

NVC Utilities Committee
Trustee Meeting
Community Hall and by Zoom link
Friday, April 19, 2024, 2:30 p.m.

Trustees Present: Jeffrey Wilt, Judy Metcalf, Brady Brim-Deforest, Casey Brown,
Trustees Absent: David Crofoot
Staff: Bill Paige, Trish Parker, Chuck Applebee

The April meeting of the NVC Utilities Trustees convened at 2:34. Utilities chair, Jeffrey Wilt called the meeting to order.

Community Comments – See attached comments read by Rachel Rosa

Approval of minutes:

Brady moved (Judy second) approval of minutes of March 15, 2024, minutes.

Superintendent Report:

- **During the March operating period there were no exceedances (see operating report)**
- Pumped first two tanks on each train on March 27, 2024
- Ordered a sludge judge – measure level of sludge in each tank –depth and color of sludge
- Discussion of forever chemicals – lowering of levels as referenced in recent NY Times article outlining new EPA rules. Will this impact our budget going forward? City of Belfast's levels are very low – non-detect. No PFAST testing required of Belfast at this time.

Other Business:

- The trustees will review a draft 2025 budget in May. We must consider the number of times we must pump to operate within our license. In addition, we should ensure the utilities budgets are in alignment with the general budget.
- 9 North Avenue – Does moratorium apply to that property or can they reconnect?
They retain right to hook up as not a new connection but must use up to date connection which meet current standards.

- Inter-local agreement between NVC Water Department and City of Belfast Water Department. Jeffrey will ask the Overseers to approve the updated agreement. Janae will sign as the NVC President.
- We must review the 2006 Utilities Ordinance.

The next meeting of the Trustees is a **May 17, 2:30 p.m.**, Community Hall and on-line (<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82961508196?pwd=ekpzTlZcml3cnJEZmlHRmlwR3ZSZz09>)

The meeting adjourned at 3:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Jeffrey Wilt, Chairman

Rachel Rosa
7 Auditorium Park
April 19, 2024

The March utilities bill contained a notice of a rate increase for the wastewater system. The notice says that the NVC wastewater rates “are in line with other systems our size.” This is no longer an accurate statement and misleads ratepayers. My comments in February informed you that a comparison of rates to sixteen other coastal communities’ places NVC at the top of the list. Since 2019 sewer rates have increased by \$582 annually and is nearly \$300 higher than other communities. I urge you to correct this misinformation to the public at the earliest opportunity.

Last month the Utilities Committee and the public were informed that fixed cost to the utility are 95.2% and variable costs 4.8%. Is that number for both water and sewer or a combined percentage? I remind the Committee that this is a comparable rate profile to other small utilities.

NVC is not unique in that way. NVC is only unique that for 39 years there has been no rate review of the wastewater system and has charged ratepayers a fixed fee across all ratepayers for all that time. Meanwhile a reliable estimate shows that in 2024 there are 70 residences living year round in the community and on the wastewater treatment system.

2025 Budget

There was little to no progress made to have a rate review in the 2024 budget, despite an approved motion to do so. I ask that the Utilities Committee consult with RCAP to schedule a rate review for both sewer and water and fund it for the 2025 budget year.

Initiate reserve accounts as recommended by RCAP for:

- Emergency and Critical Asset replacement (\$)
- Debt Service (1 year of commitment)
- Operations and Maintenance (2 months)
- Capitol Improvement (1% assets)

Reconsider water meter replacement and use bonding or reserves to prorate cost to the ratepayers for a longer time frame than one year. The service life of the meters is estimated at at least 15 years.

Thank you.