

LANESBOROUGH VILLAGE FIRE AND WATER DISTRICT  
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BOARD OF COMMISSIONER'S MEETING  
20 Bridge Street, 10:00 a.m.

July 07, 2023

The Lanesborough Village Fire and Water District held their regularly scheduled meeting at 20 Bridge Street, Lanesborough, Massachusetts on Friday, July 07, 2023. Chair William Prendergast called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. The agenda was properly posted.

**Roll call:** **Present:** William Prendergast, Chair; Mary Reilly and Aaron Williams, Board Members; Mark Siegars, District Counsel; Katie Lemanski, Treasurer; Kevin Swail, Superintendent; Cindy Roughley, Clerk; Kristen Tool, Website Design/Maintenance; Linda Pruyne

Also present: Joseph Jones, Blake Messing from JMJ RE Holdings LLC; Mark Beglane, Attorney for JMJ RE Holdings, Inc.; Ricardo Morales, City of Pittsfield; Joe Popielarczyk, Tighe and Bond

1. William Prendergast opened the meeting at 10:02 a.m.
2. Mr. Robert Jackson did not attend the meeting.
3. Approval of prior meeting minutes: an amendment was needed to the 06-09-23 minutes. Mary Reilly made a motion to accept the minutes from the 06-09-2023 meeting with the amendment to change the word "commitment" to "warrant". Aaron Williams seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carries.
4. Kristen Tool reported that there were 126 visitors to the Water District website last month. Kristen will create a specific menu drop down option for the website that will contain archived information.
5. Senior Exemptions: Linda Pruyne stated that there were 30 people on the list. The list that was provided by the Town had other people on it, but the Water District did not receive the application forms from them. Linda confirmed that those people were approved by the Town for the real estate exemption, and therefore did qualify for the 25% senior exemption with the Water District. It was decided that a new code for accounting has to be created for the software that the Town uses, and that will be set up. This amounts to a discount of \$ 58 per quarter per account. They are in the process of updating the calculation spreadsheet which also includes Veterans.
6. Abatements: Two abatements received and discussed. Decision held for end of meeting to give more time to review.
7. Discussion regarding water shut off at the mall for non-payment of water bills. The water has not been shut off yet. The pit where the water shut off is located is filled with water and has not been able to be accessed yet. Mr. Joseph Jones stated that they have had work done at the property and at the pit. Regarding past due water bills, Mark Siegars stated that all of the water bills from the prior owner were paid. The bills that are outstanding are for the 3 quarters since the mall was purchased.

- Mr. Blake Messing requested a breakdown from the City of Pittsfield that “makes up the body of each bill from the Lanesborough water company.” Mr. Mark Beglane stated that they have no understanding of how the Water District calculated each bill. Mark Siegars will send the documentation. Mark Siegars explained that there was an agreement signed in 1989 regarding how the bills were to be calculated and that the Water District has been billing in accordance with that contract. Mr. Prendergast explained that everyone in the Water District is treated the same way and that the policy is for the water bill to be paid in full, and then any disputes can go through the abatement process. Mr. Beglane stated that all they want is to get the information so that they can make a reasonable decision. Mr. Prendergast repeated that the information would be sent. Mr. Ricardo Morales from the City of Pittsfield stated that the goal is to replace the meter there in order to be sure an accurate reading is being taken.
8. Mr. Joseph Popielarczyk from Tighe and Bond stated that the Ocean Street project is about ready to begin. A tree on G street should be removed because it is leaning. There’s a concern about the root system interfering with the project. Mark Siegars suggested that the Tree Warden should be contacted for approval about the tree removal. Discussion about erosion control at the bottom to catch rainwater, etc. Temporary paving may be an option until the project is completed. A notice to the public should go out when construction begins. Kristen Toole mentioned that the notice can also go on the website. A pre-bid meeting for the project will be held Thursday, July 27<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. at the Water District office. The bid opening for the project will be on August 10<sup>th</sup>. For a bid opening of this size it will be registered with the State’s central register and in the Berkshire Eagle. Aaron Williams made a motion to accept the bid package for the Ocean Street and G street project. Mary Reilly seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carried. Tighe and Bond will be putting together a proposal for construction oversight of the project as well. Tighe and Bond are also working on a proposal for the Iroquois Street project.
  9. MA Rural Water Association Recovery for PFAS class action lawsuit – Mark Siegars reported that there’s been an approximate settlement of 12 billion dollars. Operating water systems that have demonstrated contamination are waiting to be notified on how the claims will be processed.
  10. Return to discussion regarding abatements: Property on 35A, 35B and 35C North Main Street. Linda Pruyne to check with Lisa Wellspeak in the Town Assessor’s office to verify if 35A and 35B are listed as inhabitable. Property on 284 North Main Street, the rate increased and so the abatement request is denied. Mark Siegars to write a letter. Linda Pruyne discussed the rates and matching up with what the Town Assessor has in their system. Rates are to be put on next month’s agenda for further discussion.
  11. Treasurer’s report: The warrant was presented for July and the Board of Commissioners signed it. Katie Lemanski has taken over most of the Treasurer’s responsibilities. Linda Pruyne stated that she is willing to stay on as an adviser for an hourly rate of \$ 75 per hour. Mary Reilly made a motion to retain Linda Pruyne as an adviser to the Water District at an hourly rate of \$ 75, not to exceed \$ 18,000 per year or 240 hours per year. Aaron Williams seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carried.

12. Superintendent's report: Kevin Swail had no additional information to report.
13. The next Water District meeting to be held on Friday, August 4, 2023 at the Water District office at 10 a.m.
14. William Prendergast adjourned the meeting at 1:32 p.m.