

FINAL APPROVED
MINUTES OF THE WATER & SEWER COMMISSION MEETING
Thursday July 21, 2022
TOWN HALL CONFERENCE ROOM, 2:00 P.M.

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

Members Absent: Richard White, Walter Liff

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

1. Public Questions

None

2. Individual Applications/Petitions

- a. 115 Walton Rd.--Review of Plans

While Chair Houle had approved the application for a connection to the Quarterdeck Ln. force main, he had inadvertently not provided the members the opportunity to comment on the plans. Mr. Robillard indicated that only "Option B" of the plans would comply with the Water and Sewer Ordinance, and that he had relayed that information to Altus Engineering and would relay it also to the proposed contractor.

3. Approve Minutes of the June 16, 2022 Meeting

Mr. Roediger moved, and Mr. McGuckin seconded, to accept the minutes as drafted. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Financials

a. Commitments

Chair Houle read the commitment statements for Authorities 1 and 4. Mr. McGuckin moved to approve; Mr. Roediger seconded; motion carried unanimously.

b. Review, approve, and sign checks

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

b. Accountant's report

1. Balances as of June 30, 2022

Water:

Checking Account:	\$256,728.42
Trust Fund(Select Board)	\$103,662.09
Trust Fund (WSC)	\$57,860.77

Sewer:

Checking Account	\$265,901.01
Trust Fund (WSC)	\$42,546.99

5. Selectman's Report

Mr. McGuckin still has not heard from the City of Portsmouth as to when the next meeting regarding sewer rates would be scheduled.

6. Superintendent's Report

a. Mr. Robillard recommended that we enroll the Town into the Dig Safe protocol. The cost is "\$1.00 per ticket," probably not amounting to more than \$100/year; and it will improve utility coordination significantly. The commission concurred.

b. Mr. Robillard recommended that we purchase stickers to provide contact information regarding the Advance Meter Interface (AMI) radio transceivers to prevent them from being damaged during property renovations. He also recommended purchase of door notice cards to inform owners of public works activity. The commission concurred.

7. New Business

a. Northeast Integration (NEI) Quarterly Maintenance Report

While the report was mostly positive, Mr. Robillard and the commission are concerned about recurring problems with SCADA components (notably a Level Transducer) at the Quarterdeck Ln. station, which has resulted in numerous nuisance alarm notifications. Mr. Robillard will get with NEI to try to resolve this issue once and for all. The commission is not enamored with having to call for NEI support every time this alarm is reported at a cost of \$135/hour plus mileage.

b.NEI FY23 Maintenance Contract

NEI has proposed reducing the frequency of maintenance visits from four to two but at the same cost of \$6,000 per fiscal year and increasing the hourly "time and materials" rate from the current \$135/hour to \$150/hour. NEI advised that if we want to retain four

inspections, the cost would increase to \$9,000. As pointed out by Mr. Robillard, a most important aspect of the support contract is response time (two hours via Internet, eight hours on site), and he opined that two inspections per year was sufficient, September and March.

Motion to approve the FY23 contract was made by Mr. Ireland; seconded by Mr. McGuckin; passed unanimously.

c. Faulty Circuit Breaker at River Rd.

This problem was raised when NEI came on scene for the quarterly maintenance review late June. Given that this was the first time in memory that this had occurred, Mr. Robillard at first had recommended a “wait and see” attitude. However, the fault occurred again on 11 July and so the decision was made to get a quote from NEI and then to promptly proceed with the repair.

d. Asset Management Plan (Water) Grant Approval

Chair Houle wanted to record that the \$62,800 ARPA grant had been approved. Chair Houle, Mr. White and Mr. Robillard met on 18 July with Underwood Engineers (UE) to lay the groundwork. UE has generated ESR #21 for \$58,000 to begin the task. Next step is a mandatory kickoff meeting to include a NHDES representative present.

8. Continuing Business.

a. New England Backflow June Device Testing

Most tests were conducted 23-24 June. Four failures reported to date. Additional tests are scheduled for 27 July.

b. FY23 New Castle Water and Sewer Rates

No firm information has been received to date from City of Portsmouth as to what their final rates would be. Dep. Dir. CoP DPW has proposed these be discussed during the sewer agreement/rate negotiations. As it stands now, the forecasted New Castle rate, as recalculated last month, is water at \$8.47 per unit and sewer at \$20.80.

c. Water Meter Charge Revisited

Chair Houle shared that he could not support an earlier decision to simply adopt CoP rates because he felt they were excessive and unjustifiable. He then proceeded to spell out an alternative schedule of fees which he called “meter replacement fee.” Recall that the commission has already decided to institute a 10-year meter replacement plan. In

summary, taking into account that a 7.2% inflation rate results in a doubling of cost in 10 years, he calculated that replacement of a “standard” ¾ inch meter could be paid for by setting a meter replacement fee of \$6.50 (includes labor) per quarter; and that for a 1” meter, a fee of \$9.50 per quarter, both significantly less than the charges imposed by CoP. In essence, customers would be pre-paying meter replacement on an “installment plan” over 10 years.

Relatedly, there was discussion regarding a “fire service” fee in the case of properties which have a fire suppression system. CoP assesses monthly fees based on the fire service size (inches). This issue warrants further discussion at a future meeting.

d. Water and Sewer Ordinance Update (Round 2)

Chair Houle proposed several changes. Mr. Roediger was asked to research the CoP sewer ordinance as the proposed sewer agreement stipulates that we are to comply with the city’s document.

9. Any Other Business for the Board. None.

10. Adjourn.

Mr. Roediger made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Mr. Ireland. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 4:15p.m.