

**APPROVED MINUTES**

**SARATOGA COUNTY SEWER COMMISSION No. 1**  
**MINUTES OF September 1, 2023**  
**2:00 PM at the Treatment Plant**

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:** Bisnett, Lansing, Fillion, Butler and Scirocco

**COMMISSIONERS EXCUSED:** Keegan, Doyle, Smassanow, Hotaling

**ALSO PRESENT:** Dan Rourke P.E., Executive Director; Andrew Marsden, Assistant Maintenance Manager; Andrew Proler, Assistant County Attorney; Michelle Granger, County Attorney; Steve Bulger, County Administrator.

Chairman Bisnett welcomed everyone to the September 1, 2023 Saratoga County Sewer Commission meeting.

Chairman Bisnett called the meeting to order.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None

**CHAIRMAN’S COMMENTS:** None

Chairman Bisnett asked for a motion to approve the July 27, 2023 minutes.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES of July 27, 2023.** *Commissioner Scirocco made a motion to approve the minutes of July 27, 2023. Commissioner Butler seconded the motion. No discussion. The minutes of July 27, 2023 were approved: 4 Ayes, 1 Abstain, 4 Absent, 0 Nays.*

**2024 Scale of Charges**

Executive Director Rourke asked for a motion to approve the scale of charges and set the public hearing. Executive Director Rourke thanked the commission for being flexible and meeting on the Friday before a long holiday weekend. Executive Director Rourke presented the scale of charges document to the commission. He stated that the scale of charges represents a proposed \$10.00 user rate increase which equates to a 4% rate increase. He stated that it is a weighted average rate of \$272.00. He explained that if the scale of charges is approved it will represent the budget for 2024. He stated that he generates the scale of charges document when he is doing the approval process for the budget for the administrator’s office for the full county budget. He explained that the revenue would amount to \$27,966,181.00. He also noted that there were some highlights he would like to discuss. He stated that there is a revised method for the Saratoga Springs billing. He said that instead of billing Saratoga Springs based on flow, as in the past, we would be billing them based on an agreed upon number of units. The number of units would increase or decrease based on new projects happening within the city of Saratoga Springs. He stated that he met with those at the city, DPW & Supervisor Veitch and they all agree that this method will get rid of the variability. He said that bills in the past have ranged from \$3.3 million to \$4.4 million. He stated that the sewer district bills are 75-80% of the total DPW water budget. He stated that when that amount increases that much it affects what their planning can be. He stated that everyone thinks this is the best method for moving forward. He also stated that there are some

logistical things that need to be worked out. Commissioner Scirocco asked if Executive Director Rourke had talked to the rest of the council or just DPW. Executive Director Rourke said that he had only talked to DPW. Commissioner Scirocco stated that when they pass things it is usually a five-person council and that the city thinks they are paying more than they should be paying. Executive Director Rourke stated that the way he explained it to DPW was that he approached the city to be a good neighbor. He said that the reality is that this commission is the body that is tasked with setting the rates regardless of what the city says. Executive Director Rourke said that he wanted to make sure that they were good with it and make sure everyone was on the same page. He said he took it as far as he thought he needed to. He stated that he met with Commissioner Golub, Supervisor Veitch, Mike Veitch and Joe O'Neil and got their buy in on it. Commissioner Scirocco said that he just wanted to question it as the council seems to be very splintered. Executive Director Rourke said that he did not raise it to any other level as he does not need their approval. Executive Director Rourke said that it will be interesting to see if there is any response to it. Executive Director Rourke went on to discuss that the scale of charges also includes a decrease for Global Foundries based on flow. He stated that he decreased it from about 3 million gallons a day to 2.9 million. He also stated that if they discharge more than 2.9 million a day, we do bill them. Executive Director Rourke said that he looked at inflation and stated that in 2013 was when we aggressively started raising rates. He said he wanted to see how that compared to cumulative inflation. He stated that accumulative inflation from 2013 has been about 31%. He stated that we have raised rates 60% since 2013. He stated that our rates were not in line with the size and complexity of the district and the fact that we have one of the biggest collection systems in New York State. He stated that a lot of districts only own plants where the actual municipality owns the collection system. He stated that we needed to play catch up and now when inflation fluctuates 7, 8 or 9 %, we are not behind the eight ball. He stated that we are where we need to be to provide good service to our customers. Executive Director Rourke pointed out some anticipated expense highlights. He stated that we had a financial rate model done by Raftelis but Raftelis could not be here today to explain things. He stated that our anticipated expenses match our revenue at \$27,966,181.00. He stated that it includes an 11% increase in chemical costs for the collection system and a 17% increase for the treatment plant. He said that the expense for chemicals is \$2.2 million. He also stated that there is a 5% increase in sludge hauling. He stated that we will need to rebid that contract in May and it is a \$3.75 million increase for sludge hauling. He stated that our budgeted amount for electricity has gone up over the last year. He said we are at \$2.5 million for that. He stated that we have done a pretty good job at being mindful of electric usage. He stated that our rate has gone up and our costs have gone up but our usage has been steady out. He stated that it is going to increase because of the upgrade and the increase in horsepower at the plant. Chairman Bisnett asked if the solar array has helped to decrease the usage. Executive Director Rourke said that he thinks it did last year but that this year we had to disconnect it as it was in the way of the upgrades. He said we will not see the savings for the summer months until after the project is completed. He stated that it is about a \$60,000.00 per year credit on about a \$1.4 million electric budget. Executive Director Rourke stated that salary and fringe benefits were at about \$5.3 million dollars. Executive Director Rourke said that he was not able to align with the capital projects committee before this meeting but will be happy to meet to explain any of the projects. He stated that we are pairing a gravity line into the Englemore pump station in Clifton Park. He said we are currently gaining access to that through a wetland and beaver dam and there is a lot of permitting that has to do with getting in there. He stated that it is in rough shape, and we have televised down there and taken pictures of manholes. He stated that is \$850,000.00. He said that one of our last dive stations is the Spa Park pump station that we are going to upgrade. He said that will be \$750,000.00. He stated that we have South Broadway engineering for \$750,000.00. He said that he had some preliminary discussions with the city of Saratoga Springs to look at a sewer extension on South Broadway. He stated that everyone thought that it would be a good thing to do. He said it seems that the county may have the easiest path to doing this but this is the best way to determine if there is a return on investment or not. Executive Director Rourke said that he wants to rebuild our primary clarifiers on our old side. He said they are from 1975 and it will cost about \$2.5 million. He said that we are looking at increasing our breakroom and locker room space at our new property at \$.5 million. He said that we had to increase funding for our secondary clarifier project as we were just a little bit short on the \$11.1 million, so an addition

\$600,000.00 for that. He stated that we have an architect for the breakroom budgeted for \$150,000.00. He said that there is an increase for the Arcadis contract for \$420,000.00. He said that the inflation reduction act stated that entities that are not taxed now qualify for subsidies from the IRS for energy projects. He said this would be to the tune of 30% of the project. He said the reason it is 30% is because we passed an apprenticeship program at the Board of Supervisors last month and that allows us to get the 6X multiplier to get to the 30%. He said it is based on eligible cost and it could range from an \$8 million to \$12 million grant in the form of a check that is cut after the project. He stated that this would not be just Arcadis' contract but that Arcadis has to hire a tax or consulting firm to look at everything and make sure the costs are correct. Commissioner Scirocco questioned how for the South Broadway project extended. Executive Director Rourke said that right now it ends at Homewood Suites and we are looking to bring it down to Driscoll. He stated that there is a project being built on Driscoll with 6 or 7 high end condos. He said the residents are all in which means they will connect and we will get a return on investment. Executive Director Rourke said that also in the scale of charges we included some language for the Town of Moreau. They are anticipated to connect either the end of this year or the beginning of next year. He said that the language states the rate they are connecting at and they will be billed based on their flow. The language allows us to bill them in 2024 but we are not adding them as one of the 23 trunk systems yet because we are not sure of the timing. He stated that we are not billing them for revenue right now but the scale of charges is written as such so that we will be able to bill the town of Moreau for any flow that they do send. Executive Director Rourke presented a chart of the Raftelis financial model to the commission and explained the findings.

**Motion to Approve the 2024 Scale of Charges and Set the Public Hearing** – *Commissioner Lansing made a Motion to Approve. Commissioner Scirocco seconded the motion. The motion was approved: 5 Ayes, 0 Abstain, 4 Absent, 0 Nays.*

## **2020 CAPITAL PROJECTS**

**HVAC Upgrade at WWTP** – Executive Director Rourke gave a status update and stated that the sub-contractor is doing the metal work. They will be on site next week demolishing the rough duct work. He stated that the heating and ventilating systems will be delivered in 4-6 months. He said the project is moving forward.

**Interceptor Relining Phase VIIB** – Executive Director Rourke gave a status update and stated that the project is moving forward. He stated that we are at phase two of the railroad portion of this. He said that he has worked with some homeowners to get approvals to be on their property. He stated that we are on schedule to be out of the city of Mechanicville and down to the plant by December. He stated that from there we will move north to Shenentaha Park. He said the goal is to be done by the end of the summer of next year.

**Saratoga Springs Pump Station and F.M Evaluation and Design** – Executive Director Rourke gave a status update. He stated that we are waiting for the last pieces of the pumps to come in. He said they are due in by October and we will have one new pump to install at that station. He said that we installed a bypass connection and the project is moving forward.

## **2021 CAPITAL PROJECTS**

**Secondary Clarifier Gate and MCC Replacement** – Executive Director Rourke gave a status update. He said these are the same contractors as part of the ammonia project. He said we are waiting for a final schedule and schedule of values from the contractor and the project is moving along.

## 2022 CAPITAL PROJECTS

**Biosolids Handling Facility** –Executive Director Rourke gave a status update. He stated that he is working with the engineer on the inflation reduction act and the goal is to have 60% done by the end of the year. He said that would put us at a good point to potentially have this out to bid sometime next summer.

**Ammonia related WWTP Upgrades** –Executive Director Rourke gave a status update. He stated that we are a little bit behind schedule due to weather. He stated that the project is going smooth.

**Aeration Tank Improvements** – Executive Director Rourke gave a status update. He said that he has to get the plans to the engineer and to Jersen to look at what needs to happen with the tank floors to bring them up to code. He said there is also some concrete wall work as well. He said this is going to end up triggering a revised bond resolution. He stated that this will allow us to roll that extra cost into our potential subsidized financing.

**D&R P.S. Upgrade** – Executive Director Rourke gave a status update and said the project is also moving forward. He said the pumps just got approved and are on order and the contractor is beginning to mobilize.

**Capacity Evaluation** – Executive Director Rourke gave a status update. He said that we are looking at the capacity evaluation and DEC is being very stringent in wanting to see points A-Z.

## 2023 CAPITAL PROJECTS

**Moreau Forcemain Extension** – Executive Director Rourke gave a status update. He said the project is moving along well. He said that there have been some delays as they have been hitting some rock. He said that there will be extra costs as a result of the rock and he will have those numbers by next month.

**Ace Pump Station Upgrade** –Executive Director Rourke gave a status update and said that he had the kickoff meeting this week. He said that we should start to see submittals on the excavation and the pre-cast concrete as well as the electrical. He stated that he got approval from DEC to not put in the equalization basin and, instead, move forward with a forcemain line in the town of Wilton. He said this will save us \$300,000.00. He said the forcemain project will be \$2 million plus. He said we will see an influx of revenue from Wilton Water Authority.

## MISCELLANEOUS

**Heritage Springs Valuation** –Executive Director Rourke gave a status update. He said we are due a final report any day now.

**ATTORNEY REPORT** – None

**DEDICATIONS** – Hank’s Hollow

**Motion to Accept Dedication** – *Commissioner Scirocco made a motion to accept. Commissioner Butler seconded the motion. The motion was approved: 4 Ayes, 1 Abstain, 4 Absent, 0 Nays.*

*Executive Director Rourke thanked everyone. A motion to adjourn the meeting was made and the motion passed unanimously.*

**Next meeting September 28, 2023  
9:15 A.M. at the County Complex**