned up and it really looks good and he appreciates all the hard work that was done. Executive Director Rourke thanked Commissioner Hotaling and said he appreciated hearing that. Chairman Howe added nice job to all. Motion passed: 6 Ayes, 2 Absent, 0 Nays*

**Administration Building Rood Repair** – Executive Director Rourke reported there were 4 total bidders with costs ranging from \$279,000.00 to \$370,000.00. The apparent low bidder was WCA Roofing and Sheet Metal Co. Inc out of East Syracuse. He said all of the paper work was in order and he was recommending to award to the low bidder at a price of \$279,000.00.

*Commissioner Doyle made a motion to forward a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors to authorize an agreement with WCA Roofing and Sheetmetal, C., Inc. in the amount of \$279,000.00 for the replacement*

*of the roof in the administration building at the Saratoga County Sewer District WWTP. Commissioner Keegan seconded the motion. No Discussion. Motion passed: 6 Ayes, 2 Absent, 0 Nays*

**ATTORNEY REPORT** – Attorney Naughton said he had nothing to report other than one (1) dedication in the Town of Wilton and all paperwork is in complete and in order.

### **DEDICATIONS**

**628 Maple Avenue, LLC** – Town of Wilton – 628 Maple Avenue, LLC requested dedication of the low pressure force main and manhole in the road right of way of Davidson Drive extending to the intersection of Waterwheel Drive and Saw Mill Court to service 628 Maple Avenue and the surrounding area in the town of Wilton. *A motion to accept Resolution 4-2020 dedication of the low pressure force main and manhole was made by Commissioner Hotaling and seconded by Commissioner Doyle. No discussion. Resolution 4-2020 accepting dedication of the low pressure force main and manhole in the road right of way of Davidson Drive extending to the intersection of Waterwheel Drive and Saw Mill Court to service 628 Maple Avenue consisting of (1) manhole and approximately 616.23 ft of 2” SDR-11 low pressure force main in the Town of Wilton passed: 7 Ayes, 2 Absent, 0 Nays.*

*A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Commissioner Doyle and seconded by Commissioner Hotaling. No discussion. The motion passed unanimously.*

**NEXT COMMISSION MEETING  
Thursday, August 6, 2020  
3:00 P.M. meeting at the Treatment Plant**