

FINAL APPROVED
MINUTES OF THE WATER & SEWER COMMISSION MEETING
Thursday April 20, 2023
TOWN HALL CONFERENCE ROOM, 1:00 P.M.

Members Present: Normand Houle, Chairman, Chris Robillard, (Superintendent of Public Works), Richard White, Dave McGuckin (SB Liaison), Scott Stringham

Members Absent: Carl Roediger

Also Present: Bette Jane Riordan, Recording Secretary

Chair Normand Houle opened the meeting at 1:00 p.m. with a quorum present.

1. Public Questions. None

2. Individual Applications/Petitions. None.

3. Approve Minutes of the March 16, 2023 Meeting

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

4. Financials

a. Commitments

Chair Houle read the commitments as follows:

- a. Authority 1 (northside) \$66,653.50
- b. Authority 4 (USCG) \$982.68

Mr. White made a motion to accept the commitments as specified; Mr. Stringham seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

b. Accountant's report

1. Balances (as of March 31, 2023)

Water:

Checking Account:	\$242,425.64
Trust Fund(Select Board)	\$58,242.02 (Feb 28)
Trust Fund (WSC)	\$77,972.31 (Feb 28)

Sewer:

Checking Account	\$334,637.27
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2. Review, approve, and sign checks

Prior to approving checks, Chair Houle wanted to address agenda item 8.b. Northeast Integration (NEI) Assessment of River Road Meter Accuracy. Chair Houle had exchanged emails with Dylan Kimmel who was standing by his evaluation of the Badger meter, that it was measuring accurately. The commission was not impressed with NEI's level of analysis. Chair Houle noted that Mr. Kimmel had indicated a possibility of trying another device to evaluate accuracy. Chair Houle welcomed the trial so long as it would be at no cost to the Town. Mr. Robillard stated he would speak with Mr. Kimmel regarding the issue. Lesson learned: With the Town under pressure to promptly resolve a meter discrepancy issue, we had rushed to a possible solution. In the future, we need to adhere to a more formal assessment of requirement. Further, we should consider alternate vendors for services which are not necessarily NEI's expertise.

Chair Houle read the checks as presented. Mr. White made a motion to approve the checks as a read; seconded by Mr. Stringham. Motion carried with three in favor (Houle, White, Stringham) and one abstention (McGuckin).

5. Selectman's Report

Mr. McGuckin reported that negotiations continue with the City of Portsmouth regarding the sewer agreement, and that we are awaiting resolution of the meter discrepancy between our meter at River Rd. and the one at the Peirce Island WWTF. Mr. Robillard updated the commission regarding the meter issue and is working with Portsmouth on comparative readings.

Chair Houle reported that the new Water and Sewer Ordinance was approved and adopted by the Select Board at its April 17, 2023 meeting.

6. Superintendent's Report

a. Mr. Robillard reported progress on introducing the meter replacement fee into Accufund. He also recommended additional software functionality such as an interface between metering and billing, and facilitating the application of ancillary charges such as backflow prevention device testing. The commission approved the introduction of credit card payments, a convenience feature which will be at the expense of customers. There will be Accufund charges to introduce these software enhancements. The sense of the commission was to proceed with these enhancements as soon as possible, rather than wait until the next fiscal year.

b. Mr. Stringham asked about the status of the illegal sump pump at a Main Street property. Mr. Robillard reported that the sump pump had been disconnected, and that it was the property owner's problem to resolve. Further, for the record, he noted that a "sump pump surcharge" that Chair Houle had proposed cannot be considered because mixing stormwater/groundwater and wastewater is prohibited by federal and/or state law.

7. New Business

a. Electrical Systems Upgrade Progress Report

Chair Houle noted that Mr. Sharpe of Underwood Engineers would be providing summary reports of activity coincident with the submission of invoices, and that these would be shared with the members as occurring.

b. Town Meeting Warrant Article, Planning for Force Main Bridge Replacement

Chair Houle reminded the members of the warrant article and encouraged them to attend Town Meeting to vote in favor.

8. Continuing Business.

a. DPW Winterizing of WBTS Master Association Hydrants

Chair Houle reported Messrs. White and Roediger did draft a white paper outlining the requirements for maintenance and testing of private hydrants. Mr. Roediger also met with Fire Chief Hartmann to provide background and rationale for terminating this winterizing service. In summary, the commission is recommending that DPW discontinue this maintenance in light of liability concerns. Mr. Robillard expressed his willingness to continue winterizing. The commission disagrees. During discussion, the commission learned that there are two private hydrants on the northside serviced by the water utility. They have never been winterized by our DPW and for liability reasons identical to the MA situation, the commission believes they should not be.

Chair Houle will formally send Mr. McGuckin an email which explains the commission's concerns and recommendation to discontinue the service, for his further relay to the full select board.

b. Northeast Integration Assessment of River Rd. Meter Accuracy

See the discussion at item 4.b.2 Review, Approve and Sign Checks.

9. Any Other Business for the Board.

It appears the Historical Society will be installing an irrigation system as part of the grounds beautification effort. They need to be informed of the need for a backflow prevention device.

Mr. White has opined that we should try to define the “sewer basins,” one for each pump station defined by the geographic area served, to compare water consumed by customers in each basin vs. sewer they produce to get a better understanding of factors which may be contributing to inflow and infiltration.

Mr. Robillard reported he had received spec sheets from EJ Prescott for manhole frames and covers that can be effectively sealed from outside elements at a cost of \$890 each. These will be considered as alternatives to the expensive Neenah Type A manholes (\$2-3K each) which we have in stock to replace the manholes where we have air release valves (Mainmast & Walton; and upper Portsmouth Ave.)

Chair Houle reported that a public hearing had been held at the 17 April select board meeting for the \$30K asset management plan for the sewer infrastructure. Proper documentation was signed and Chair Houle has sent it on to NHDES. We hope to get a “green light” to proceed some time this summer.

10. Adjourn.

Mr. White made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Mr. Stringham. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 3:15 p.m..

Respectfully submitted,
BJ Riordan
Recording Secretary