

**FINAL APPROVE**  
**MINUTES OF THE WATER & SEWER COMMISSION MEETING**  
**Thursday, March 17, 2022**  
**MACOMBER ROOM, 2:00 P.M.**

**Members Present:** Normand Houle, Chairman, Walter Liff, John Ireland, Chris Robillard, (Superintendent of Public Works), Carl Roediger, Richard White, Dave McGuckin (SB Liaison), John Ireland, Scott Stringham

**Members Absent:** None

**Also Present:** Bette Jane Riordan, Recording Secretary

Chair Normand Houle opened the meeting at 2:00 p.m.

**1. Public Questions**

None

**2. Individual Applications/Petitions**

None

**3. Approve Minutes of the 20 Jan 22 Meeting**

Mr. White moved, and Mr. Liff seconded, to accept the minutes as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

**4. Financials**

**a. Review, approve, and sign checks**

Chair Houle read the checks as presented. Mr. White made a motion to approve the checks as a read; seconded by Mr. Roediger. Motion carried unanimously.

**b. Accountant's report**

1. Balances as of January 31, 2022

Water:

Checking Account:	\$280,818.60
Trust Fund(Select Board)	\$147,350.48 (Jan 2022)
Trust Fund (WSC)	\$57,780.77 (Jan 2022))

Sewer:

Checking Account  
Trust Fund (WSC)

\$260,688.95  
\$51,223.60 (Jan 2022))

## **5. Selectman's Report**

Mr. McGuckin reported that he is working on alternative methods of communication with the City of Portsmouth regarding the establishment of sewer rates.

## **6. Superintendent's Report**

a. Mr. Robillard reported that 10 AMI radio modules have been installed, and that he will be posting a public notice for residents to schedule installation appointments. He noted that there are some 370 more to be installed and that this will be a long process.

b. Mr. Robillard reported that two companies have provided quotes for the generator service for FY23, Milton Cat and Power Up. The Town currently uses Milton Cat of Scarborough, Maine; their quote is \$7,800+. Power Up, which is used by the City of Portsmouth, is located in Auburn, NH and quotes \$2,850. Mileage and hourly rates are in addition to the stated contract price: \$3.00/mi. and \$125/hr. for Milton Cat; \$1.25/mi. and \$90/hr. for Power Up. Power Up has a three-year contract, as opposed to the annual of Milton Cat, which has an automatic renewal clause. Discussion ensued over the differences and the Commission requested that Mr. Robillard obtain further information from Power Up regarding their scope of services. Mr. McGuckin asked if the Power Up price is locked in for the full three years of the contract and asked that an escape clause be included for any non-performance issues.

c. Chair Houle asked about SCADA performance. Mr. Robillard reported no problems and that they are working on replacement of bubbler pumps.

## **7. New Business**

### **a. New England Backflow CY22 Service Proposal**

Chair Houle reported he had received the proposal and had suggested minor changes. At his request degree-of-hazard assessments were added in; costs for these would be passed through to property owners. Both Mr. White and Chair Houle reviewed the document and are satisfied. The period of performance is April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023. The price for device testing remains at \$55.00. After discussion, Chair Houle moved to accept the proposal; seconded by Mr. McGuckin; passed unanimously.

### **b. EPA Notification; New Castle "Co-Permittee" for Peirce Island WWTF**

Chair Houle noted Mr. Robillard received word from EPA Boston that New Castle would

become a “co-permittee: of the WWTF. This information had been passed to members of the commission beforehand, and followed up with an example of two communities surrounding the City of Keene of what this would entail. It will involve a significant amount of reporting paperwork that will only add to the Town’s workload. Chair Houle noted that possibly some of the required information may be held by Portsmouth. There was brief discussion of liability for unauthorized discharge, and whether New Castle could be held responsible. Mr. Robillard pointed out that each co-permittee is responsible for their own system. Mr. McGuckin noted that this issue should be added to the sewer rate discussions with Brian Goetz from the City of Portsmouth to assure that New Castle is only responsible for its own system.

#### **c. Asset management Grant Revised Scope Accepted by NHDES**

Chair Houle reported our request was approved for \$62,800 and that we are waiting for the paperwork upon which the Select Board would act to accept the grant.

#### **d. Second Water Meters: Fees and Sizes**

Chair Houle had reviewed the Town website regarding this subject and found it lacking. He met with Mr. Robillard and proposed a new application form to comport with the Water and Sewer Ordinance. Mr. Roediger likened this application process to a purchase request. Discussion ensued regarding the current \$235 fee (specified on the current form but contradicted by the \$40.00 fee listed in Appendix B of the Ordinance); as well as clarification of actual costs. The principal component of the fee is the meter; others include ancillary components, wiring, AMI radio modules and labor. Mr. Ireland noted that it should include the costs for the (plumbing) permit. Mr. Robillard noted the contracted plumber applies for the plumbing permit from the Plumbing Inspector; and that this is in addition to the application to install a second meter. Public Works does the connection work from the meter to the AMI radio module, but highlighted that penetration of the property structure through which the wiring must pass is the responsibility of the property owner. Mr. Robillard distinguished between the Plumbing Inspector and Public Works and noted that these installations are a collaborative process.

Mr. Roediger brought up the issue of pipe/meter size. The “standard” meter has  $\frac{3}{4}$ ” inlet and outlet ports. Anything larger would cost the customer more than the proposed \$300 fee. Mr. Robillard pointed out issues to consider when customers need/ask for a larger meter than the standard, not only the initial cost of the meter but also the cost to replace the meter in the future, which would be at the expense of the utility. Mr. Robillard suggested a meter surcharge (as does the City of Portsmouth) to provide for future replacement.

It was the sense of the Commission to set \$300 as a fee for a second meter, with a surcharge for any meter not standard. Mr. Robillard noted that the Water and Sewer Ordinance needs to be amended accordingly. Chair Houle made a motion to amend

Appendix B of the Ordinance from \$40.00 to \$300.00; seconded by Mr. Roediger; carried unanimously.

## **8. Continuing Business**

### **a. Diesel Generator Radiator Replacements: Quarterdeck Ln. and River Rd.**

Mr. Robillard reported no estimated date of arrival the radiator replacement components (supply chain issues), so he proposed that we recore the radiators rather than replace. There was much discussion regarding various alternative approaches to effect this repair. In the end, it was agreed that we would undertake the Quarterdeck Lane station first. We would take the generator offline and notify trucking companies that, in the event of a power outage during the few days the generator would be out of service, we would need them to respond promptly to truck effluent to the River Rd. station. Following the outcome of the Quarterdeck repair, we would reassess the desirability of having a standby generator for the River Rd. repair.

### **b. Installation of Type A Manholes**

Mr. Robillard suggested waiting until the asphalt plant is reopened and to do this work in conjunction with repaving of Mainmast Circle.

### **c. W&S Ordinance: Cross-Connection Update**

Mr. Roediger met with the Plumbing Inspector who agreed to the language of the appendix. As required, Chair Houle will send the document to NHDES for approval.

### **d. W&S Ordinance: Non-Payment Penalties**

Chair Houle reported on his query to NH Municipal Association (NHMA) legal if the Town can turn off a customer's water for nonpayment. NHMA answer: yes, it is legal to do so and they provided extracts of Manchester's ordinance in this regard. And Chair Houle noted that duplicate language exists in Portsmouth's ordinance. Chair Houle opined that the Town would not turn off water during the cold months, 1 Nov. to 1 Apr, and he noted that the ultimate penalty is placing a lien on the property. Discussion ensued. The commission agreed that the current non-payment fee structure/process can be improved, but that a 1 ½% penalty was not sufficiently severe to discourage late payments. Chair Houle will incorporate the various comments into a draft proposal to be discussed at the next meeting.

## **9. Any Other Business for the Board.**

Chair Houle reported on his conversation with selectmen Stewart and McGuckin regarding CWSRF Project #131, a ~\$1.1M project whose approval in the current CWSRF loan/ARPA grant application process is questionable. The impetus for deciding on whether or not to go forward with this project is a very tight timeline preceding Town Meeting that would require public hearings and development of a warrant. Chair Houle doesn't believe this loan could be supported by a near term increase in the sewer rate, already very high. He is concerned about repayment and whether or not the costs would be borne by ratepayers or taxpayers. After much discussion, Mr. While opined that the Town should apply for the full amount of the loan as the EPA will be taking note of the Town's efforts to remediate I&I (inflow and infiltration) as laid out in the 2016 Underwood Engineers (UE) Sewer Study. (A prime focus of Project #131 is to address I&I issues.) Mr. McGuckin noted that UE needs to provide the Town with additional information. Mr. Roediger opined that the taxpayers should fund this project because it is a major undertaking to benefit the whole island. The commission will await additional information from UE.

**April Meeting Date.**

Because Chair Houle will not be available for the regularly scheduled 21 April meeting, the commission agreed to change the date to Thursday, April 14, 2022, 2:00pm.

**10. Adjourn.**

There being no further business, Mr. White made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Mr. Roediger. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m..

Respectfully submitted,  
BJ Riordan  
Recording Secretary