

FINAL APPROVED

**MINUTES OF THE WATER & SEWER COMMISSION MEETING THURSDAY,
January 18,2024
TOWN HALL CONFERENCE ROOM, 1:00 P.M.**

Members Present: Richard White, Chairman, , Carl Roediger, Scott Stringham, Lorn Buxton, Stephen Johnson, Alternate, Jim Rini, Alternate, Chris Robillard, Director of Public Works.

Members Absent: Select Board Member Pam Cullen, Larry Doyle, Alternate.

Also Present: Bette Jane Riordan, Recording Secretary.

Noting a quorum, Chair White opened the meeting at 1:02 PM. Voting members are Chair White, Carl Roediger, Scott Stringham, Lorn Buxton.

The Chair proceeded to the Agenda.

1. Public Questions. None

2. Individual Applications/Petitions: None

3. Approve Minutes of the December 21, 2023 Meeting .

After review of Revised Draft Minutes, Chair White called for a motion.

MOTION: To Approve the Minutes of the December 21, 2023 Meeting of the Water and Sewer Commission as amended.

MOTION: L.BUXTON
SECOND: S. STRINGHAM
UNANIMOUS

4. Financials.

a. Review, approve and sign checks.

Water: After review, Chair White called for a motion.

MOTION: To Approve the water utility checks as read and presented.

MOTION: L.BUXTON
SECOND: C. ROEDIGER
UNANIMOUS

Sewer: After review, Chair White called for a motion.

MOTION: To approve the sewer utility checks as read and presented.

MOTION: C.ROEDIGER

SECOND: L.BUXTON

UNANIMOUS

Chair White acknowledged Mr. Roediger's inquiry on status of alternate voting and making motions. He clarified that alternates do not vote on items, but if a member is absent, the Chair will designate an alternate for that meeting to be able to vote. Otherwise alternates are welcome to participate in all discussions and ask questions, but cannot offer motions.

b. Accountant's Report.

Chair White related the following figures from the Financial Administrator:

Water

Checking Acct.	\$227,905.67
Trust Balance: (Select Board)	\$53,979.55
Cap. Reserve Balance: (W&S)	\$107,917.82

Sewer

Checking Acct.	\$314,77.26
Trust Balance (Select Board)	\$.08
Cap. Reserve Balance (W&S)	\$204,918.33

5. Select Board Member's Report. None at this time.

Chair White noted he has the monthly reports and will scan them to members and alternates. We are 50% expended, and the budget is in good shape.

6. Superintendent's Report.

a. 2023 Big Ticket items: No changes.

b. Water/Sewer Software Enhancements, Credit Card Payments, (No changes)

He noted previously that this will be resolved in February.

c. Sewer Smoke Testing and Draft Letter to homeowners.

Director Robillard reported he has completed the draft letter and will forward to Chair White. The letter outlines the responsibilities of the homeowners to correct the identified problems.

d. Sewer Manhole Remediation Phase 1. 2023 CWSRF Project.

Director Robillard reported on the need for a Warrant Article for approximately \$65,000 net, as it is an SRF loan. He is working with Underwood for scheduling decisions. Chair White wants construction to begin this summer, but noted that the loan monies will not be available until sometime in the fall, when it is acted upon by the Governor and Executive Council. The Chair explained the process to the Commission members, which includes, first going before the Town in the May 2024 meeting, then going before the Governor and Executive Council.

Chair White stated he wants to address the inflow situation, and asked the Commission if they would agree with going forward with the work that needs to be done and float the costs from our Capital Reserves. He believes that \$77,000 may not be enough to cover costs. He explained about the wetlands permitting process and how Underwood Engineering will cost \$2500 to guide through the maintenance, known as “SPN-Permit”. Chair White wants to start the project sooner, and proposed taking the \$2500 out of a sewer line item in the budget. Mr. Roediger noted that the Town may have to comply with the State rules and regulations, including Buy American and Davis Bacon Act. Mr. Robillard stated as it is a loan those regulations would apply. Mr. Johnson discussed that by his rough calculations, the 22 manhole covers to be purchased would cost about \$1000 each if purchased outside of the US saving \$22,000 which would be more than the \$17,000 loan forgiveness if the project is done using Town funds from capital reserves. Discussion ensued involving whether or not to use capital reserves and how to fund the Town’s share in paying off the loan. Could the Commission bump the cost into the rate? These issues will need to be decided at the Commission’s February 15th meeting. The Planning Board will need to weigh in on the local permit issue. (See last meeting’s minutes for discussion of that issue.) Mr. Roediger expressed his preference for the Town going ahead and using capital reserves. Mr. Johnson pointed out the benefits of this avenue, with cost savings on interest and a year of inflow. The \$22,000 figure may be low so Chair White asked for the difference in costs between American and European made covers. Mr. Robillard noted there are many types of covers which are in fact watertight, and will report back on costs. Mr. Roediger also wanted to know about the expiration date for the permit. Mr. Johnson pointed out that by going the capital reserves route, there would be no need for a Warrant Article.

e. Portsmouth Avenue Sewer Air Release Valve Replacement Update On schedule.

f. Camera Piscataqua Street Sewer Main Spring 2024

Director Robillard reported that he is waiting on availability of MAC Construction. He also reported he intends to “camera” the Piscataqua Street Sewer Main in the Spring of 2024. He had previously outlined a schedule for sewer pipe inspection. Usually 5 years is the standard time for completing all inspections. He stated he prefers the collection basin method with one iteration in the collective areas and gave an estimate of \$10,000 to do the Steam Boat Lane area. The other areas include the Laurel Lane locale. Chair White summarized by stating that 3 basins will be done every three years. There was brief discussion of handling private lines during the camera process.

g. Force Main Wrap Around minor leak Sawtelle Bridge (Previously discussed as resolved)

h. Cleaning of the grease at Quarterdeck Lane Pump Station – Billing WBTS Hotel

After discussion of the billing methodology, the Chair called for a Motion.

MOTION: To approve billing WBTS Hotel 1/3 of the bill for costs incurred with the wet well.

MOTION: L.BUXTON
SECOND: C.ROEDIGER
UNANIMOUS

Storm Surge Inflows.

Director Robillard provided an overview of the extent of the effects of the two recent storms, and went over the variations pre, during, and post storms. He described the situation at UNH where there was a break in the sewer line sometime during the storms which had to be repaired, and he agreed that UNH will need to pay for the septic truck and related repairs. These repairs included labor costs and 2 truck loads by Chris-Co. Mr. Johnson asked Director Robillard about the pipe. He noted it is now fixed. The bill will include the following for equipment and labor: (\$600.90)(\$630.00)for a total of \$1230.90.Graphics regarding the storm surge inflows can be viewed by contacting Mr. Robillard or Select Board Office.

MOTION: To Authorize and Invoice the amount listed regarding the January 10,2024 seawater inflow to the sewer system as a result of the sewer pipe breakage at the UNH property.

MOTION: S.STRINGHAM
SECOND: L.BUXTON
UNANIMOUS

Chair White noted the enormity and severity of the inflow and infrastructure situation and the need to go forward with the projects at hand. Director Robillard spoke about his acquiring a precipitation monitor, and how that would be helpful to his department.

7. NEW BUSINESS.

a. FY 2023 Annual Town Report due by 2/24/24.

Chair White is working with Carl Roediger and Normand Houle, former Chair to produce a draft which will be distributed to the Commission.

b. Steamboat Lane Pump Station.

Director Robillard stated he needs a new access ladder to the drywell. He also asked the Commission to consider upgrading to submergible pumps.

8. CONTINUING BUSINESS.

a. Town Master Plan – All set

b. Ordinance Change -Water Sewer Billing Cycles: Reviewed Section 5.4.1.

Mr. Roediger is working on the draft. Director Robillard reviewed the late fees section to make sure it is correct.

c. FY 2025 Budget Draft – Director Robillard.

Ist Draft Due 1/18/2024

Final Due 2/3/21/2024.

Chair White explained the budget process and Director Robillard gave highlights of the proposed budget for both water and sewer. Mr. Stringham asked for a history of actual expenditures versus budgeted amounts. Director Robillard has them for years 2019-2023. Chair White asked that this information be provided, and Director Robillard will check with Finance Administrator Lori Ruest and report back.

d. Irons in the Fire: Chair White revising this section. Intent is to add a topic to Agenda Items entitled O&M. (Operations and Maintenance)

e. Underwood Engineering.

Chair White noted that the Commission still needs Underwood’s Asset Management information.

Chair White stated that the Commission will nail down the budget at the February meeting, and will also need to get updated information from the City of Portsmouth.

9. Any Other Business for the Board: None.

NEXT MEETING: FEBRUARY 15,2024 1:00PM

10. Adjourn

Mr. Buxton made a Motion to Adjourn, which was seconded by Mr. Stringham. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 2:20

Respectfully submitted,

Bette Jane Riordan
Recording Secretary.