

**VILLAGE OF MARBLEHEAD SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD AUGUST 4, 2022**

Mayor Bird called the special meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance. Purpose of the meeting was to review the draft of the water rate study.

**ROLL CALL AND ATTENDANCE**

Answering roll call were Lynn App, Dean Dorko, Angie Kukay, Duane Myers, Maryann Sauvey and John Starcher.

Other officials present were Fiscal Officer Rhonda Sowers, Board of Public Affairs member Tyler Brown, Water Superintendent Tony Joyce, Village Engineer Craig Claar and Chuck Hall of CT Consultants. Robert McNutt, senior engineer with CT Consultants joined remotely.

Visitors in attendance were Dale Harwood, Karyn Harwood, Joe Gouker, Patty Gouker, Dave Reed, Kelly Reed, Deb Lautermilch, Jack Lautermilch, Lou Cardinale, Tim Feller, Michael Wegrzyn, Al Mazzeo, Katy Mazzeo, and Margie Klaehn.

**REVIEW OF RATE STUDY BY CT CONSULTANTS**

Chuck Hall of CT Construction began by explaining the current study is in draft format and they are now looking for input from officials in order to finalize and make a recommendation on rates. Bob McNutt, senior engineer at CT Construction then stated his role is to identify the water department's needs and then help the community develop a plan to afford those needs. Currently the recommendation would be to double the basic rate over the next five years. Mr. McNutt said reasons driving the size of this increase include system maintenance that has been deferred and needs to be funded; difficulty recruiting and maintaining qualified personnel resulting in a need for increased wages; construction of a second water tower which has been studied since 2015 and is now needed; and inflation. To meet these needs he recommends making rate adjustments more often; maintaining fair and competitive wages for department personnel; following the requirements of the asset management plan; and increasing tap fees.

**DISCUSSION/QUESTIONS BY COUNCIL**

Mr. Myers asked if revenue from potential new customers at Bay Point and Johnson's Island was included in projections. Mr. McNutt said they have not yet been added to projections. Mr. Myers then asked if the plant has capacity to service this many more customers or whether a plant expansion will be required. Mr. McNutt said it is unknown at this time how much water the new customers will use so it is difficult to project whether an expansion is necessary. Mr. Hall pointed out that Marblehead is in a unique situation in that it is a seasonal community where water usage is high during the summer months but relatively low during the off season. Mr. McNutt added that if capacity becomes an issue the village may need to place a moratorium on development. Mr. Myers expressed belief that it is bad government to double the water rate within five years.

Mr. App commented that the proposed increase is not competitive with the county's water rate. Mr. McNutt said the village should be comparing rates with other small lakefront communities and not with the county's rate.

Mr. Starcher asked how long it would be before the study is completed and what recommendations officials can expect regarding rates. Mr. McNutt said once he has received feedback on the draft, he should be able to complete the study in two weeks.

### VISITOR COMMENTS

Dave Reed said that most of Johnson's Island is already receiving water from haulers who fill their trucks at the Marblehead plant so the village already has capacity to service them. Mr. McNutt pointed out that bulk sales at the plant have been dropping annually which indicates haulers are not filling trucks at the plant. Water Supt. Tony Joyce confirmed that large haulers only fill at the plant occasionally. Joe Gouker later stated that McRitchie, the primary hauler to the island, has his own fill station and does not tend to fill his trucks at Marblehead.

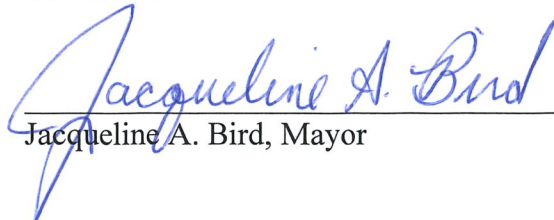
Mike Wegrzyn commented that he hopes council considers a moratorium on building and then asked if the village has looked into obtaining any of \$1.2 trillion federal infrastructure funds for water projects. Mr. Hall said there are frequently qualifiers that limit which projects can be funded and added there are currently no guidelines in place for the federal monies. Mr. McNutt stated that CT Consultants has a full staff that monitors revenue sources for its clients.

Joe Gouker stated his belief that there is sufficient capacity at the plant to provide service to the planned new customers although it may necessitate adding a third shift of water operators. He added there will be at least 180 new customers from Johnson's Island. Mr. Gouker asked what options beside higher rates Mr. Myers and Mr. App were referencing during their comments. Both responded an option to higher rates would be to obtain water from the county. Mr. Hall explained that currently the county rate is \$23.00 for 4500 gallons while the village rate is \$27.00 for 3500 gallons but added there are a lot of questions that come with that option. Mr. Myers said once everything is vetted, if the recommended rate increase is still substantial, he feels officials need to look at other options. Mr. McNutt said there are many things to be considered in going with the county including losing autonomy and being subject to someone else. Mr. McNutt also pointed out that the county has not raised their rate in several years and reminded officials of his opening statement that all plants either have raised rates, are in process of raising rates or will raise rates.


### ADJOURNMENT

Being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:27 p.m.

APPROVED:

  
Jacqueline A. Bird, Mayor

Attest:

  
Rhonda I. Sowers, Fiscal Officer