

MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC WORKS COMMISSION  
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 9, 2014 – 2pm

1. Present: Chairman Walter Liff, Supr. Steven Tabbutt, Ex-Officio Selectman Dave McGuckin, Secretary Pamela Cullen

Members Present: John Ireland, Normand Houle, Walter Glidden

Alternates Absent: Chet Fessenden, with Reg Whitehouse arriving at 4:30pm

In attendance: Debra Knowles

Guests: Paxton Mitchell, Morgan Hagg, Edmund Tarbell

2. Chairman Liff called the meeting to order at 2pm to review and continue working on updating the Water/Sewer Ordinances. Liff then called the formal meeting together at 3pm.

3. Chairman Liff reviewed and read the checks to the Board. Normand Houle made a motion to approve the checks as written. John Ireland seconded the motion. Motion carried.

4. John Ireland made a motion to accept minutes of December 11, 2013 as amended. Walter Glidden seconded the motion. Motion carried.

5. Old business:

a. Separating Trust Funds - Accountant Deb Knowles explained that she was asked by Selectman Buxton to discuss the recent meeting about the Trust Funds. She said that Roland Bergeron, town auditor, and Selectman Buxton met to discuss the separating of the water and sewer trust funds. Bergeron suggested reversing some of the journal entries that were originally done regarding the depreciation accounts. Knowles said that when Roberge was in the office, he did not give an estimate of time nor cost. Selectman McGuckin said he would still like to know approximately what the cost would be.

b. Grease trap - Selectman McGuckin said that along with himself, Steve Tabbutt and Walter Liff, they met at the hotel to see the newly installed second grease trap. The second grease pit will allow more cooling time. McGuckin explained the proximity of the pit to the original pit. McGuckin added that we have the name of the engineer for references regarding the grease pit. When the tank is pumped, the engineer will call Tabbutt to witness the grease that is collected. The Board discussed having a need for a base line and possibly taking pictures of the pit and having a paper trail with dates and times as well as at the pumping station at Quarter Deck Lane. Houle asked about the water temperature to see if this was brought up during the meeting as the temperature had been a little higher than prescribed. It was decided talk to Don Grave about the water temperature.

6. New business:

a. 152 Portsmouth Avenue – Paxton Mitchell introduced himself and explained he was here today to discuss the water and sewer bill for 152 Portsmouth Avenue. Mitchell said that he has rented from Ed Tarbell for some time, and came to dispute the most recent water/sewer bill in the amount of \$1,576.07. He then introduced Morgan Haag who also lives at 152 Portsmouth Avenue. He gave a history of the water bills and what took place when Tarbell hooked up into the sewer. Tarbell received a sewer bill going back only to the beginning of the fiscal year rather

than when it was originally hooked into the sewer system. The town overlooked billing this property until an audit was done of the records showing that Tarbell had never been billed for the sewer after tying into the town system. The town presented Tarbell with a water and sewer bill last April albeit should have been for a couple of years, to the beginning of the fiscal year. Mitchell then explained that he and Tarbell talked about how to come up with the new water/sewer amount and worked out a financial agreement for the future. Mitchell then said that the usage was wrong with the town charging him for 150 Portsmouth Avenue's units. After this discovery of incorrect billing, Accountant Knowles recreated the correct usage for each account and presented to the tenants

Morgan Haag explained how she and Mitchell ended up coming to the meeting today because of the letter sent to Tarbell (Attachment A) dated Dec. 18, 2014, that is inaccurate. Haag stated that she has no authority regarding the water/sewer bill and the responsibility lies with the property owner Edmund Tarbell. At a meeting with the accountant, Haag said that all bills going forward would be sent property owner. Chairman Liff said that it is not protocol to talk to the tenants but the Commission is giving you and Edmund Tarbell the courtesy today to hear about the delinquent water/sewer bill. Liff then explained about how the information in the letter to Edmund Tarbell was provided to him by the accountant and selectman. Selectman McGuckin said that going forward the water and sewer bills for all three rental properties of Edmund Tarbell will be billed to him the property owner.

Accountant Debra Knowles shared with the Board the billing history of 152 Portsmouth Avenue. This address owes the town for five cycles (four months per cycle) of water and sewer. Chairman Liff said the amount of the bill is \$1576.07 which covers a period of August of 2012 to December 2013. Steve Tabbutt explained how the two rental properties (150 and 152 Portsmouth Avenue) were mixed up in the billing and usage and didn't become aware of that until May of 2013. Knowles has since reconstructed the bills for these two properties to show the correct usage.

Chairman Liff asked for the opinions of the board members. John Ireland said he was upset that the 2012 water/sewer bill has not been paid. The amount Tarbell paid in April of 2012 (attachment B) (\$1127.70) was payment for what was previously used and that money can't be used towards the current outstanding bill. Walter Glidden said the tenant and landlord need to work it out and the water/sewer bill needs to be paid or the water will be shut off. Normand Houle said that going back through all the readings there were only a couple of cycles that this property exceeded the minimum units. Possibly the town could go back adjust those to the minimums throughout the five periods. Selectman McGuckin said he didn't agree with Houle, and that the bill should not be adjusted. This is their actual water usage and the accountant went back through the five cycles to work out the correct usage. Chairman Liff concurred with Selectman McGuckin's comments. If the Board agrees, the town will take a payment schedule and would not terminate the water. Chairman Liff thanked them for coming into the meeting.

b. Water breaks – Steve Tabbutt reported that the recent water break was found in the swamp on Howard Crosby's property and it has been resolved. There was another break off of Campbell's Island just before Christmas on the new line. Tabbutt explained how a fitting let go because it contracted due to the cold weather. There was another break on the same line out in the channel.

Selectman McGuckin reported that there have been a least two water breaks in Portsmouth. The water pressure is still down on the Wentworth side of the island. McGuckin said that if the water pressure at the hotel is down for a certain period of time the hotel must vacate.

c. Chairman Liff asked for any other business to come before the board.

1. John Ireland made note that the public works department on the town website has the old water and sewer rates. Secretary Cullen said that she will make those changes.
2. Selectman McGuckin reported that he had updated the water and sewer application as discussed at the last meeting.

Normand Houle moved to adjourn the meeting. Walter Glidden seconded the motion. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 4:50pm.