

**FINAL APPROVED**  
**MINUTES OF THE WATER & SEWER COMMISSION MEETING**  
**WEDNESDAY, February 21, 2018 - 3:00 P.M.**

**Members Present:** Walter Liff, Chair, Damon Frampton, Ex-Officio Select Board, Steve Tabbutt, Supervisor of Public Works, Richard White, Member, Normand Houle, Member, Clint Springer, Alternate

**Members Absent:** John Ireland

**Also Present:** Christiane McAllister, Accountant, Anne Miller, Secretary, Ben Jankowski, Department of Public Works

**Public Present:** Jim Rini, Mundy Tarbell

Mr. Walter Liff opened the meeting at 3:01 p.m. and, noting the presence of Mr. Mundy Tarbell, 14 Shore Lane, reordered the agenda to address Mr. Tarbell's concern about water quality.

**1. Water quality**

Water quality reporting reflects a one year rolling average. While the most recent, Q1, 2018, test shows that contaminant levels are below the threshold, previous high Total Trihalomethane (TTHM) levels of over .080 mg/L affect the four quarter, rolling average. The City of Portsmouth is progressing with plans to remedy the water quality problem through the addition of an aeration system. The project went out to bid in January, with the intent to have the system online by the end of 2018.

Addressing whether the water is drinkable, Mr. Steve Tabbutt noted the requirement for public notice when the TTHM levels exceed a .080 mg/L, annual average. The full impact of the elevated levels isn't yet fully known. TTHMs are a byproduct of chlorination that attaches itself to organics in the water and doesn't dissipate. It's a concern of the EPA as well as the state.

Mr. Dick White described that the same water treatment conditions have existed since 1953: chlorine is added and the water has been coming from the Madbury reservoir where it picks up organics. The difference is that now chemical testing is able to detect TTHMs.

Further, the Town only buys its water, it doesn't produce it. TTHM levels are just under the threshold when it enters the Town system. Further, in larger districts like the City of Portsmouth, the report can conceal a single elevated TTHM reading through its average of ten or more test sites across the system, while a single elevated reading in New Castle, with only one or two sample sites, is unmasked. Portsmouth also has the advantage of pulling water from different sources including Madbury, where there are organics, and wells, where there are not.

Ms. Anne Miller, 410 Wentworth Road, asked whether any testing could be done on the City of Portsmouth water in the older pipe section of the system beyond the Wentworth-by-the Sea Resort. Mr. Tabbutt speculated that the water quality at the Wentworth and Main meter pit is worse than that of the

hotel. Mr. Normand Houle proposed that the Town test the water at the farthest end of the Portsmouth system. Testing would require Portsmouth's permission as well as Town funding. Testing results would compliment the readings from the Shapleigh meter pit in order to have a complete understanding of the water that enters the New Castle system. Mr. Houle suggested that the Town politely inform the City of Portsmouth of our intent to test the water and determine whether there is any objection.

Mr. Houle moved that the Commission test the water in two places on the Wentworth side after coordinating with Portsmouth to do the tests. Mr. White seconded the motion.

Ms. Christiane McAllister noted the source of funding in the Water budget in the "Other Services" line. Mr. Damon Frampton asked whether, in light of the pending warrant article to upgrade the water main, the action could negatively impact relations with the City of Portsmouth. Mr. White answered that the testing is in response to the continued questions and complaints about water quality that are addressed to New Castle's Water & Sewer Commission.

The motion was put to a vote and unanimously approved.

Mr. Tabbutt will contact Brian Goetz, Portsmouth Deputy Director of Public Works, and move forward.

## **2. Review, approve and sign checks**

The City of Portsmouth sewer bill of \$41,540.74 is higher than normal, likely due to sump pump infiltration.

Mr. Houle moved to sign the checks as called out. Mr. Clint Springer seconded the motion. Motion carried, unanimously.

## **3. Approve the minutes of the January 10, 2018 meeting of the Water & Sewer Commission**

Mr. Houle moved to approve the minutes of the January 10, 2018 meeting of the Water & Sewer Commission as amended on February 14, 2018. Mr. Springer seconded. Motion carried, unanimously.

## **4. Old Business**

### **a. Update Ordinances**

On February 15, 2018, Mr. Houle circulated to Members a draft of the Ordinance reflective of those changes discussed on February 14, 2018.

Concerning the performance security for installation road cuts, the first paragraph in the Section, Installation, Maintenance and Repair, would be changed to:

### **Installation, Maintenance and Repair**

All trench openings in town roads shall be bonded *for one year from the date of completion of the project* with a \$2,000 minimum cash, certified check, or other funds acceptable to the Water and Sewer Commission as escrow payment held as surety by the Town. Town bonding is not necessary when the construction is in a state road and the contractor already has a bond with the state highway Department of Transportation. Before any trench is dug, the contractor/owner

shall comply with N.H. Title XXXIV, Public Utilities, Section 374.49, "Damage Prevention System." Compliance is most readily achieved by contacting Dig Safe, Inc. at phone number 811 at least 72 hours in advance of digging. Trench openings shall be repaired and maintained for at least one year by the contractor who does the excavation work. ***The surety bond will be released upon satisfactory final inspection by the Supervisor of Public Works.*** All final patches shall be permanently emplaced by the Felix Marino Heat method. Patching a state road will be done in accordance with state regulations.

Mr. Houle rechecked the language pertaining to the location of the sewer connections in the Section, **Service Connection Requirements, General**, and proposed adding:

***To prevent concealment of illegal connections under slab, the building sewer shall be brought to the building at an elevation at least 12" above the basement floor.***

Further, the sentence, "*The entire line when completed shall be gas tight and watertight*" has been moved to eliminate redundancy.

Mr. White questioned how the Ordinance allows for slab-on-grade construction with a frost wall, where the sewer needs to run under the slab in order not to freeze. Mr. Tabbutt responded that the Ordinance is written for conventional basement construction. In a slab-on-grade situation, Mr. Tabbutt suggested that the inspection will be thorough. Mr. White offered the addition of the sentence, "The Town of New Castle will accept an under slab sewer entrance on a slab on-grade-construction with additional inspections being required." This indicates that it will be accepted, but puts the owner on notice for increased scrutiny.

A question has emerged over what constitutes a quorum. Mr. Houle could find no reference to the matter in his review of the current governing Ordinance. The draft Ordinance --in language previously reviewed by the Commission -- states,

*There are five regular members and two alternates; one member is an ex-officio member of the Select Board. Five members constitute a voting quorum. The Town Treasurer is ex-officio Treasurer of the Water and Sewer Funds and a non-voting member of the Commission as is the Superintendent of Public Works. The commissioners annually choose one of their number as chairperson for one year.*

Mr. Houle could find no definitive rule for a quorum, but found that typically, a quorum is a simple majority. The Commission could decide to define a quorum as:

- a) five voting Members of the seven (including Alternates) Members, or
- b) three of five Members

Mr. White believes that the purpose of five Members plus two Alternates is to provide for a quorum of consisting of five voting Members, as described in the current draft Ordinance.

Once edited to include the slab-on-grade exception for sewer connection location, Mr. Houle will return a copy of the draft Ordinance to Commission Members. Upon approval, it will be sent to the Secretary for distribution to the Select Board.

### **b. FY19 Budget**

Ms. McAllister distributed updated draft copies of the budget. The revenue lines are highlighted to indicate that the revenue calculation will follow the finalization of appropriations and the “Miscellaneous Sources” line item will receive a “plug number” to match the appropriations.

#### Water

A “Trainings & Certifications” line was added. Engineering Fees and Attorneys’ Fees were cut in half, to \$2,500. Ms. McAllister wants to return the appropriation for Engineering Fees to \$5,000 as originally budgeted in the event that the water project warrant is funded via a revolving loan fund. Accordingly, the Water Fund may need to initially cover some expenses before they can be reimbursed. Miscellaneous Supplies and Expenses were increased to \$1,500 per Mr. Tabbutt’s recommendation.

#### Sewer

Mr. Houle asked that Ms. McAllister correct the geographical account descriptions:

32 3403 000 000 should read Residential Sales NC North-Authority 1

32 3403 001 000 should read Residential Sales NC South-Authority 2

32 3403 002 000 Wentworth-by-the-Sea Resort- Authority 2

32 3403 003 000 Residential Sales WBTS-MA-Authority 3

32 3403 004 000 USCG- Authority 4

Instead of a separate Final Read Fees budget line, Ms. McAllister suggested rolling those revenues into the Late Fees line, titled “Late and Final Fees,” and will investigate whether the \$500 estimate should be adjusted.

Changes to the Sewer Fund appropriation budget since February 14, 2018 include:

Engineering Fees to \$3,000

Miscellaneous Supplies & Expenses to \$500

Principal Repayment, currently at \$92,000 cannot be finalized yet

Training & Certifications added at \$1,000

Mr. Houle addressed the desire to lower rates and suggested that, at year’s end, any amount in excess of the planned and stated capital reserve budget be returned via rate reduction to the ratepayers in the ensuing year. Ms. McAllister described that any excess revenue is captured in the Fund Balance and can always be used to reduce the needed revenue. This year the Fund Balance was used to pay for the sewer project.

Mr. White suggested that, in the overall scheme of things, unless it results in a significant impact on rates, it doesn’t seem worth it.

It is believed that, with the inclusion of these final revisions, the Water & Sewer Commission has finished its work on the FY19 budget. Ms McAllister will move the budget forward.

## **5. New Business**

### **a. Shoe Fund**

Mr. Liff asked that the fund for the purchase of state-required steel-toed shoes be reinstated in order for DPW staff to purchase footwear appropriate for working with manhole covers. Ms. McAllister suggested the addition of a Uniforms Fund with the cost split between Water, Sewer, Buildings and Highways. Mr. White proposed that each employee have access to \$100 from the Water Budget and \$100 from the Sewer Budget. The Highways and Buildings Funds can augment the \$200 per employee. Ms. McAllister will add a line item for Uniform Allowance in the amount of \$200 to each of the Water and Sewer budgets.

Payment will be reimbursed upon presentation of a receipt.

## **6. Adjourn**

Hearing no further business, Mr. Springer moved to adjourn. Mr. White seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 4:17 p.m.