**Moose Lake Windemere Area Sanitary Sewer District**

**Approved Special Meeting Minutes**

**November 8, 2023**

**@ MLWSSD Office**

1**.**  The special meeting of the Moose Lake Windemere Sanitary Sewer District was called to order at 10:03 a.m. by Chairman Kuster. Members present included: Chairman Kuster, Vice Chairman Clair Strandlie, Treasurer Eric Nielsen, and Bruce Lourey. Also in attendance were Executive Director Darla Hall, Joe Janson, Minnesota Rural Water Association, City Administrator Ellissa Owens and Public Works Superintendent Phil Entner. Member Henry Gretsfeld was absent from the meeting.

2. Approval of Agenda: Motion was made by Nielsen second by Lourey to approve the agenda as written. Motion carried 4/0.

3. Guests: Chairman Kuster explained the purpose of the meeting today is to attempt to resolve some of the ongoing issues both the City and District are having. Joe Janson, MRWA is a neutral party between the two entities and may be able to provide helpful information on resolution to some of those issues.

a. Smoke Testing Results – SouthTown and Kenwood: Joe Janson reported that the smoke testing went well but he did find some areas where smoke came up in Kenwood North. One in particular was located on a property under a wishing well structure (property identified as Westmoreland home). Hall reported that letters were sent to those homeowners where smoke was observed. They were instructed to contact Superintendent Newman to determine the cause and that the homeowners are responsible to have the issues repaired. It is believed the problem is broken cleanout caps but that has not been confirmed. Janson discussed one area of pipe in a swamp area and indicated that smoke would not be able to penetrate thru the standing water. His suggestion was for the District to have that section televised.

Janson reported the results of smoke testing in the Woodland/SouthTown area did not find any issues. Joe’s recommendation was for this type of inspection to be done more often. Lourey commented that the homes in that area on the township side are higher up and a lot of the homeowners in that area are elderly which should mean lower flows. The City questioned if the District has any idea how many people are in each of the homes. Entner commented that he knows of a few homes with families and three kids living in that area which would cause higher flows. The District explained they received the water meter readings from the City for that area and the average useage per home was around 133 gpd yet the flow meter is reporting numbers anywhere from 500 to 1000 gpd per home. Joe Janson suggested the next step the entities should take would be televising those lines. Kuster reported they had been televised a few years ago but Janson suggested it should be done again to determine if that is the cause. Board discussed the manual calculations compared to the controller at Lift Station #1 which have been taken since MRWA did the calibrations. The numbers seem to be consistent with what the controller readings are. Janson suggested the District may want to look at replacing the rotary dial on the station if numbers seem out of line. He believes it to be roughly a $40 repair but noted they tend to wear out and sometimes need to be looked at.

Joe stated generally, if nothing is discovered after sump pump inspections and smoke testing, televising is the next step. Educating the public on sump pumps is also recommended. Chairman Kuster stated that the District would be more than willing to televise the District’s section of the lines. Phil Entner reported that they would need to have the City Councils approval on whether the City would be willing to participate and contribute for their section of the line. After much discussion it was decided that the City would seek approval from the City Council and if approved the televising project would be done and split based on feet of the project for respective entities. Obtaining a quote and agreeing on the company doing the televising was discussed. Two companies were suggested. Visu-Sewer and Ritter & Ritter. Phil will need to know how many feet of line the District has.

Temporary metering was discussed in the Newberry manhole which is the end of the District’s customers. It was questioned if the District went this route if the City would accept those numbers. Phil stated that temporary meters tend to have a plus or minus of being 15% off. Installation of a permanent meter was discussed. Mag meters were discussed with the cost estimate of around $100,000. Janson stated that a flume meter is more controlled and much more accurate. City Administrator Owens suggested the District just turn over the 36 customers to the City to eliminate all of the issues. City would then use the Lift Station #1 readings for billing purposes. The District was not sure if this was a possible option being the residents are township residents. The option of installing water meters on private wells was also discussed.

After much discussion it was agreed that the City would look into approval from the City Council on sharing the cost of televising that area. Both parties would need to agree to fix any areas identified in their respective section.

b. Review of Manual Data vs Lift Station Controller Data: Discussed above.

c. Discussion on flow discrepancy between LS#1 and Flow Meter: Discussed above.

d. Letter City of Moose Lake Rate Increase and Overage Increase/Adjustment for frozen water line policy: Chairman Kuster explained the terms of the contract regarding rate increase and how they are to be based on “jointly used facilities on the District’s portion of the system”. The City based their 12% rate increase on the entire sewer fund which includes the City’s I&I project for repairing sewer lines as well as depreciation. The District agreed on the 12% increase based on inflation but indicated that in the future the cost needs to be based on “jointly used facilities on the District’s portion of the system”. The City feels that the I&I project is a jointly used facility as it provides more capacity at the ponds for the future, however, the District is not guaranteed they will get any additional capacity. Kuster explained the District needs to follow in line with what the contract says and be able to have a defendable answer for the District customers on the justification of rate increases. It was noted that depreciation was included in the City’s calculation on the rate increase. Nielsen stated that depreciation is not an expense. Owens tried to explain the City’s position on the rate increase and that the jointly used items are not separated in the sewer fund. Owens stated if the District were to pay on their proportionate share based on flows the District would be paying more than what they are paying now. Hall stated that the District not only pays on treatment fees but also on the debt services payments as well. The District explained to Joe Janson that the District maintains and repairs all of their collection system, repairs any I&I issues etc., and this cost is passed on to only District customers. The District does not pass its costs for I&I issues onto the City. The District only sends the effluent to the City for treatment.

Janson questioned if the District has ever thought about splitting off from the City and installing a smaller mechanical system. He discussed Lake Andrew which is establishing their own town and are installing a mechanical system for wastewater treatment.

e. Discuss solution for Kenwood North: District discussed the Kenwood North manual

calculations of the flows versus the controllers calculations and the pump hour readings. There have been several issues with wipes clogging the pumps and Quality Flow has been out several times. Joe Janson suggested perhaps the one pump that continues to run should be disabled. He also suggested a solution of using an N type impeller which would help with the issues of the wipes. Entner agreed that these types of impellers do help. District will look into these options and discuss with Superintendent Keith Newman. The District is working toward resolving the issues as they are currently being charged at 240 gpd per home for this area. City Administrator Owens and Public Works Superintendent Entner left the meeting.

Joe Janson continued the discussion on several entities that have put in their own mechanical system for the treatment of wastewater. Lake Andrew, North Long Lake Sanitary Sewer District, Palisade, etc. are a few mentioned. He stated they are becoming more popular and estimated 384 types of systems in the state. Janson suggested the District contact Septic Check out of Milaca, MN. They do engineering and contracting on installing these types of systems. He also suggested the District contact Eric Applewick of Advanced Utility Solutions. This company is a contractor that oversees the maintenance and running of the systems. It was questioned if any grants were available for this type of project. Janson stated there are phosphorus removal grants, energy efficient grants for adding VFD’s, and safety grants. He also discussed low interest loans thru the Department of Agriculture. District will possibly invite Septic Check to an upcoming meeting to obtain more information.

4. Other Business: No other business to discuss.

5. Adjournment: Motion was made by Lourey second by Strandlie to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 11:58 a.m.

Minutes by Darla Hall, Executive Director