

**Final Approved Minutes**  
**Town of New Castle Water & Sewer Commission Meeting**  
**Public Session: 3:00 p.m.**  
**August 20, 2020**

**Commission Members Present:**

Normand Houle, Chair  
John Ireland, Vice Chair  
Richard White  
Walter Liff  
Carl Roediger (alternate)

**Commission Members Absent:**

Dave McGuckin, Select Board Liaison

**Others:**

Steve Tabbutt, Public Works Director  
Ms. Christiane McAllister, Town Accountant  
Ms. Amelia Trapp, Recording Secretary

Chair Houle called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. 5 members were present, and a quorum was established.

**No Public Questions**

**No Individual Applications/Petitions**

**Approval of Minutes:**

*July 16, 2020* – Chair Houle said he is working from revised version 1. He reviewed changes needing to be made with the members. The section on continued business on the Sawtelle Bridge needed some clarification and additional information under the backflow prevention discussion. **Mr. White made a motion to accept the minutes as amended and was seconded by Mr. Ireland. Motion passed unanimously.**

**Financials:**

**≠ Review, Approve, & Sign Checks** – Chair Houle read and reviewed each check and associated invoice. Ms. McAllister distributed July month end financials in place of the annual monthly summary. The financials reflected month end revenues, expenditures and cash balances for the Water Fund and Sewer Fund. Ms. McAllister said the River Rd. flow meter charges are estimated until the new meter is installed. Mr. Liff asked how she estimated the amounts. Ms. McAllister said she is using the same month's prior year usage. This has been acceptable to Portsmouth. **Mr. Liff made a motion to accept the checks as read and was seconded by Mr. White. Motion passed unanimously.**

≠ **Accountant's Report** – Ms. McAllister distributed the maps of the authority lines as well as commitments she needed approval on. Authority 1 is New Castle (North); Authority 2 is Wentworth Rd/Spring Hill Rd/Lavender Ln/Abigale Ln; Authority 3 is WBTS Homeowners Association, Authority 4 is the Coast Guard Station; and Authority 5 is the WBTS hotel. She asked for the commission's approval on the commitment of April 1, 2020 – June 30, 2020 for sewer usage (cycle 4) of \$80,491.08.

**Mr. Ireland made a motion to approve the commitment and was seconded by Mr. White. Motion passed unanimously.** This is the final billing for fiscal year 2020. The Accufund software is up and running and payments are being posted to accounts through the new system. The Commission was pleased with this news.

Ms. McAllister raised the issue of meters affected by the water project that had been running in reverse that was discussed at the July meeting. The commission had agreed to issue water and sewer bills for those accounts. The invoicing was prepared manually and she presented the “manual” commitment for the commission's approval. The water amount was \$351.12, and the sewer amount was \$657.30. **Mr. Liff made a motion to approve both commitments of water and sewer. Mr. White seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.**

Mr. Jankowski, at the July meeting, had stated he would read the meters that had to be manually billed when the temp water was discontinued at those locations. The meters have not yet been read due to miscommunication during staff vacations, but Mr. Tabbutt said he would take care of the meter readings with Mr. Jankowski as soon as possible.

#### **FY 2020 Budget Review:**

Ms. McAllister presented her analysis of FY20.

The statement of financial position (balance sheet) showed the starting balances of each of the trust fund accounts as follows:

- ≠ **Selectmen Water Capital Reserve** = \$147,304.59.
- ≠ **Selectmen Sewer Capital Reserve** = \$31,491.98.
- ≠ **W&S Water Capital Reserve** = \$27,769.93
- ≠ **W&S Sewer Capital Reserve** = \$45,538.51

She distributed copies of FY20 year end Revenue and Expenditures reports for both Water and Sewer funds, and a chart that compared units of usage and units purchased for both water and sewer.

Water Fund: the year ended with \$8,773.06 in unrealized revenues (less water was billed than projected) and \$46,187 unexpended appropriations which resulted in an approximate increase of \$44,000 in fund balance. The auditors will eventually finalize that amount.

Sewer Fund: the year ended with \$70,907 in unrealized revenues (less sewer billed than projected—probably due to Covid and decreased business at WBTS) and \$64,128 in unexpended appropriations which resulted in a \$13,400 decrease in fund balance, since expenditures were higher than revenues. Likewise, the auditors will eventually finalize the amount.

The chart was prepared with two objectives: to analyze the estimates used in the FY20 rate calculations which drive the budget, and to use as an assessment of the actual system, since there should be some correlation between “water in” and “water out.”

The data shows good estimates over all for water projections, but indicate that Auth #4 (Coast Guard) estimates can be decreased. The data also confirmed that “lost water” is in the neighborhood of 20%.

A review of the “water in/out” data resulted in discussion by the Commission on the merit of using the data going forward to check on the integrity of the system in terms of leakage of both water and sewer. The Accountant’s office will work on a template for a worksheet that can be used for this purpose.

### **No Selectman’s Report**

### **Continuing Business:**

**NEI Contract for River Rd. flow meter** – They have received the approval from legal to sign this contract. The motion to accept will allow Ms. McAllister to do the paperwork to retrieve the money from the Select Board controlled sewer trust fund. **Mr. Ireland made a motion to accept the NEI Contract in the amount of \$12,850 to replace the River Rd. flow meter and was seconded by Mr. White. Motion passed unanimously. Chair Houle signed the contract.**

### **Backflow Prevention Status – survey to assess degree of hazard:**

Chair Houle said the letters had gone out and a file was sent to Jim Siegel, Portsmouth DPW. No one has received a letter yet from Portsmouth. In an email, Chair Houle asked Mr. Siegel if Portsmouth would conduct the survey. Mr. Siegel said New Castle was responsible for conducting the survey(s).

Mr. White said he felt a Mr. Tom Cravens was knowledgeable in surveys and used to be a national speaker on backflow prevention. Mr. White will extend an invitation to Mr. Cravens to brief the commission at its September meeting with the objective, a proposal to assess/survey backflow accounts with possible high degree of hazard. Chair Houle said they had \$1,500 in the professional services line to cover any costs for this survey.

Mr. Ireland asked how it had started to become an issue, especially about when a household needed to be tested. Mr. Tabbutt said any household with an irrigation system had to have a backflow preventer. Chair Houle said there was a list of this information, which is the file sent to Jim Siegel. Mr. Ireland was concerned that there was not a checklist for homeowners who have irrigation systems. Chair Houle said for towns under 1,000 in population do not usually need this. However, once the check valves at the Sawtelle bridge and at Wentworth

Rd./Main St. had been removed, it became an issue since the New Castle utility effectively became an extension of the Portsmouth water system.

Mr. Ireland said his question was not quite answered. Mr. White said it would depend on the kind of structure and how many check valves were in the structure. He said Mr. Craven would have a better answer as well. The other members agreed that Mr. Craven should be invited to the next meeting. Mr. White said he would take care of it and ask Mr. Craven how much time he would need in his initial meeting.

#### **U-Bolt assessment Sawtelle Bridge:**

Chair Houle said they had received an email yesterday from Andy Sharpe of Underwood Engineering. The total cost for the structural engineer is \$5,800. It is \$2,200 per day for the EVROK bridge inspection lift. Mr. White asked how many days it would take to do all the tie-downs on the bridge.

Mr. White said they should send an email to Mr. Sharpe for the extensive details they were requesting and how much the Board should budget for to complete the check. Mr. Roediger thought that the \$5,800 would include a set amount of days. Mr. Ireland said that if the \$2,200 was holding them back from deciding, could the Board vote in a certain amount to allow the work to be completed over a certain amount of days.

Chair Houle was not sure how much planning and risk was involved to take care of this project. Mr. White said the previous fee went up by \$1,300 to give them the full report. He said the full question was how long they needed to rent the lift and the structural engineer to look at the condition of the U-Bolts.

Mr. Roediger said that under Task 1 on the proposal, it stated that the survey would be done in one day. Chair Houle said he would email Mr. Sharpe this evening to confirm that the survey would take one day. Their cost limit would be \$8,000. **Chair Houle made a motion to authorize the expenditure of \$8,000 to inspect the U-Bolts of the Sewer Main on the Sawtelle Bridge. Mr. Ireland seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and all members were in favor.**

#### **New Business:**

##### **Air Release Valve – valve options & funding**

Mr. Sharpe had emailed the Commission regarding the options they had to replace the Air Release Valve. Mr. Tabbutt said it was a \$30,000 fine by the EPA if sewage was dumped into the river. The commission agrees to pursue the alternative to remove and replace a section of the force main including the ARV, along with replacement of the ARV at the top of the hill curve on Rte. 1B and the one at Walton Rd./Mainmast Cir.

#### **Meeting Adjourned:**

**Mr. Liff made a motion to adjourn and was seconded by Mr. White. Motion passed unanimously. The Water & Sewer Commission Board Meeting on August 20, 2020 was adjourned at 5:20 p.m.**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Ms. Amelia Trapp  
W&S Commission Recording Secretary