

GRATTAN TOWNSHIP BOARD

Special Meeting of June 23, 2008

Call to Order

Township Supervisor Frank Force called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Roll Call

D. Timmons read the roll call. Members present: Supervisor F. Force, Trustee D. Heffron, Trustee P. Knoerl, Treasurer S. Freeman and Clerk J. Fues. Marc Middlestadt, Sierra Consultants and Attorney Dan Langdon, Representative for Sierra Consultants also attended the meeting. There were 2 audience members present

Approval of the Agenda

D. Heffron added a report on the results of soil tests on sewer land and J. Fues added discussion of Kent County Department of Public Works fee schedule and an evaluation of the current operators. D. Heffron moved and J. Fues seconded to approve the amended agenda. All ayes. The motion carried.

Old Business

Sewer Operation and Maintenance

Labor Rates for O & M People

F. Force said the Township is looking for ways to reduce labor costs for operation and maintenance of the sewer system. There was a discussion about Main Tech's work on the system. Marc Middlestadt said Main Tech is called in to do corrective work. F. Force said he had no problem with Main Tech's performance, but again stated that the rates must come down. He asked Mr. Langdon to Dave ??, Sierra Consultant's owner to look at their numbers and see how that can be accomplished.

Administrative Fees

F. Force said he was opposed to paying the 15% administrative fee Sierra Consultants has started charging. He said as far as he can tell M. Middlestadt does the bulk of reporting and Sierra is double dipping. P. Knoerl asked for a breakdown of the actual administrative costs.

Sierra's Reliance on Main Tech (23% of Annual Maintenance)

Board members said when Sierra was awarded the sewer contract it was agreed that Main Tech's costs would be \$1000.00 per year. Main Tech's costs are now 23% of annual maintenance costs. Sierra and Main Tech's prices are about the same. M. Middlestadt said Al from Main Tech is more qualified to do corrective work to the system. J. Fues said the Township agreed to use Main Tech until Sierra "got up to speed" with Grattan's sewer system and then Main Tech would be faded out.

Assurance of Grattan Lagoon Viability for Winter Storage for '08, '09 and Future

F. Force said the Township is receiving conflicting reports from Sierra and Prein and Newhof on the chances for another lagoon overflow. Prein & Newhof predicted that the lagoon will overflow during this irrigation season. M. Middlestadt said that was wrong. Mr. Force asked for assurance in writing from Sierra Consultants that another overflow would not happen this season. D. Langdon said he would speak with the owner about putting that assurance in writing and get back to the Township. M. Middlestadt explained his irrigation calculations. J. Fues said irrigation of the lagoon is currently operating at about 62% and in order to lower the lagoon to a safe level irrigation must be operating at 69% efficiency. M. Middlestadt said the high pressure alarm at the lagoon has been going off and shutting down irrigation. D. Heffron said a \$100.00 device can be installed to notify Sierra when that happens. Mr. Middlestadt said irrigating 18-19 million gallons over the season is Sierra's goal. M. Middlestadt said from June 2, 2008 to November 12 million gallons can be eliminated from the lagoon. He said the water level will be close to 2' of free board thru the end of winter. J. Fues asked if the volume in the lagoon will go down by 12 million gallons. Mr. Middlestadt said it would. He estimated the lagoon will take in 8 million gallons from December until spring. F. Force questioned why Sierra would not assure any further overflows when the State has given the Township an additional month to discharge. M. Middlestadt said most systems are allowed to begin discharging April 1 st . He asked the Township to ask the State to allow Grattan to begin discharging in April. There was a discussion about evaporation while irrigation is taking place. D. Heffron asked if rain gauges provided by the Township are being used. M. Middlestadt they were not being used. Mr. Heffron asked that the gauges be put into use immediately to determine the actual amount of water hitting the ground. J. Fues said the Township has the opportunity to irrigate at the orchard if needed. This irrigation would be at a huge cost to the Township, however if it is needed the Township needs to know now. J. Fues said the Township has been listening to and basing decisions on Sierra's information regarding lagoon irrigation. He said the Township need something in writing showing the number of gallons irrigated by November 30, 2008 without using the traveler and with using the traveler. He said this is a very high priority and asked that the information be provided within 2 days.

Elimination of Three-Year Management Plan

F. Force said the Township would like the three year management plan eliminated from their contract with Sierra as Sierra does not provide such a plan. M. Middlestadt said he provided information on the three things former Township Treasurer Maria Bajema asked for.

Discussion of an O & M Cap

Board members discussed putting a cap on the monthly operation and maintenance costs and requiring Sierra to get permission for work over that cap. Members were not in agreement as to how to handle this, but agreed that the costs of operation and maintenance need to be controlled. S. Freeman said she was concerned about sewer customers bearing the cost of the lagoon overflow when it was not their fault.

Sierra vs. Prein & Newhof

F. Force said Sierra and Prein & Newhof don't agree on anything and questioned what the Township can do when it is in the middle. M. Middlestadt said operation and maintenance costs will continue to rise without improvements to the system. Board members said Sierra is responsible for the sewer system and agreed to meet monthly with Sierra for discussion. J. Fues noted that Prein and Newhof would not be involved if the sewer overflow did not happen. M. Middlestadt said he would like a copy of the IMP from Prein & Newhof. The Township will get a copy of that for him. Board members discussed backup personnel for Sierra. M. Middlestadt said his backup person contacts him and he gives him instructions on what to do.

F. Force reviewed information the Township would like from Sierra as follows; a discussion of labor rates, elimination of administrative fees, assurance that the lagoons will not overflow again and irrigation numbers with and without the use of the traveler. D. Langdon said he and M. Middlestadt will discuss this with Dave ?, owner of Sierra Consultants. Audience member Jackie Vander Ploeg suggested getting information from Prein and Newhof stating what the State permit allows.

Traveler

Sierra's Assurance In Writing that Traveler is Not Required

Board members discussed turning the traveler on immediately to see how much can be irrigated. It was noted that this could cause high pressure problems, be time consuming and costly. It was agreed to wait until Sierra provides numbers for irrigation with and without the traveler before making a decision. J. Fues said the yearly irrigation target should be 20 million gallons. M. Middlestadt said he thought he will be able to irrigate 17-19 million gallons.

Flow Meters

F. Force reviewed information on 3 types of flow meters; ultrasonic, magmeter and surface sensor. He said surface tension meters are the cheapest, easier to install and have the best accuracy. Board members asked for additional information about who uses these meters, how they work and if the users like the meters. F. Force said demo ultrasound meter are being sent to the Township. Board members suggested trying those meters on

pump #1 and then doing a drawdown. P. Knoerl said if the electrical panel is changed for flow meters the Township must have a new stamped drawing. He recommended trying the surface sensor that will also run the pump. M. Middlestadt said the Township's permit may need to be changed if the system is altered.

Irrigation Issues Grattan Lagoons

1. Irrigation Spread Sheets

Board members discussed irrigation spread sheets based on M. Middlestadt's reports. They said they still would like to know how much water is going into the ponds. D. Heffron said there have been huge increases in inflows in March and April the past 2 years and red flags should have gone up when Sierra saw those figures. M. Middlestadt said water is still infiltrating the system thru manholes. There was a discussion about recent repairs at Willow Lawn Trailer Park and the number of gallons those repairs will decrease inflows by.

New Business

Monthly Sewer Meetings

Board members and representatives from Sierra agreed to schedule monthly meetings to evaluate sewer issues. J. Fues asked that a special meeting be scheduled for Thursday, June 26, 2008 at 10:00 a.m. to discuss the traveler.

Return on Investment Analysis for Mission Dialers

M. Middlestadt said that information is not available yet. P. Knoerl said the Board would not need that information by the June 26, 2008 special meeting. J. Fues asked M. Middlestadt to let him know when the mission dialers are installed so he can remove phone services. M. Middlestadt said he would.

Soil Test Results

F. Force soil tests from the State showed high levels of phosphorus and nitrogen on sewer land being farmed by Denny Heffron. Mr. Heffron said he has always used the MSU Extension for testing and those test results show phosphorus levels going down. He said sodium levels on that property are also decreasing and the State results make no sense. Mr. Heffron said water tests read the phosphorus levels.

Kent County Department of Public Works Fee Schedule and Evaluation of Current Operators

Board members discussed Kent County Department of Public Works fee schedule. Board members said mistakes were made the KCDPW in the past. P. Knoerl asked M.

Middlestadt if Sierra has software to record costs for each pump station. Mr. Middlestadt they do not and agreed that would be nice.

Communications

Board members were reminded of the June 26, 2008 special meeting at 10:00 a.m. Dan Langdon asked if he could discuss sewer issues directly with someone at the Township. Board members said Supervisor F. Force should be contacted as he is the Sewer Administrator.

Adjournment

There being no further business F. Force declared the meeting adjourned. The next special meeting will be held June 26, 2008 at 10:00 a.m.

Jim Fues, Township Clerk

Franklin J. Force, Township Supervisor

Diane Timmons

Recording Secretary