

FINAL APPROVED
MINUTES OF THE WATER & SEWER COMMISSION MEETING
Thursday, August 18, 2022
TOWN HALL CONFERENCE ROOM, 2:00 P.M.

Members Present: Normand Houle, Chairman, Walter Liff, John Ireland, Carl Roediger, Dave McGuckin (SB Liaison), John Ireland, Scott Stringham

Members Absent: Richard White, Chris Robillard, (Superintendent of Public Works) who did participate via phone for a portion of the meeting.

Also Present: Bette Jane Riordan, Recording Secretary, Mr. Lawrence Doyle

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

1. Public Questions

None

2. Individual Applications/Petitions

a. L. Doyle Request for Abatement of July Bill

Mr. Doyle, 17 Steamboat Ln., explained how failure of a water line in his irrigation system went unnoticed until he received his exceptionally high water and sewer bill. The break was hidden under a concrete landing; it has since been fixed. There were no questions from the Commission. Chair Houle relayed his research on this matter noting there would be no forgiveness for the water portion (\$1,093.26) and then addressed the sewer portion. He went back two years for the June 30 bills for that quarter. In the end, the commission voted unanimously to reduce his \$3,686.76 bill to \$1,856.91; \$1,093.26 of which is for water and \$736.65 for sewer.

3. Approve Minutes of the July 21, 2022 Meeting

Mr. Roediger moved, and Mr. McGuckin 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. Ireland 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 31 July 2022

Water:

Checking Account:	\$275,280.60
Trust Fund(Select Board)	\$103,662.09 (June 30)
Trust Fund (WSC)	\$57,860.77 (June 30)

Sewer:

Checking Account	\$259,097.99 (June 30)
Trust Fund (WSC)	\$42,546.99 (June 30)

2. Commitments

Chair Houle read the commitments for Authority 2, \$9,184.5; Authority 3, \$30,003.00; and Authority 5 (WBTS) \$62,965.50. Motion to approve was made by Mr. Ireland, seconded by Mr. Loff; motion passed unanimously.

3. Personnel Changes in the Accounting Dept.

Chair Houle stated that Lori Ruest has retired but is returning as a consultant for three days per week. Mr. McGuckin stated she will return September 1. Mr. McGuckin does not believe this is a permanent resolution. Accounting clerk Kelly Williamson will leave once Lori returns. A new assistant will be hired.

5. Selectman's Report

Mr. McGuckin brought up the issue of increased electric rates and the effect on the Town's budget. In light of significant electric bills for the pumping stations, he is concerned about the sewer budget. Chair Houle pointed out that we shall just have to wait and see when the bills come in. Mr. Stringham asked if the Town would consider alternate electric providers (other than Eversource). Mr. McGuckin said the Select Board is looking into this.

Mr. McGuckin brought up the status of sewer/septage agreement negotiations with the City of Portsmouth, noting it had been nine months since the Town broached the issue with the City. The last agreement expired some 13 years ago. Portsmouth provided the first draft of an agreement in April; the Town responded on May 26th. Numerous requests for movement have yielded no response from the City. Mr. McGuckin requested input from the commission on how to move forward; discussion ensued. Chair Houle made a motion to accept the recommended rate of the April 13, 2022 Stantec (company contracted by the City for all rate related issues) memorandum of \$11.39 per unit. Mr. McGuckin seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

6. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Robillard participated via telephone. Chair Houle reviewed with him the contents of his email summary regarding the following items:

- a. **Digsafe:** Membership is complete, and we've received 6-7 locate requests thus far.
- b. **108 Main Street:** Crisis has been averted. Meters are inside one of the rafters.
- c. **Zenner AML radios:** *Island Items* and a website push message seem to be working and about 10 new appointments have been scheduled. DPW is trying to get as many done as possible before the cold weather arrives. Chair Houle commented we are at about 40% completion.
- d. **Asset Management Plan for Water:** Mr. Robillard reported he's been in contact with Margaret Blank of Underwood Engineers and Portsmouth Computer Group (the Town's IT support contractor) to ensure the purchase of proper equipment. Margaret is following up with Luis Adorno (NHDES) to clarify some questions related to what is eligible for reimbursement (tablets, cases, set up costs, etc). He also had a conversation with Margaret about the field survey. Given that much of the main trunk of the system is already mapped from the water project, there should be plenty of time in the allocated field days to gather shutoffs. DPW is going around and marking as many shutoffs as possible ahead of formal field work. We plan to do field data collection in the coming weeks. Chair Houle added that per Mr. Adorno, if it turns out there is money left over at the end of the project, it would be acceptable to use these funds to pay for location equipment expenses. Chair Houle stated he would like a status report on the AMP work be made part of Mr. Robillard's monthly presentation to the Commission. Mr. Robillard stated that the field survey should be underway shortly.

7. New Business

a. Asset Management Plan (Water) Kickoff Meeting with NHDES

Chair Houle wanted to record that the kickoff meeting was held on August 4th and included the presence of the NHDES representative overseeing this initiative, Mr. Luis Adorno.

b. Geolocation vs. Location Equipment

The issue is whether the commission should invest in a more capable/sophisticated locator tool than had been previously agreed to at the end of FY22. Approximately \$3,300 had been set aside to purchase a basic locator. DPW has the new unit, however,

when Mr. Robillard noted with the sales representative that we would be embarking on the development of an asset management plan, the representative suggested purchase of the RTK Probe Utility Locator with Survey Grade GNSS at a cost of \$8,400.00. The total upfront cost (including other required components) would be approximately \$10,000. Since we haven't used the one we have, we could return it for credit if we purchase the more advanced piece. Mr. Robillard outlined the benefits of the newer unit. Chair Houle voiced concern about various spots in the Island where cell reception, a component of this upgraded system, is poor. Chair Houle suggested that Mr. Robillard ask the salesman to return and test the newer model for proper reception and operation. Mr. McGuckin expressed concern over the higher cost. \$6,765 would come out of the trust funds to pay for this. Mr. Roediger confirmed with Mr. Robillard that the information gathered would be entered into a GIS database. Mr. Robillard assured Chair Houle that the item would be properly secured.

After further discussion, Chair Houle made a motion to conditionally approve the purchase of the RTK Probe Utility Locator with Survey Grade GNSS, conditional upon successful performance of the unit at locations designated by the Superintendent of Public Works. The additional funds to purchase this equipment, \$6,765.25, would come from the Water and Sewer Reserve Funds equally divided: \$3,382.62 each. Mr. Ireland seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

c. Request for Reconsideration to DES of CWSRF Sawtelle Bridge Project

This project, which has to do with replacement of the sewer line under the Sawtelle Bridge, was submitted on behalf of the Town by Underwood Engineers. In the pre-application process, it did not place very high in the list of approved projects. Chair Houle wanted to record that he submitted a request for reconsideration on August 5, 2022. He probably won't hear back for a month and is not optimistic that our project will get funded.

8. Continuing Business.

a. Faulty Circuit Breaker at River Rd

Mr. Robillard reported that a request to Eversource for a disconnect is in. He is waiting for a work order invoice from Eversource because they will not schedule the work until they are paid. Northeast Integration (NEI) has the part. Mr. Robillard assured the Commission that NEI has been advised the work is "not to exceed \$2,000." He will work with the accounting office to ensure the Town does not delay until the next meeting to pay for the work. Luckily, the breaker has only tripped once in the past few weeks. So, while a nuisance, especially on the weekends, it has not been overly problematic.

b. Recurring Problems with SCADA Components

NEI is aware of our concerns and they will work with DFS on a solution. Mr. Robillard and NEI agreed to deal with the River Road breaker issue before delving into this one.

c. NHDES Informed of Select Board Adoption of Cross-Connection Program

Chair Houle wanted to record that, as required by NHDES, the Select Board had formally adopted the program at its August 2, 2022 meeting.

d. Water Meter Charge Revisited - Fire Service Fee

After lengthy discussion, the commission has concluded that a fire service fee is not warranted. Mr. Robillard suggested that, if there are water meters on water service uniquely dedicated to fire service, they should be removed.

e. Water and Sewer Ordinance Update (Round 3)

The main body of the ordinance is nearly complete. Next up for review is the appendix regarding fees.

9. Any Other Business for the Board.

Chair Houle reported that he had been contacted by Terry Golter of the Cemetery Trustees regarding water service at Riverside Cemetery. Chair Houle summarized his experience with his church regarding the provision of water service at one of their cemeteries. There are issues of seasonal meter use to be considered. Mr. Robillard said they could have a meter.

10. Adjourn.

Mr. Liff made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Mr. Roediger. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 4:25 p.m..

Respectfully submitted,
BJ Riordan
Recording Secretary