

**FINAL APPROVED**  
**MINUTES OF THE WATER & SEWER COMMISSION MEETING**  
**Thursday, September 15, 2022**  
**TOWN HALL CONFERENCE ROOM, 2:00 P.M.**

**Members Present:** Normand Houle, Chairman, Walter Liff, John Ireland, Chris Robillard, (Superintendent of Public Works) arrived at 3:45pm, Dave McGuckin (SB Liaison), Scott Stringham

**Members Absent:** Richard White, Carl Roediger

**Also Present:** Bette Jane Riordan, Recording Secretary, Cory Belden, Altus Engineering, Luke Michelin, 115 Walton Rd.

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

**1. Public Questions.** None

**2. Individual Applications/Petitions**

**a. Request for Waiver, L. Michelin 115 Walton Rd.**

Property owner, Mr. Luke Michelin, and Altus engineer Cory Belden were present to request a waiver from the ordinance requirement to have a 500 gallon holding tank. In light of significant ledge on the property, they are seeking to install a E/ONE EXTREME DH071 self contained grinder pump station which, according to literature provided to the commission "is a complete unit that includes: the grinder pump, check valve HDPE tank, controls and alarm panel...a popular choice for one average single-family home..." Mr. Belden noted that the City of Portsmouth has allowed installation of this type of product in the Banfield Rd. and Sagamore Rd. areas where ledge has been regularly encountered.

Discussion ensued with concern focused on performance and capacity (70 gallons) in the event of a power outage. Mr. White, though not present, had emailed the commissioners questioning why the old 1000 gallon tank could not be used. Answer: the old tank is not of solid concrete; rather, it is made of cinder block and was not a viable alternative. Regarding power outages, Messrs. Belden and Michelin reported that the house has a whole-house backup emergency generator.

Chair Houle voiced concern about the pump's capability to pump into the force main. Mr. Belden responded that the pump would be able to pump into the force main. After receiving comment from the members, Chair Houle opined that the decision should be based on harm that could come to the town, and that per the ordinance, the Town bears no responsibility for any failure of the implementation, and that all responsibility/liability

lies with the property owner. Mr. Michelin acknowledged his responsibility/liability in this regard.

A vote was taken to grant the waiver, 4-1, with Mr. Ireland preferred the 500-gallon tank requirement.

In closing, Chair Houle suggested that the commission consider updating the ordinance to allow for this newer technology. Mr. McGuckin emphasized that protection of the Town's interests need to be clearly stated and that property owners bear all risks.

### **3. Approve Minutes of the August 18, 2022 Meeting**

Mr. Stringham moved, and Mr. Ireland seconded, to accept the minutes as drafted. 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. Stringham. Motion carried unanimously.

#### **b. Accountant's report**

##### **1. Balances as of August 31, 2022**

###### **Water:**

Checking Account:	\$288,542.48
Trust Fund(Select Board)	\$66,673.33 (Jul 31)
Trust Fund (WSC)	\$57,870.52 (Jul 31)

###### **Sewer:**

Checking Account	\$236,116.36
Trust Fund (WSC)	\$42,554.16 (Jul 31)

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

#### **a. Negotiation with the City of Portsmouth**

Mr. McGuckin reported that negotiations with the City of Portsmouth regarding the sewer agreement are ongoing.

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

In his absence away for training, Mr. Robillard had provided the commission with an email written report regarding the following items:

- a. River Rd. Circuit Breaker. Pre-payment to Eversource was among the accounts payable reported earlier. Once paid, Eversource will call to schedule suspension of power to the station. No circuit breaker faults to report over the last month,
- b. Asset Management. Field work has been recently completed. DPW has located roughly 270 of approximately 350 services. They are confident about others but do not want to mark them since they are paved over or on private property such as in flower beds. Mr. Robillard is working with PCG, the Town's IT support service, regarding hardware/software purchases. He has a quote from them and will work with Margaret Block (Underwood Engineers) to ensure all is set. Since everything must be purchased before we can submit for reimbursement from DES, he is working to streamline the process.

Regarding the issue of curb stops likely being on private property, whether under driveways/paths/flower beds, Chair Houle suggested that we might have to send out letters to owners indicating that they bear responsibility for property damages should DPW have to turn off water service for whatever reason, notably in the event of flooding inside a structure.

- c. Geolocator Tool. Tests were successfully conducted at several locations in town to confirm coverage; "conditional approval" was achieved. The "upgraded" geolocator will be purchased.

- d. NEI SCADA issues. As before, the River Rd. circuit breaker needs to be resolved before these are addressed.

- e. Zenner (AMI) Radios. About 50% installed. Still working on getting owners to make appointments. The door hangers and notices in *Island Items* and on the Town website have been effective.

- f. Tools to be purchased with FY22 encumbered funds. Still working. Supply chain issues continue to impact.

- g. Fire Service Fees. Mr. Robillard has input to provide. This will likely be reviewed at next month's meeting.

- h. Safety Building Water Meter. It is presently not metered and, like other Town property receiving water service, it should be. This will likely be discussed at next month's meeting.

i. Water Meter Charge. While this has been discussed at prior meetings, Mr. Robillard has additional input to consider. This will likely be discussed at next month's meeting.

## **7. New Business**

### **a. Planning Loan for Force Main Replacement at Sawtelle Bridge.**

For the benefit of the Town, Underwood Engineers submitted a "pre-application" for the FY22 CWSRF "competition." The project did not "make the cut." However, NHDES has offered the Town \$100K in planning money for this project. Chair Houle raised the question as to whether the Select Board could unilaterally approve a bond for this amount, or would it have to go the warrant article route for approval at Town Meeting? Chair Houle asked permission from Mr. McGuckin to contact legal counsel for a reading on the issue. Mr. McGuckin noted that the Town is not charged for inquiries to the NH Municipal Association, but to Town Legal Counsel it is. Chair Houle will follow up.

Mr. McGuckin suggested establishing a trust fund via warrant at Town Meeting for projects like this one. Chair Houle noted that this sort of project is why we have a capital reserve line in the budget. But this project is currently estimated at \$1.1M. Thus, it is unlikely that the rate payers would be able to ever fund it on their own. We would need lots of "free money," whether loan forgiveness or grants.

Mr. Stingham asked if there was a written report regarding the condition of the line under the Sawtelle Bridge. Answer: yes, there had been a visual inspection in 2020 which resulted in the replacement of approximately 15 hoops that hold the line in place.

**b. Lack of Water Meter in Safety Building.** Postponed and see Superintendent's comment above.

## **8. Continuing Business.**

**a. Faulty Circuit Breaker at River Rd.** In process and see Superintendent's comment above.

**b. Geolocation vs Location Equipment Purchase.** In process and see Superintendent's comment above.

**c. Recurring Problems with SCADA Components.** See Superintendent's comment above.

**d. Water Meter Charge - Decision.** While the commission had discussed this issue at length in a prior meeting, a decision to proceed and apply a fee had not been taken.

However, recognizing that the utility does not have the size of all meters registered in a database, it is impossible to apply the fee. Implementation indefinitely postponed.

**e. Water and Sewer Ordinance Update.** Chair Houle presented proposed changes/edits.

**9. Any Other Business for the Board.** None.

**10. Adjourn.**

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

Respectfully submitted,  
BJ Riordan  
Recording Secretary