

Hammond Acres Water Corporation, August 5, 2023,
HAWC Board Meeting (11am) & Annual Members Meeting (4pm)

Board Members in Attendance: Joe Silverman (President and Treasurer), Mike Woolf (Vice President), Shirley Porter (Secretary), Jonathan Bisset, Richard Stonberg, John Leary, Peter Contuzzi (sitting in for Dorothy Martin, Association Liaison)

A brief history of the Hammond Acres Water Corporation was described for the benefit of those members who are relatively new to Hammond Acres.

Denny Devlin and Ed Rehor (Ronnie's uncle and father) built the system in 1956. At that time, very few places on the lake had their own well. Denny managed it for many years with a nominal fee to users; however, many of the original pipes and connections from the initial construction are still elements of our system, so it's not surprising that many have worn out and are causing leaks. When Denny Devlin passed away, the users of the water system formed the Hammond Acres Water Corporation (HAWC). The HAWC purchased it from Denny's heirs in 1996 at a cost of \$45,000. The money was raised with a special assessment to water users of \$750 per household – which is equivalent to \$1,450 in 2023 dollars.

Joe presented a summary of the financial and other problems we have had since last year's Annual Meeting:

- The end of the 2022 season had more leaks than in years past. The electric bills were also high, due to the both the leaks and the elevated cost of electricity. As a result, our account at the end of the 2022 fiscal year was smaller than anticipated.
- Joe received an invoice from Rob Christenson in December for \$13,500 for backhoe services incurred when fixing leaks with Ronnie dating back to 2017. Joe verified the dates of service on Rob's invoice through cross-referencing them with the invoices submitted by Ronnie in previous years. We paid Rob \$4,000 in 2022 but still owe him about \$9,500.
- The change of plumbers from Ronnie to Steve Rida was expensive, as the negotiated hourly rate is higher and it took Steve many hours to learn our system without the benefit of advice from Ronnie, who has a serious medical condition. Steve needed to: learn the procedures for starting up the system, identify all of the cottages of HAWC members, and locate and close the shutoff valves for those cottages before filling the pipes.

- In the course of starting the system, Steve found that our storage tank, which had been installed in the mid-1980's, was leaking in multiple places and needed to be replaced.
- Replacement of the storage tanks required locating an engineer, as the Mass Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) required one for approval of a permit of the new storage system. Joe found and signed a contract with an engineer from Tighe & Bond. The engineer, Pete Valinski, with support from Steve Rida, decided on a location and design and the permit was submitted to the DEP in the first week of June. A conditional DEP approval was not received until July 31st. The estimated costs for the storage tank and installation (including permitting) will be roughly \$22,000. Steve will do the installation. In addition to the DEP, the Goshen Conservation Commission needed to approve the project as the location behind the storage shed is within 100 feet of a wetland. The Commission also had some conditions for that approval. The plan is to install 2 or 3 hydropneumatic tanks in a shed adjacent to the existing storage shed next to the pump station on Cherry Rd. Those tanks will supply water pressure to compensate for the loss of the old, tall storage tank. There is room in the shed for two or three additional tanks if they are needed in the future.
- There have been a large number of leaks this season, including a very large one on the pipe that runs from the end of Lake Dr, along Pond Hill Rd. This was noticed at the end of last season and Rob knew that this would be a priority at the start of this one. This pipe helps to drain the system in the fall. The repair required several days and, as a result of the backhoe digging, also disrupted the landscaping along the road. The Conservation Commission required two procedures to manage the flow of rainwater and prevent silt from entering the lake, which we contracted with Rob Christenson to do. At this time, the Conservation Commission is still not satisfied and we will need to find an environmental engineer to correct this issue. The cost of this is yet to be determined.

Joe went to the HAC Board meeting in May and asked for financial help, given the excessive and unanticipated expenses. More than half of HAC members get their water from our water system. Joe asked for \$9,000, which was roughly the amount still owed Rob Christenson but also said that any offer would be helpful.

The Board voted to loan us \$9,000, which will ensure that we will not run out of money this season. The HAC Board met the following week and decided the terms of this loan: it will be interest free for one year but 10% interest will be charged afterwards.

There was some confusion as to whether the end of the year (when the 10% interest would kick in) would be the fiscal year (Dec. 31) or a year from the date of the loan (approximately June 1st). At the HAC Annual meeting later that day, I was told that it would be latter.

Thanks go out to Dan Polacheck for helping us out with reinstating our status as a 501(c)(12) tax-exempt corporation. This required back-filing of several years of taxes. We did not owe any taxes or penalties, although there was a fee of \$600 for the application for reinstatement. Thanks Dan!!

The Water Corporation currently has 63 members. Most of the members (56) have paid the special assessment and Joe will contact those who still need to pay.

The HAWC Board met earlier in the afternoon and approved an increase in annual dues to \$350 (to cover the escalating annual costs) and a special assessment of \$550, for a total of \$900. This special assessment will be needed to: 1) repay the loan to HAC, 2) pay all or most of the money owed to Rob Christenson, 3) create a financial cushion in our bank account, and 4) start the process (to the degree that funds allow) of replacing old sections of pipe that are most prone to leaks.

We understand that this puts a financial burden on HAWC users, especially as it comes at the same time as increases in HAC dues and the special assessment for the dam work. On our end, this can be considered a deferred payment on upgrading of our system that probably should have been started years ago.

As usual, all members will receive their dues statement in March. As President and Treasurer, Joe is open to payments of this amount made in installments, if that makes monthly budgeting easier. For example; if members make a payment of \$100 a month starting in January, the total will be met by the end of the 2024 season. If you would like to arrange something along those lines, please contact Joe at jlsilverman@mac.com or call him, 413-563-6119.

John Leary agreed to serve another 3-year term on the Board and this was approved. Joe asked for nominations for Treasurer to fulfill that function and relieve him of the extra work. No one volunteered and he was re-elected to another 3-year term.

Respectfully submitted

Shirley Porter, Michael Woolf and Joe Silverman
Secretary, Vice-President and President of Hammond Acres Water Corporation

End of the 2023 Season Update

The pump in our well, which had been working overtime due to the lack of a storage tank, broke and had to be replaced on Aug. 7th. Steve arranged with Henshaw Well Drilling Company to come and replace the pump, which they did fairly promptly. Steve had to flush the system again before resuming operation.

The installation of the new storage tanks was completed on September 8th. Steve built an extension on the old, locked shed and cut a doorway through the shed's wall to allow access to the tanks. The final inspection was done by the DEP on September 28th and I received the DEP letter of approval in October. The new tank system seemed to be working well.

I met with the environmental engineer that we hired to consult on the situation on Pond Hill Rd and we reviewed the site with the department heads of the Goshen Conservation Commission and Highway Department. The engineer, John Wallen, was very helpful and I am optimistic that the situation will be resolved without further expense on our part.

Hope everyone has a safe and pleasant winter and we look forward to seeing you in the spring.

Happy Holiday,
Joe