

FINAL APPROVED
Water & Sewer Commission Minutes
Thursday, January 16, 2020

Members Present: Normand Houle, Chair, Damon Frampton (Selectman Officio), John Ireland, Walter Liff, Richard White, Steve Tabbutt (PW Supr.), Carl Roediger(Alt)

Also in attendance: Christiane McAllister, Dave McGuckin.

Chair Houle opened the meeting at 3:00 PM.

1. **Public Questions: None.**
2. **Individual Applications/Petitions: None.**
3. **Approve Minutes of December 11, 2019.**

After review, Dick White made a Motion to Approve the minutes of December 11, 2019 as amended. John Ireland seconded, and the Motion carried.

Dave McGuckin asked the Commission to recognize the return of Carl Roediger to the Water and Sewer Commission. Chair Houle welcomed Carl back to serve as an Alternate and expressed his gratitude on behalf of the whole Commission to have the benefit of his experience and expertise.

4. **Financials.**
 - a. **Review, approve and sign checks.**

After review, Walter Liff made a Motion to Accept the checks as presented and read. John Ireland seconded, and the Motion carried.

- b. **Accountant's Report:**

Christiane reported on figures as of the end of December.

i.

Water:

Revenue: \$253.17

Expenditures: \$11,226.94

Checking Acct Balance: \$201,038.50

Trust Bal: \$146,606.67

Cap Res Bal: \$15,191.75

Sewer:

Revenue:\$163,983.40

Expenditures: \$38,620.32

Checking Acct Bal: \$223,349.70

Trust Bal: \$39,827.24

Cap Res Bal: \$30,383.49

Dick White asked for an explanation about the revenue difference between water and sewer. She explained the sewer revenue was the full commitment for Authorities 2 and 3.(southside). She noted there was no water revenue posted for December. That was done in November. This has to do with the new billing cycle system with Portsmouth. January will be the next water bill covering November and December. Christiane reported that Ben and Steve are now reading on a quarterly cycle with Portsmouth.

ii. Accountant Assistant Status.

Christiane reported good news. She has decided on a candidate and an offer of employment will be made contingent upon completion of background check. His name is Chris Robillard from Portsmouth. She wanted someone who wanted to professionally grow, and hopefully will learn to serve as her back up. He was one of 25 people who applied. He has a Masters in Public Policy and has served as an intern with the Town of Exeter. His qualifications ,background and skill set are excellent. Dick had asked that this item be placed on the Agenda to make sure things were moving along to get Christiane some help. The Commission agreed that the hiring was a positive development.

iii. Asset management software.

Dick White had asked that this item be placed on the Agenda. Christiane reported there is no update at this time. She still has the goal of completing the inventory of fixed assets first before moving forward.

5. Selectman's Report.

a. Additional funding for water project?

Damon reported he had nothing new to add, nor did Selectman Stewart. Dick White had asked that this be placed on the Agenda, because of his concern that additional funding will be needed to complete the project. Chair Houle reviewed discussion from a prior Select Board Meeting (September 2019) where Bill Stewart went through potential savings if the Board decided to modify the agreed upon bid figures (Change orders) for Granese. Chair Houle listed some of the examples, one of which was to stop the laying of new 12" pipe at Town Hall, and leave it as 8", as opposed to completing to the juncture of Wentworth and Main. The Select Board did not wish to do this, but preferred to complete the project as originally promised to the Town.

Dick White strongly recommends that the Select Board consider a warrant article be done for Town Meeting to finish the project. Damon and Christiane mentioned that there had been prior discussion over the possibility of obtaining additional funding to add the Revolving Fund loan (SRF). Dick went on to review the current funding

for the project, including money for the loops. He noted that the bids did come in higher than expected, hampering our ability to complete the whole project. If we need additional monies then it is incumbent upon the Select Board to go back to the Town and request additional funding. Damon agreed. Damon also expressed complete support for completing all 5 loops as this was what was promised to the residents of New Castle. Damon agreed to take the Commission's concerns to the Select Board.

Chair Houle brought up the issue of the trust fund, which is controlled by the Select Board and has a current balance of approximately \$146,000.00. Its possible some money could be taken from this trust fund to apply towards the water project. Carl Roediger recommended taking the matter to the town with the reality of what the funding shortfall is and how it can be handled. He stated to lay out the project as it really is. Dick suggested using the trust fund first, and then go to the citizens for the remainder of what is needed. Carl stated that cutting out the looping portion inhibits the project. John Ireland agreed. He recommended using the trust funds money now, when we need it. Dave McGuckin pointed out the reasonableness of the borrowing costs if we borrowed \$500,000. Noting that over 20 years, if we had to repay \$30,000 per year for the loan, it would add 3 cents to the tax rate. Mr. McGuckin also recommended that this Commission communicate its concerns and recommendations with the Budget Committee, who could be a valuable ally.

After further discussion, Chair Houle agreed to draft some language for a formal memo to the Select Board from the Commission reflecting the views and recommendations of the Commission. He will circulate to the members for their input.

6. Continuing Business.

a. Rescind motion of 11 Dec 2019 to move meeting to first Thursday.

Dick White made the Motion to Rescind, which was seconded by John Ireland. Motion carried.

b. Rescind Motion of 11 Dec 2019 to amend ordinance change addressing backflow prevention and consider an alternate one.

Dick White made the Motion to Rescind, which was seconded by John Ireland. Motion carried.

Chair Houle asked the Commission to review the draft of the proposed ordinance by Ben Jankowski regarding backflow prevention. After review it was agreed that STET valves needed to be named in the ordinance, and add the phrase "or its equivalent". He also questioned what the penalty should be for non-compliance. The Chair opened the issue up for discussion. Examples of concerns were: Dick: Don't shut off any sprinkler system or anything to do with fire safety. Use a fine. Another recommendation is to shut off the "first service" (domestic) and not the second fire service. Carl suggested crafting the testing for seasonable businesses for backflow prevention. After further discussion it was agreed that Ben should check with

Portsmouth and adopt what they currently have in effect. This issue was tabled until the next meeting for further information and report back.

7. New Business.

a. Island Items Submission for February edition.

Chair Houle solicited opinions and recommendations for topics for articles for both Island Items and the Annual Town Report. The new water agreement and how the billing has changed was one suggestion, along with the effects of removing of the check valves. Another suggestion was to write about the new aeration plant going on line in Newington, and its effect on New Castle's no longer having major issues with "TTHMs" and water quality issues. Chair Houle will report back.

b. Initiate FY 2021 budget build.

The Commission reviewed the proposed budget figures as submitted by the Accountant on a line-by-line basis and made recommendations to increase or decrease line items budget items. Chair Houle explained that his goal is to refrain from having to raise the sewer rate. The completed sheet will be provided at a later date. The Commission will continue with its budget build with Christiane, and will report back at the next meeting. Setting capital reserves will be done in the process.

8. Any other Business.

Carl Roediger noted that the traffic control device on the bridge is placed on the wrong side of the road and poses a safety issue. The Town needs to pressure the State DOT to rectify this problem. Dick White wants a pipe change under the bridge, but Chair Houle explained why that can't be done at this time. DOT says the bridge cannot support the weight of a 12" line.

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Dick White made a Motion to Adjourn, which was seconded by John Ireland. Motion carried.

Meeting Adjourned at 5:07 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Bette Jane Riordan
Recording Secretary

