**Moose Lake Windemere Area Sanitary Sewer District**

**Approved Regular Meeting Minutes**

**March 17, 2021**

**Meeting held via conference call**

1. Due to the recent increase in COVID-19 cases, the regular meeting of the MLWSSD was held on Wednesday, March 17, 2021 via conference call. Proper posting guidelines were followed. Chairman Kuster called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m. Those members in attendance included: Chairman Byron Kuster, Vice-Chairman Cliff Koski, Treasurer Eric Nielsen, Henry Gretsfeld and Clair Strandlie. Also in attendance were: Executive Director Darla Hall, Superintendent Keith Newman and Michelle Swoboda, Wipfli.

It was noted that the board packet was sent via email to the board members and that some had problems opening it as it came as a pic file. Hall to check into to make sure additional board packet information sent for meetings is sent in the proper format.

2. Approval of the Agenda: It was decided to add item b. COVID vaccinations and item c. April Meeting under New Business. Motion was then made Strandlie second by Gretsfeld to approve the agenda as amended. Motion carried 5/0.

3. Guests: Michelle Swoboda, Wipfli – Review 2020 Audited Financial Statements: Michelle Swoboda discussed the audit and noted that it went very smoothly. The District realized a change in net position of $100,801 in 2020 which was $17,739 more than in 2019. The most significant changes were due to a decrease in sewer operating expenses of $33,759 due mostly to the sewer line televising project in 2019 as well as a decrease in the tax levy of $29,284 from 2019 to 2020. Interest in CD investments also increased . Swoboda noted they reviewed 6 different categories during the audit and did not find anything where the District didn’t comply. One item that was mentioned was the lack of segregation of duties which Swoboda said is common in organizations of the District’s size but the District monitors that by having the bank statements and books reviewed monthly by the Treasurer. Michelle Swoboda then left the meeting.

4. Approval of Minutes: The Board reviewed the minutes of the February 17, 2021 Regular Meeting. It was asked that corrections in the wording regarding the February 3rd meeting with the City of Moose Lake be made that indicated the City did acknowledge that errors were made in the calibration done by First Systems Technology. It was also asked that a sentence be added to the discussion that the District pointed out that the flows were much closer once the calibration was done correctly but negative numbers were being reported from the Kenwood South and Woodland area and then at that point the City Superintendent discussed the problem with the SCADA fiber optics. Also the first paragraph on page 2, last sentence should read the City Representatives seemed very agitated and the City made it clear they would not meet again to discuss this matter. Motion was then made by Gretsfeld second by Strandlie to approve the February 17, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes as corrected. Motion carried 5/0.

5. Executive Directors Report:

 a. Insurance Renewal – Waiver Form: Director Hall presented the Board with the Liability Coverage Waiver Form. Motion was made by Nielsen second by Koski to indicate that the MLWSSD does not waive the monetary limits on municipal tort liability established by Minnesota State Statutes 466.04. Motion carried 5/0. Hall to finish up the insurance documents and get them submitted for renewal.

 b. Working Remotely – Updated Computer: Director Hall discussed the issue of working remotely since the COVID pandemic. She had been coming in once a week and it has worked out well by allowing the flexibility of coming on days when the mail is in and any pending issues can be taken care of at one time. A note is posted on the door as well as a message on the answering machine that includes her cell phone number so she is available should someone need immediate assistance. Board members commented they have not had any complaints. Hall discussed the issue of the computer programs and not having them readily available. The computer in the office was purchased in 2014 along with a new monitor at that time for $1,580. Hall noted she needs to have Jason Haukland come in to clean up the computer as it has been operating slow but if the District would be willing to allow her to continue working remotely would like to get pricing on what it would cost to get a lap top with a docking station type situation set up so she has easier access to District information. Superintendent Newman had concerns about using a lap top for all records in the event it gets damaged or stolen and suggested having a main computer at the office. Board directed Hall to get a rough idea on costs from Jason for getting something set up for working remotely and bring back the information to the board for approval.

6. Superintendent Report: See written report prepared by Superintendent Newman. Keith reported that he had his first Point of Sale inspection for a home on Birchview Drive. Tory Johnson did the televising. The first meeting for the televising was cancelled due to the pipes being frozen as the house had been sitting empty and there was a leaky faucet. Newman noted the lateral line is not real deep. Upon the second meeting to televise Newman was present and watched it as the camera did not have recording capability. No I&I was visible as noted in the Plumbers Report however there were a few minimal dips in the pipe. Director Hall commented that she reviewed the Plumbers Report and that Tory had indicated that the new homeowners would look at repairing the dips in the spring. Hall then reviewed the POS Ordinance and noted that the language discusses no I&I present and no “major” sags, or broken pipes. She contacted attorney Mia Thibodeau to ensure the District would not be in jeopardy for issuing a Certificate of Compliance with the minor dips in the pipe noted and the comment of the new homeowner repairing. The attorney’s response was that by issuing the Certificate of Compliance the District could not force the new homeowner to make the repairs (in the next five years) as we are signing off that it is up to our standards. The current homeowner would need to disclose any issues with the home to the new owner at closing so if something did come out of the minor dip in the pipe at a future date the new owner would ultimately have to go after the previous owner. Gretsfeld commented that the new owners may want to look at some sort of insulation to prevent the freezing of the pipe in the future since it is shallow. Certificate of Compliance will be issued and signed off so homeowner can set up closing date.

Superintendent Newman discussed a permit that was issued for Dean and Jane Culshaw at 94202 Ghemparr Lane. This is in the area known as Pie Swanson Point. The Culshaw’s are building a new slab on grade house. There is no stub forcing the contractor to connect to the district main. Newman noted that in digging a test hole it appears the lake level is at about five feet with a need to get to around eight feet which will require dewatering. The first quote they received for the dewatering was around $10,000. Gretsfeld questioned if they had looked into directional boring. Other options were discussed and it was decided that perhaps Newman and Gretsfeld would look into further to see what other options might be available for the Culshaw’s.

Keith attended the 2021 MPCA Wastewater Conference on line. He was required to complete 8 hours of training by the end of this year but actually attended 12 ½ hours as there was more information he wanted to get updated on.

7. Treasurers Report: Treasurer Nielsen reviewed the profit and loss and balance sheet with the Board for the month ended February 28, 2021. The balance in checking at month end was $17,763.12. Treasurer Nielsen noted he reviewed the bank statements and reconciliation and found the books to be in order. Today’s claims include check# 12202 thru 12215 as well as two EFT payments for payroll taxes for a total amount of $9,853.54. CD rates were briefly discussed but no action taken. Motion was then made by Strandlie second by Gretsfeld to approve the Treasurers Report and payment of the claims to include check#’s 12202 thru 12215 as well as the two EFT payments for a total amount of $9,853.54. Motion carried 5/0. Hall noted that the City of Moose Lake’s treatment fees for January and February were not included in today’s claims as there were questions regarding their calculations.

8. Old Business:

 a. Flow Numbers: Director Hall reported that she did not have accurate numbers to report for the month due to the issue with the SCADA unit not reporting correctly and the unresolved issue of how to calculate that number.

 b. City of Moose Lake Outstanding Overage Charges: Director Hall informed the Board that she had received an email from the City of Moose Lake late Monday which included recalculated 2019 and 2020 overages, new invoices for the months of September, October, November and December which included 19,000 gpd added to each day for an issue the City had with their SCADA equipment. (Due to something with the fiber optics). The flow meter reporting numbers and what the SCADA was reporting back to the office was off by the City’s estimate of 19,000 gpd). Also included were the bills for January and February 2021 treatment fees. Hall did speak with City Administrator Katie Bloom before the recalculated bills were sent to the District. Apparently the City of Moose Lake held a special meeting to discuss the 2019/2020 overages and the Council directed Bloom to have their calibration person, Brad White of First Systems Technology, come up with a method of trying to figure out what the flows should have been calculated at had he done the calibration correctly.

Chairman Kuster explained that he had met with Director Hall yesterday afternoon to review the new bills from the City. An email was sent to City Administrator asking how the calculation was done and if their engineers had reviewed the calculations and validated the method used. Katie indicated via email she did not know exactly how Brad White calculated the figures but White mentioned he applied averages off a Palmer Bowlus flume table to what the original flow was. She also indicated that the flow adjustment that was made for September thru January (due to their SCADA issue) was calculated by taking an average of the missing flows from February 2nd (when they noticed the issue) until the end of that month. Katie indicated the difference was between 18,000 to 20,000 gpd. She also said no engineers have been involved during the entirety of the process.

Kuster explained the calculation process Brad used to the Board and said he felt that Brad’s solution was providing arbitrary numbers and suggested perhaps the City’s engineer needs to sign off on how the calculation was done. The Board then discussed Superintendent Newman’s suggestion of using our Lift Station 1 flow numbers and calculating the number of homes between LS#1 and the flume and using the MPCA number of 240 gallons per day per home. It was commented that by using that data it would be a more accurate defendable number.

Hall commented on some of the other issues that were wrong with the billing besides the method of calculations. After much discussion it was decided perhaps this item needs to be addressed by the board in person to review all the documents and information. It was then decided to table the remainder of the discussion until the board could reconvene today’s meeting at a later date in person.

9. New Business:

 a. Annual Meeting Updates – Chairman Kuster/Treasurer Nielsen: Chairman Kuster reported that the Moose Lake Township Annual Meeting went well. He provided the township with the annual summary report for the District and noted that the annual levy had gone down again this year. Treasurer Nielsen reported that he attended the Windermere Township Annual Meeting however the levy got voted down and the meeting started to get out of hand so they ended the meeting before he was able to give any report.

 b. COVID Vaccinations – Board members discussed the COVID vaccinations and who had all received them at this point and discussed the possibility of meeting in person for the April meeting. Strandlie commented that he had received his vaccination and would be open to meeting in person with masks required. Gretsfeld indicated that he would have to wait and see at this point if he could attend in person due to medical reasons. Hall commented that perhaps if he was unable to attend in person he could still join the meeting via phone if he was feeling up to it. Kuster commented that he had received his vaccination and was open to meeting in person again.

 c. April Meeting – Board members decided that the April Meeting will be held at the office in the back room to allow for social distancing and that masks would be required. Kuster informed the Board that he will be absent from the April meeting. Vice Chairman Koski will run the meeting in his absence.

10. Adjourn: Due to unfinished business regarding the City of Moose Lake overage bills and calculation of the January and February invoices for treatment fee’s the meeting was recessed until Wednesday, March 24th, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. at the District Offices. Board will gather in the back room to allow for social distancing and masks will be required.

Minutes by Darla Hall, Executive Director