Village of Schuylerville – Village of Victory

Joint Water Board Budget Meeting Minutes

Date: March 16, 2026
Location: Joint Meeting
Type: Budget Workshop / Discussion

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1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Members present included:

Chairman Drew

Commissioner Campbell

Commissioner Dennison

Commissioner Healy

Secretary Jamie Porter

Village of Schuylerville Mayor Carpenter

Schuylerville trustees:

Colvin

Campbell

Baker

Village of Victory Mayor Helwig

Trustee Mitchell

Victory Clerk treasurer Gabby Hershey

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2. Purpose of Meeting

The joint meeting was convened to:

- Review and discuss the proposed water budget
- Evaluate potential rate adjustments
- Discuss infrastructure priorities and funding strategies

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3. Budget Overview & Financial Position

- A **projected surplus of approximately $167,000** was identified for the current fiscal year.
- The surplus is **not fully guaranteed**, as outstanding expenses (including emergency repairs and pending invoices) may reduce available funds.
- Members acknowledged that prior assumptions of "no available funds" were inaccurate based on updated projections.

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4. Water Rate Discussion

2% Increase Proposal:

- A 2% increase would generate **approximately $14,000 in additional revenue**, which was deemed insufficient.

Broader Discussion:

- Significant infrastructure needs may require:
  - **15–20% increases over time**, potentially phased over multiple years
- Concerns raised:
  - Public resistance to rate increases
  - Burden on taxpayers
  - Need for gradual vs. immediate increases

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5. Infrastructure & Capital Planning

Identified Issues:

- Aging infrastructure (system-wide)
- Victory Water Plant beyond useful life
- Pressure deficiencies (below Department of Health standards in some areas)
- Known problem areas:
  - Hessian Drive / Ranger Road loop (failing galvanized line)
  - Morgan's Run
  - Cemetery Road
- Fire flow deficiencies in parts of the system

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6. Capital Strategy Debate

Two Competing Approaches:

A. Incremental / Conservative Approach

- Maintain current rates or small increases
- Build reserves slowly
- Continue phased infrastructure work
- Rely heavily on grants

B. Aggressive / Strategic Investment Approach

- Pursue **large-scale funding (grants + borrowing)**
- Target **significant portions of the master plan**
- Improve competitiveness for major funding (e.g., EFC grants)
- Avoid piecemeal upgrades

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7. Grant Funding & Opportunities

- Members emphasized the importance of:
  - Actively pursuing **state and federal funding opportunities**
  - Engaging representatives and grant programs
- Noted:
  - Potential funding sources exist despite prior assumptions
- General agreement:
  - The Board should **"go after any available funding"**

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8. Planning & Engineering Needs

- Strong consensus that:
  - **Engineering studies are required before major decisions**
  - Specific projects (e.g., Hessian Drive line) lack:
    - Accurate mapping
    - Cost estimates
    - Defined scope
- Recommendation:
  - Begin with **engineering and system assessment work**

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9. Equipment & Operational Needs

Potential purchases discussed:

- Water line locator (~$15,000)
- Trailer (~$20,000 estimated with outfitting)
- Pumps, generators, and related equipment

Challenges identified:

- Procurement limitations (lack of credit purchasing mechanism)
- Need for improved purchasing process ie Credit card

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10. Administrative Capacity Concerns

- Questions raised regarding:
  - Who will manage:
    - Grant writing
    - Project administration
    - Oversight of multiple simultaneous projects
- No formal structure currently identified

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11. Key Themes / Board Sentiment

- Strong agreement that:

    - The system has been **underfunded for decades**
    - Continued delay will lead to:
        - Larger costs
        - Loss of local control
- Shared concern about:
    - Balancing taxpayer impact vs. infrastructure necessity
- Recognition that:
    - **Difficult decisions can no longer be deferred**

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12. Decisions & Direction

- No formal votes taken on:
    - Rate increases
    - Specific projects
- Informal direction:
    - Continue budget evaluation
    - Further analyze rate strategies
    - Explore engineering studies
    - Continue pursuing grant funding

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13. Adjournment

Meeting concluded following extended discussion.
