

Final Approved by the Commission
Minutes
Town of New Castle Water & Sewer Commission
March 18, 2021, 2:00 PM
Macomber Room

Members Present: Normand Houle, Chairman, John Ireland, Richard White, Walter Liff, Carl Roediger, Alternate, Steve Tabbutt, Department of Public Works

Members Absent: David McGuckin, Selectman, Anne Miller, Secretary

Also Present: Christiane McAllister, Accountant, Mr. Paul Whittemore, president of New England Backflow, Inc.

Chair Normand Houle opened the meeting at 2:03 p.m.

1. Public Questions

No public comments or questions were proffered.

2. Individual Applications/Petitions

No applications or petitions were presented.

3. Approve Minutes of February 18, 2021 Meeting

Mr. Walter Liff moved, and Mr. Richard White seconded, to approve the minutes as originally drafted. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Financials

a. Review, approve and sign checks

Chair Houle read the checks as presented. Mr. White moved to approve the checks as read, and Mr. John Ireland seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

b. Accountant's report

i. Balances as of February 28, 2021

Water:

Cash	\$254,159.76
Trust (SB)	\$147,338.34
Trust (WSC)	\$27,776.72

Sewer:

Cash	\$248,048.99
Trust (SB)	\$16,493.08
Trust (WSC)	\$45,549.60

ii. Sewer Rate for FY 22. Based on accountant recalculations, the sewer rate will be adjusted down one cent to \$19.50 per unit from \$19.51. Motion to effect this change was made by Mr. White, seconded by Mr. Liff; approved unanimously.

5. Selectman's Report

a. Status of DPW supervisor search.

In the absence of selectman McGuckin, Ms. McAllister (also Town HR) reported 15 new applicants with four positive prospects.

b. Select Board endorsement of backflow testing.

This item is meant to solicit select board backing of the initial effort to establish a rigorous backflow prevention program, to possibly include a selectman's co-signature (along with the chair of the WSC) of the initial testing notification letter. (This is one step in the process which is discussed further in paragraph 6.a.

c. Water Project Loop Design and Asset Management.

As reported in the minutes of 18 February, Chair Houle did send an email to selectman Stewart addressing the commission's request to have Messers. White and Roediger participate in loop design; and to note that the commission lacks resources to develop an asset management plan. Mr. White moved and Mr. Liff seconded attaching the email to these minutes. Motion approved unanimously; email is attached.

6. Continuing Business

a. New England Backflow, Inc. (NEB) proposal.

The commission welcomed Mr. Paul Whitmore, president of NEB to discuss the possibility of that company becoming the Town's contracted backflow prevention device testing agent. At the end of a detailed, extensive give-and-take regarding the services NEB can provide, and the associated fees charged, it was agreed that Chair Houle and NEB staff would exchange drafts of the Town letter that would notify affected customers of the state requirement to test backflow prevention devices and the Town requirement to schedule a test. Upon final agreement of the text of the letter and NEB contract specifics, Chair Houle would sign a contract.

Chair Houle will draft a notice to be inserted in the upcoming April bills notifying all customers of the progress achieved at this juncture and noting that specifically affected customers will be notified by letter (discussed above) of the need to schedule a test. Expect testing to occur in the late May/early June timeframe when most irrigation systems will have been energized.

b. Monthly SCADA test with NEI's Rick Bogle

Mr. Tabbutt reported that the test was successfully completed last week.

c. Fire Department and DPW hydrant flow tests

Mr. Tabbutt reported that the fire department is ready to partner with DPW to conduct periodic hydrant flow tests. Mr. Tabbutt would like to perform the next series during the spring flush, concerned that there might be a moratorium on hydrant flushing later in the year due to the lack of rainfall thus far.

As it is not necessary to test all hydrants to note significant decrease in fire flows across the overall system, the commission has selected the following hydrants for testing:

1. Kittery Point Yacht Club
2. Wentworth Rd./Main St.
3. MHT School
4. The first hydrant coming onto Great Island Commons property. While this hydrant is fed by the Portsmouth system, it is owned and maintained by the Town.
5. Campbell's Island. As this hydrant is part of the City of Portsmouth (southside) water system, we would have to ask the City to conduct this test, or allow us to test when they flush the hydrant.

d. Access to Walton Rd. and Portsmouth Ave. Air Release Valves (ARVs)

Mr. Tabbutt is tentatively scheduling to pry the access hatches out of the ground in May.

e. Hydrant 6 on Oliver St.

The November 2020 hydrant flow test reflected a low reading for this hydrant. Mr. Tabbutt will try to determine a cause during the spring flush.

f. Status of Asset Management Discussions with Mr. Adorno (NHDES)

Despite multiple tries, Ms. McAllister has been unsuccessful in making contact with Mr. Adorno to get a sense for what the state may be expecting in the way of an asset management plan pursuant to the funding of the water main project. She reports that selectman Stewart believes there will be an Underwood Engineering deliverable from which can be developed an asset management plan. (See related discussion at paragraph 5.c.)

g. Water Conservation

Mr. Roediger will draft an article for the next *Island Items* addressing this issue..

7. New Business

None.

8. Adjourn

Mr. White moved, Mr. Ireland seconded, and Members voted unanimously to adjourn at 4:50 p.m.

Email attachment discussed in paragraph 5.c.

LOOP DESIGN/DECISIONS AND ASSET MANAGEMENT

Wed, Feb 24,
2021 at 3:54
PM

Normand Houle
<nhouleccp@gmail.com>

To: Bill Stewart
Cc: Carl Roediger, Christiane McAllister, David McGuckin, John Ireland,
Richard White, Walter Liff

Hello Bill,

The two items in the subject line, and their relationship to the water project, were discussed at last Thursday's meeting of the Water & Sewer Commission. They prompt this email.

1. Loop design/decisions.

Members Dick White (former New Castle Fire Department fire chief) and Carl Roediger (former city of Portsmouth deputy fire chief) highlighted what I understand has been a longstanding concern regarding low fire flows in the Bosn' Hill area. Interestingly, this has been confirmed in the recent hydrant flow evaluation. The following flows (gals. per min.) were reported: Mainmast Cir. (hydrant #14, 460 gpm); Quarterdeck Ln./Maimast Cir. (#15, 580 gpm); and Quarterdeck Ln (#16, 490 gpm). They are among the lowest readings in the town.

The loop "candidates" in the Bosn' Hill area are known to be: top of Mainmast Cir.; top of Locke Rd.; and Quarterdeck Ln./Lilac Ln. Moving forward with these three would undoubtedly improve water quality. However, their contribution to fire flow improvement is questionable, likely minimal, since the "upstream feed," at least for the first and third, is identical, i.e. Walton Rd.

Both Dick and Carl have suggested an alternative to the Quarterdeck/Lilac loop which might be more effective, namely connecting Quarterdeck Ln. to what would be a new line under Neal's and Pit Lanes, thereby achieving an additional "upstream feed" from Cranfield St. and/or a new

Wentworth Rd. line. While such a connection would certainly be more expensive than a Quarterdeck/Lilac loop, it has the potential to significantly improve fire flows to the Bosn' Hill area and would provide redundancy to the single Walton Rd. feed. Steve Tabbutt indicated that Andy Sharpe is aware of such an alternative.

With the above as background, I am respectfully asking that when it comes time to consider the way forward with regard to looping in the Bosn' Hill area, that Dick and Carl be invited to participate in discussions regarding alternatives. They have unique insight and experience of which we should take advantage.

2. Asset Management Plan

Even before the advent of the water project, this subject has come up in WSC discussions as the water and sewer utilities would likely be the predominant assets. Within the context of the DWSRF, where are we with regard to asset management? The WSC is concerned that it might be tasked with development of a plan. Please know that the commission does not have the resources (time, manpower, funds) to undertake such work. Just want you to know my concern sooner rather than later.

If you would like to discuss these two items further, please let me know.

Thanks,

Norm Houle

603-431-4052