

## **FINAL APPROVED**

### **MINUTES OF THE WATER & SEWER COMMISSION MEETING THURSDAY, AUGUST 24, 2023, TOWN HALL CONFERENCE ROOM, 1:00 P.M.**

**Members Present:** Richard White, Chairman, Pam Cullen, SB Liaison, Carl Roediger, Scott Stringham, Chris Robillard, Superintendent of Public Works.

**Also Present:** Bette Jane Riordan, Recording Secretary, Residents Lorn Buxton, Larry Doyle, Stephen Johnson.

Chair White opened the meeting at 1:00 p.m., noting a quorum. He introduced potential candidates for positions on the Water Sewer Commission as either full voting members or alternates. Chair White noted the difficulty of finding people who are willing to serve in Town government and the challenges associated with recruitment. The Commission has been short-staffed for a number of years, but thanks to the efforts of Scott Stringham in putting out a notice of vacancies, several people have come forward. Chair White thanked Scott for his work.

**1. Public Questions.** None

**2. Individual Applications/Petitions:** None

**3. Approve Minutes of July 20, 2023.**

After review, Chair White called for a Motion. Mr. Stringham made a Motion to Approve the July 20, 2023 minutes of the Water Sewer Commission as presented. Mr. Roediger seconded, and the motion was carried unanimously.

**4. Financials.**

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

After reviewing the sewer invoices and checks, Chair White called for a Motion. Mr. Stringham made a Motion to Approve the sewer checks as presented. Mr. Roediger seconded, and the motion was carried unanimously.

After reviewing the water checks, Mr. Stringham made a Motion to Approve the water checks as presented. Mr. Roediger seconded, and the motion was carried unanimously.

**b. Commitments.**

Chair White read the following Commitments for approval by the Commission:

Authority 2 (Lavengers Lane, Spring Hill area) \$11,086.40. (Sewer usage for 3 months)

Authority 3 (Marina Heights, Ducks Head, Mill Pond, Old Bay). \$30,222.40 (Sewer usage for 3 months)

Chair White explained that these commitments were required by the Town's Auditor and cover those residents who are on the Portsmouth Water system and New Castle sewer system.

For Wentworth by The Sea (WBTS), for April, May, June, the Town is billing \$70,824.00 for sewer usage.

Chair White called for a Motion. Mr. Stringham made a Motion to Approve Authorities 2,3 and WBTS Commitments as presented. Mr. Roediger seconded, and the Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Roediger had asked if the Town was billing on split rates, due to the change in sewer rate, but Mr. Robillard said that new rates would not be recognized or reflected until later in the next billing cycle.

Chair White stated that he needed a Motion on an additional invoice to approve payment to Brisbane Co. for software enhancements for sewer portion. The Commission earlier approved the water payment to Brisbane. Mr. Roediger moved to approve the check as written, which was seconded by Mr. Stringham. Motion carried unanimously.

**c. Accountant's report – Balances. Covers the month of July 2023.**

**Water:**

Checking : \$233,068.75

Trust: \$53,283.95

Cap Resv: \$79,027.15

**Sewer:**

Checking: \$188,139.00

Trust: \$0.08

Cap Resv: \$92,277.69

Mr. Roediger questioned the status of the irrigation situation at 62 Main Street. Chair White had responded to the owner who had asked not to be charged late fees. (\$20.00 per month; customer had \$1000 bill). He has a problem with his irrigation system and asked the Town to forgive late fees until he solves the problem with the system. Chair White asked him to shut his system off until it can be repaired. Mr. Robillard confirmed the customer had just paid his bill.

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

Selectwoman Cullen asked for what is expected for her to report. Chair White explained as she is the liaison between the Board and Commission she would report on what the Select Board may do which affects the Commission's business or would be useful for Commission to be aware of.

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

Mr.. Robillard reported as follows on non-agenda items.

### **Backflow prevention device permit fee.**

Mr. Robillard wanted to clarify the process going forward now that Mr. Houle is no longer on the Commission. Originally no fee was charged for the initial issuance of the backflow prevention device. He wanted to know if we were going forward to charge a fee. The ordinance does require a fee be charged. Discussion ensued. The \$40 fee would be to cover administrative costs associated with such things as property changing ownership. The initial period of time is five years, then the customer would be billed the fee to cover the next five years. The permit is good for 5 years but there is an annual inspection. The homeowner is responsible for the device. This process is pretty much directed by NH DES. We currently have 55 devices issued. All new owners will be contacted by DPW. It was the sense of the Commission to proceed as recommended. Mr. Roediger stressed the fact that this fee is to cover the additional and administrative time done by DPW and the accountant to meet the requirements outlined.

### **Waste Water Asset Management Plan .**

Our Water Asset Management Plan has a grant in the amount of \$57,000, which included a number of additional things, one of which is a rate analysis. Usually these grants are around \$30,000 and are more bareboned than ours. Mr. Houle, former Chair, had suggested doing the same thing with the sewer side but not be part of the grant, but Commission would pay for that. He planned for Underwood Engineering to be involved. Mr. Robillard mentioned this at the kick off meeting and was wondering if the Commission was still interested in pursuing this for the sewer side. Underwood would put together a scope of work and fee for the Commission's review and approval. Discussion ensued. Mr. Stringham asked if the cost was included in the budget, and Mr. Robillard indicated it was not in the capital budget. He noted some lines in the budget might be utilized or use of capital reserve funds. It was the sense of the Commission to allow Mr. Robillard to proceed with checking with Underwood for a proposal. He noted that fire service and meter replacement fees which were enacted this year have gone into effect with the new fiscal year and will be seen by customers in the October billing. Mr. Roediger stated the fire services fee is \$15.00 per quarter and the meter replacement fee is based on size.

Mr. Robillard proceeded to address the Agenda Items.

## **Water Asset Management Plan.**

Proceeding on schedule.

## **Sewer Asset Management Plan.**

Kick off event/meeting for stakeholders was held last week with Underwood and DES. Mr. Robillard reported that the Town has to do a level of service work shop. Water and Sewer level of service workshops will be combined and will take place later this fall. It is expected that a number of town officials will need to attend, including Fire, Police and school personnel.

## **Sewer Smoke Testing**

Mr. Robillard has completed the report having received results from the company that performed the test, which documents the 8 findings of deficiencies. Letters will be going out to homeowners who are in violation. Chair White would like a PDF version and Selectwoman Cullen would like to attach the report to these minutes of the Commission. Mr. Robillard will try and get an electronic version. Chair White noted that the Town has been approved for the I&I study and he assumes at some point that NH DES will be looking for this report. It also relates as documentation to support our compliance efforts with the EPA. Selectwoman Cullen asked the potential candidates to ask any questions about the smoke testing.

## **2023 Big Ticket Purchases Update**

Mr. Robillard reported he had no new information. He has 2 more items to purchase. Chair White asked him to check with the Finance Administrator about the deadline for purchases.

## **Pre-treatment of Industrial Waste Update** **Grease trap inventory?**

Mr. Robillard and the Portsmouth designee toured all 8 of the food establishments on the Island. to discuss the grease trap issues. Next month he will be issuing grease trap permits for all of those establishments. The Town will mirror Portsmouth's program already in operation. We are a co-permittee with Portsmouth. It is an annual permit and the entity must produce their clean logs showing they are in compliance. The inspections will be done by a third party. The fee for the permit is \$75.00. ( Initial is \$150 with \$75 annually thereafter.)

## **Watertight manhole frames & covers installation:** **Piscataqua Street – Update**

Mr. Robillard is meeting with another company next week to get a proposal and will report back.

## **NHDES Leak Detection Survey Grant due 7/31/2023-Update.**

Mr. Robillard reported we have applied and receipt has been acknowledged so we are in the que.

## **Water/Sewer Software Enhancements, Credit Card Payments-Complete?**

We are 90% done with implementation. The credit card portal is active and residents can pay their water sewer utility bills on our website should they so choose. The last item to be completed is the meter replacement fee.

## **June 2023 Backflow Testing Update. Complete?**

NCHS back flow device needs to be tested so they can be issued a permit. There a couple of more to be tracked down from the June testing. Mr. Robillard will report back.

## **Annual Lead/Copper Testing Update**

DPW has completed this. (20 done)

Town Administrator John Scruton introduced himself to the members and candidates. He reported that the Town has signed and sent in the original loan agreement for the force main bridge replacement plan. (\$100,000). He thanked all for their willingness to do public service.

## **Portsmouth Ave Sewer Air Release Valve Replacement Update.**

Mac Construction is preferred contractor, and Mr. Robillard will be in contact and report back.

## **New Business.**

### **a. NHDES WW SAG Project Priority List -FYI**

#### **i. WW Pump Stations on the 2027 & Beyond List Additional 30K Grant**

Chair White has reported that our projects are on the list.

### **b. NH DES Clean Water SRF 2023 Priority List FYI**

#### **i. Sewer Manhole Remediation Phase 1 -#1 on the infrastructure list.**

#### **ii. Force Main Bridge Crossing Replacement - #76 on the infrastructure list**

#### **iii. Force Main Bridge Crossing Replacement - #26 on the planning list.**

#### **iv. Stormwater Asset Management Program - # 4 on the asset management programs (FYI Only).(While this has nothing to do with Water Sewer, Chair White wanted to recognize Mr. Robillard's work on this project.**

## **8. Continuing Business.**

### **a. New Members to WSC**

#### **i. Can we have more than 2 Alternate Commissioners-investigation.**

#### **ii. Nominations need to be at a regular meeting.**

#### **iii. Candidates:**

Lorn Buxton, Larry Doyle, Jim Rini, Stephen Johnson, Fred Pulitzer.

Chair White said the Commission can have five full time members. We currently have 4 full time members. We are allowed to have two alternates. We are planning to ask the Select Board to allow the Commission to have 4 alternates. When a full time member is absent, the alternate steps in with full voting power. Otherwise alternates can participate in all discussion, but not as a voting member. Chair White called for a Motion.

Mr. Roediger made a Motion to recommend that the Water & Sewer Commission request the Select Board to approve increasing the number of alternate members from 2-4. Mr. Stringham seconded, and Motion carried unanimously.

Chair White stated next item is to recommend particular persons and called for a Motion.

Mr. Roediger made a Motion to recommend to the Select Board to add Lorn Buxton as a regular member of the Water & Sewer Commission. Mr. Stringham seconded and the Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Roediger made a Motion to recommend that the Select Board add Lawrence Doyle to the Water & Sewer Commission as an alternate member; to add Jim Rini to the Water & Sewer Commission as an alternate member; and to add Steve Johnson as an alternate member. Mr. Stringham seconded and the Motion carried unanimously.

Selectwoman Cullen pointed out that Mr. Buxton term is filling out the remainder of Norm Houle's term. The others will serve three year terms.

b. Sewer Asset Management Project Contract with UE.  
(Received NHDES approval on 8/8/2023.)

c. Sewer Pump Station Electrical Upgrades.  
2023-07-27 UE's Status Report. Chair White gave background to the candidates regarding the need to get the new electrical equipment (generators) up in the air, due to sea level rise and other factors. He also stressed that the job of the Commission is to keep the water and sewer systems functioning. Mr. Robillard explained about the issues with the Scada system and how that works for the benefit of the candidates.

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

**a. Next Meeting date September 21, 2023 @ 1PM.**

## **10. ADJOURN**

There being no further business to come before the Board, Mr. Stringham. Made a Motion to Adjourn, which was seconded by Mr. Roediger. Motion carried unanimously.  
Meeting adjourned at 2:25 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Bette Jane Riordan, Recording Secretary.