

**Brandon Board of Sewer Commissioners Meeting
October 28, 2024**

NOTE: These are unapproved minutes, subject to amendment and/or approval at the subsequent board meeting.

Board Members in Attendance: Doug Bailey, Heather Nelson, Brian Coolidge, Ralph Ethier

Others In Attendance: Seth Hopkins, Bill Moore, Tanner Romano, Karen Rhodes, Jack Schneider, Steve Bissette, Neil Silins, Barry Varian, Billy Bullock, Steven Jupiter, Jan Coolidge, Judy Bunde, Tom Kilpeck, Helyn Anderson

Others by Zoom: Keith Whitcomb, Tricia Welch

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order 7:04PM by Doug Bailey – Board Chair.

a. Agenda Adoption

Motion by Heather Nelson/Ralph Ethier to approve the agenda as presented. **The motion passed unanimously.**

2. Approval of Minutes

a) Approve Minutes of Board of Sewer Commissioners Meeting – July 22, 2024

Motion by Brian Coolidge/Heather Nelson to approve the minutes of the July 22, 2024 meeting. **The motion passed unanimously.**

3. Consider Request of Tanner Romano on Behalf of Workforce Housing LLC to Waive Sewer Capacity Fees for a 24-unit Housing Project at 333 Jones Drive

Seth Hopkins reported this is a request for a rehab of a Park Village building for up to 24 apartments. Tanner Romano has requested a waiver of the capacity fee and a calculation was provided to the Select Board. There is a statement from Mr. Romano outlining the reasons. This is a public/private partnership for workforce housing.

Doug Bailey asked the term of the waiver and Mr. Hopkins advised it is for wastewater capacity and is a one-time fee. Heather Nelson asked if the Town can safely accommodate the request. Mr. Hopkins noted the purpose of the allocation is to assure the wastewater treatment plant accommodate the usage and there is capacity to do the project. The Town has been charging a per gallon fee to preserve the sewer capacity and it goes into the wastewater account. It was noted the Town did not waive this for the Smith Block renovation. Ms. Nelson asked what the cost of the housing will be and what income level will be targeted.

Tanner Romano stated it is too early to tell what the cost will be as the workforce housing project is in its infancy. In speaking to Bill Moore, Mr. Romano stated it sounds like the Town was interested in this housing. The building was previously permitted to 9000 and the last owner brought it down to 3000 so the building had been allocated for this amount and it is hoped to keep the rents affordable. Mr. Romano advised when participating with the Smith Block project, it was mostly older people that were to use this project that opened up housing for families. Ms. Nelson wanted to make sure the aim is for housing for people that have regular jobs. Mr. Romano stated it will be market rate housing for working people. He noted one of the problems with grants is that there are strings attached for the housing to be low-income housing, but not for those needing workforce housing.

Bill Moore stated there is a willingness for the Town to participate as middle income housing is needed and there are programs that may be rolling out that perhaps this project will be eligible to apply for and the Town is willing to apply on behalf of this project or other housing projects to bring more people to Brandon.

Seth Hopkins stated this would be waiving about \$7,700.00 and this is the type of upfront cost if someone were building a single-family unit and is funding that would go into the capital replacement fund.

Heather Nelson was in favor if this is going to be housing at the mid -level price. Tanner Romano noted three of their employees moved out of state due to the state's housing stock and rent costs. Their company has created six individual housing stock to allow their employees to either purchase or rent them. It is obvious that this is not enough and this project would have a greater impact and would entice the Town to do a little bit. Ralph Ethier thought it a great project but noted concern with the waiver that it would open up for anyone wanting to put in an apartment to request a waiver. Ms. Nelson noted this is for a multiple-unit project, unless there is more to be done at the old Training School. Seth Hopkins advised the building next door is also proposing to add 24 units.

Karen Rhodes noted that the size of the units sounded small. Mr. Romano advised they range from 800 to 1200 square feet and is the average unit size their company builds as many people like these size units.

Seth Hopkins advised the Town has tools to encourage economic development and that could include tax stabilization for this property. That would be general fund related in delaying the increase of property tax the Town would receive but this request would not be the general fund but would be the wastewater side. He has talked with the wastewater staff and this is a policy that has been applied consistently. The sewer operation is very expensive to run and is constantly in need of capital replacements.

Motion by Brian Coolidge/Ralph Ethier to deny the request of Workforce Housing LLC to waive sewer capacity fees for a 24-unit housing project at 333 Jones Drive. **The motion passed unanimously.**

4. Public Comment and Participation

There was no discussion held.

5. Adjournment

Motion by Brian Coolidge/Ralph Ethier to adjourn the Board of Sewer Commissioners meeting at 7:19PM. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene Bryant
Recording Secretary