

**VEAZIE SEWER DISTRICT
JULY 13, 2011 – MINUTES
6:30 P.M.**

Attended by: Chair Esther Bushway, Trustees Gary Brown and Rob Tomilson, Supt. Gary Brooks, Tammy Olson, and members of the public.

- 1) Call Meeting to Order – Esther called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.
- 2) Consider Meeting Minutes of June 8, 2011 and Annual Meeting Minutes of June 21, 2011– Gary moved to accept the minutes of June 8, 2011 as written; Esther seconded. Vote 2-0, passes. Rob abstained. Gary moved to accept the minutes of June 21, 2011; Rob seconded. Vote 3-0; passes.
- 3) Review Agenda – There were no changes to the agenda.
- 4) July 1st Billing/Rate Increase Discussion – The July 1st billing was the first to include the rate increase. To date, one call has been received. The caller was a flat-rate user who inquired as to whether or not there had been a rate increase. We received his payment the next day. Gary said about one-third of the payments have been received. Esther asked if that was about average, and Tammy said yes. Rob asked why we needed to raise rates. Esther explained that we have several reserve accounts that aren't being funded, and that our auditor told us we should be funding these accounts. Esther added that there hasn't been a rate increase in 10 years.
- 5) Bulk Mailing/Billing Outsourcing Discussion – Supt. Brooks said that we have discussed this a few times in the past and gave an overview. Currently bills go out through first-class mail and are received the day after they are mailed. With bulk mailing, it could take several days for ratepayers to receive the bills. It would save about \$120 per year. With billing outsourcing, which is also bulk mail, mailing could take longer and we would lose some control of the bills. It would save about \$100 a year. Rob asked that the billing process be explained, and Tammy provided an explanation. Rob asked about combining the District's billing with the Orono-Veazie Water District, and Supt. Brooks said that the Trustees had originally decided to bill one month after OVWD to avoid ratepayers having to pay both bills in one month. There was some discussion on accepting credit cards or checks by phone, as well as automatic payments.
- 6) Website Update – In January, the Trustees discussed getting our minutes on the website by the end of the year. Supt. Brooks did some research and found that very few small districts have websites, usually due to the time and money involved in maintaining a website. Some larger districts have them. One had updated minutes and agendas on it. Those that do have websites have what we have, such as frequently asked questions and directions. Supt. Brooks stated that this was an update, and Esther added that we are not behind the curve since so few districts have websites.
- 7) Superintendent's Report – a) The facility is running well with no problems. b) We have been cleaning and repairing diffusers using a barge made by the staff. c) Last week, the

storm knocked out the power. The alarms operated properly, and we took the generator to the County Road pump station. d) We are using more chlorine this year than in past years, although we are using less than a gallon a day. Rob asked why we use it, and Supt. Brooks said for disinfection. Supt. Brooks further described the process. e) Town council meeting minutes were added to the packets this month. These minutes are also available online.

- 8) Other Business – a) Tammy explained Right to Know training to Rob and provided him with the information to study and the certificate to be completed. b) Tammy reported that three ratepayers entered into payment plans this week. c) The Trustees reviewed and signed a letter to the town stating that the District has reduced its assessment to the town by \$10,000. Rob asked how the District will reduce its budget to account for that \$10,000 reduction. Esther stated that it is money that will not go into the reserve accounts, and Tammy added that almost 15% of it will come from the reduction in Trustee compensation. d) Esther moved that the salaries for the Trustees for the ensuing year will be \$1; Rob seconded. Vote 3-0, passes. e) Rob provided an overview of himself. f) Rob stated that he received feedback on our Trustee election process, and that the people he spoke to did not like being divided up to vote as they felt chastised. People also suggested to him that we have a process of taking out papers and voting all day like the town does. People also asked him why there was a meeting after the annual meeting, and the process was explained. g) Rob stated that the town attorney gave a legal opinion on “Repealed by Implication,” on the District’s ability to assess the town. Rob provided Esther with a copy of the letter. Member of the public Todd Lynch asked if this letter was on the website, and Rob explained that it came from Tom Russell, the town attorney. Rob had asked the town for it. Supt. Brooks stated that the District’s attorney had a different opinion. Supt. Brooks pointed out that in past meetings, town councilors have been in favor of larger assessments and don’t have a problem with the District assessing the town. Rob stated that the assessment is not fair to people who don’t have sewer to subsidize the District. There was some discussion on how the entire town benefits from clean water, even those on septic systems. There was some discussion on how this is similar to schools, where the whole town benefits from having a school even though for most or all of your adult life, you do not have children in the school system. h) Rob asked what the policy was for sending minutes to the town. Tammy stated that they are mailed to the town after they are approved. Rob asked if they could be emailed to save the cost of the paper and the stamp, but Esther said that we send them one paper copy by mail. i) Rob asked about the policy on competitive bidding. Supt. Brooks said that for the most part, we bid out everything. We have had very few capital costs. We had one that was not bid out, when we had the pump station upgraded we used electricians familiar with wastewater plants. j) Rob asked if we had benchmarking data to show that our operational costs, number of operators, and so on are lower than other lagoon systems. Esther said no, and Rob asked if that data could be collected in-house. Supt. Brooks explained how all lagoon systems are different. There was some discussion on the upgrade and how it doubled the capacity of the facility and how that affected our operating costs. Rob said that he could put together a draft survey form to present to the Trustees. k) Rob asked for our capital improvement plan. Supt. Brooks said that he would provide him with the plan and the budget. l) Rob asked if his requests for information should go through Supt. Brooks, and Esther said yes.

9) Adjournment –Rob moved to adjourn, Gary seconded. Vote 3-0, passes at 8:26.

NEXT MEETING: SEPTEMBER 14, 2011 AT 6:30 PM

Minutes approved September 14, 2011, by a vote of 3-0.

Gary Brown, Secretary. 9/14/11