

# VILLAGE OF EPHRAIM

FOUNDED 1853



## Wastewater Committee Minutes Monday, October 2, 2023, 9:00 AM

**Present:** Karen McMurtry- Chair, Michael McCutcheon, Bruce Nelson, Jim Peterman

**Absent:** Dennis Jewell

**Staff:** Brad Rasmusson – Wastewater Manager/Operator in Charge, Brent Bristol-Administrator  
Andrea Collak – Clerk/Treasurer, Dan Oakley – Operator in Charge

1. **Call to order:** The meeting was called to order by Chair - McMurtry and a quorum was present for this meeting.
2. **Changes in Agenda:** None
3. **Previous minutes – Minutes from August 7, 2023**

**McMurtry moved, McCutcheon seconded to approve August 7, 2023, meeting minutes as presented, all ayes, and the motion carried.**

4. **Visitors' comments:** None
5. **Ephraim Wastewater Operator in Charge Report:** Rasmusson reviewed the WW, WWT, and SS OIC reports as included in the agenda packet. Wastewater duties were completed according to schedule.

August 3rd, the screw screen auto rinse control, had a bad solenoid. Also, the broken faucet by the pista grit was replaced.

August 18th, EDMR was submitted. On August 25th, all lights in the headworks with LED were replaced and the room was cleaned. On August 29th, Crane Engineering installed the new HT meter after the old one was struck by lightning a couple of months ago. On September 9th, PJ Kortens wired in the new HT meter. Also wired float in the receiving station to alarm when the screens need cleaning.

On September 7th, a wash-down hose for the headworks screw screen was installed. On September 8th, the west tank room faucet was replaced.

The failed grinder station on Crystal Springs was pumped out on September 12th. On September 18th, a failed grinder on North Shore Road was pumped out.

On September 20th, maintenance was completed on the blower room exhaust fan, belt was adjusted, and greased.

EDMR was submitted on September 19th.

### The month of August 2023:

There were 64 in-house bacteria tests completed, 65 water tests (683 for the year so far), and 1 clean water test. 10 holding tank pump-outs and 17 septic pump-outs. There were no emergency call-ins.

### The month of September 2023:

There were 66 in-house bacteria tests completed, 70 water tests (750 for the year so far), and 4 clean water tests. 1 holding tank pump-outs and 3 septic pump-outs/problems. There were no emergency call-ins.

**6. Discussion and recommendation regarding the 2024 Budget:**

Rasmusson presented the committee with the Year-to-Date report for the end of August 2023, which gave the committee members a good visual look at each of the line items. Rasmusson reported that he increased the budget in a few of the accounts.

**Phone/Internet** 610-30-57401-306 -raised \$600 because it has been around \$500 over the last four years.

**Vehicle Fuel** 610-30-57401-310 - raised \$1,000 because the last two years have been over.

**Office Supplies/Expenses** 610-30-57401-333 - added \$250 because it had some small charges over the years.

**Electricity/Generator Fuel** 610-30-57402-303 - raised \$3,000 because was over last year and is already close to the budgeted amount this year. Also, generators must be fueled up this year.

**Chemicals Plant** 60-30-57402-380 - raised \$1,000 because overage last year and this year will be close. Product and delivery prices have increased as well.

**Chemicals Lab** 60-30-57402-381 - raised \$1,000 because of overage last year and this year will be very close to that amount. Product and delivery prices have increased.

**Sludge Expense** 60-30-57402-383 - raised \$4000 because Sturgeon Bay's sludge treatment costs are going up 30%. This account also went \$6,000 over last year.

**LP Gas Lift 1 Generator** 60-30-57403-304 - raised \$200 because of prior years' overages as well as cost and delivery.

**Collection System Maintenance** 60-30-57403-384 - raised \$5,000 because the DNR recommended camera 20% off our collection system per year. Rasmusson would like to see how much camera work could be done for \$5,000 and adjust accordingly in the future.

Rasmusson noted that he decreased the budget in a few of the accounts.

**Vehicle Maintenance** 610-30-57401-311 - lowered \$500 due to being under budget for the last couple of years.

**Training/Conferences** 610-30-57401-320 - lowered \$500 due to being under budget for the last couple of years.

**Computer Supplies/Expenses** 610-30-57401-344 - lowered \$500 due to being under budget for the last couple of years.

**Auditing Expense** 610-30-57401-377 - lowered \$1,500 due to being under budget for the last couple of years.

**LP Gas** 610-30-57402-304 - lowered \$1,500 due to being under budget for the last couple of years.

Bristol added that numbers for state income and insurance are just starting to come in so the decision will have to be fluid. Wages and health insurance will also have to be considered by the Village Board. Bristol mentioned that sewer M&L special charges are paid by all the property owners and are charged through taxes shown on the income side and are there to pay Wastewater Department Debt that would be paid in 2025. Moving forward, 2025 would be a great time for any larger capital projects if they should exist and require additional revenue/taxation. The Collection System Capital account was created in 2016 when going down with wastewater staff from 3 to 2 staff members and seeded initially with \$35,000. That helped with additional costs and that is why the Village did not increase the rates for some time. The money was used and there was no money at the time to replenish that account. In government, budgeting income matches the expense, and thus the Capital Outlay accounts such as Collection System Equipment Outlay/Replacement Fund 610-57403-810 in the past

and Equipment Outlay 610-30-57404-820 presently exist to balance the budget. The replacement fund is very healthy. There are standards set up by the state for how much percentage of fund balance/replacement fund the municipality should have in relation to operation. The committee should be looking at the income side of the budget and consider automatic increases in sewer, hauler, and septic fees. The sewer fees were raised 5 percent last year. With inflation, 5 percent covers just the cost of doing business. Can we argue for a 10 percent increase? Jim Peterman suggested a 7 percent increase to get a little bit better in the black. The committee can tie the increase amount to something real like the State's third quarter Consumer Price Index (CPI) that the Village uses for budgeting. The CPI for the 12 months ending August 31, 2023, was certified at 5.4 percent. Last year that number was 7.7 percent. Jim believes that 7 percent is reasonable; combining this year's and last year's CPI numbers.

Rasmusson noted that the committees should also consider raising rates for out-of-area holding tanks (HT) and septic tanks. Rasmusson suggested going up \$2-\$4 on out-of-area HT, still offering the off-season discount and being competitive. Septic is the strongest waste and the most difficult and costly to treat. The committee should consider going up \$20-\$30.

**McMurtry moved, McCutcheon seconded to approve the 7% increase in sewer rates, \$4.00 increase in holding tanks, and \$25.00 increase in septic for 2024 Wastewater/Well Water Fee Schedule, and pass it onto the Village Board, all ayes and the motion carried.**

**McMurtry moved, Peterman seconded to approve 2024 Wastewater and Well Water Budgets as submitted, and pass it onto the Village Board, all ayes, and the motion carried.**

**7. Discussion and recommendation on replacement of WW service vehicle:**

Rasmusson noted that the Wastewater Department currently has a 2001 Ford F-150. It is mechanically in decent shape other than the air conditioning does not work. Rasmusson spoke with the Village auditor, and she stated that if the truck was an item on the replacement fund, it could be replaced. At the year-end 2022, there was \$565,000.00 in the Replacement Fund.

Rasmusson presented the committee with three options. He reached out to Ewald Motors. They sell most of the state vehicles to the police, government, etc. Rasmusson got prices from 3 manufacturers, all in a crew cab,  $\frac{3}{4}$  ton, 4x4, with either a fiberglass or an aluminum utility body. He is leaning towards a 2024 Ford because it has an aluminum body and no steel. There are also options for a bulkhead guard with a light bar above the cab for \$1,675.00, amber strobe lights front and rear for \$1,695.00, and a spray-in bed liner to protect the bed for \$1,654.00. Rasmusson thinks the bulkhead guard, lights, and spray-in liner should be added to either the fiberglass or the aluminum service bodies. Rasmusson proposed that the money for the replacement truck come out of line item 630-30-57404-810 Equipment Outlay which would come out of the Replacement Fund at the end of the yearly audit.

Peterman asked whether they considered used cars, maybe checking at Reliable Automobile Sales to save some money. Rasmusson said there would still be an expense to outfit the

vehicle with a service body. Peterman believes the Village should shop around and look at other options.

McMurtry, McCutcheon, and Nelson believe that with the situation in the automobile industry these days, used vehicle prices are probably going to go up, the new vehicles might not be available or not available at that price. It makes sense to replace the used service vehicle with a new one.

**McCutcheon moved, McMurtry seconded to approve the replacement of the Wastewater service vehicle with a 2024 Ford for a total price not to exceed \$80,000.00 which will come out of Replacement Fund, and pass it onto the Village Board, all ayes, and the motion carried.**

8. **Visitors' comments:** None
9. **New business for the next meeting:** Quote for UV System. The next meeting is Monday, November 6th, 2023, at 9:00 AM.
10. **Adjournment**

**McCutcheon moved, McMurtry seconded to adjourn the meeting, all ayes, and the motion carried.**

Recorded by,  
Andrea Collak- Clerk/Treasurer