

**MINUTES OF THE WATER & SEWER COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10, 2015-3:00 PM**

Present: Walter Liff, Chair, Ex-officio Selectman David McGuckin, Steve Tabbutt, Director, Public Works, Members Normand Houle, John Ireland, Walter Glidden. Alternates Reg Whitehouse, Chet Fessenden, and Deb Knowles, Town Accountant, and Bette Jane Riordan, Secretary.

Chair Liff convened the meeting and proceeded to the first item on the Agenda.

1. Review, approve, and sign checks.

Chair Liff proceeded to review, approval and signing of checks:

From water:

\$1,325.00 for May's fair share of payroll expenses.

\$4068.00 to City of Portsmouth for hydrant rental for the year and six months of water testing. The cost is \$150.00 per hydrant. The Town rents twelve.

From Sewer:

\$184.41 to Bay Ring,

\$692.25 to Donahue, Ciandella and Tucker for legal expenses

\$2,619.19 to Town of New Castle.

\$25,829.92 to City of Portsmouth.

\$702.17 to Eversource.

Normand Houle made a Motion to Approve checks as called out. John Ireland seconded, and the Motion carried.

2. OLD BUSINESS.

a. Depreciation/tiered rates discussion.

Normand Houle reported that he is currently waiting for a report from Lorn Buxton and Deb Knowles as to the correct numbers. Selectman McGuckin stated he is hoping the Commission presents a number to the Select Board which is palatable: perhaps \$300-\$400 every 4 months as a rate for citizens to pay for water usage.

Mr. Houle stated that customers may view this process as arbitrary. He needs Lorn Buxton's research. In response to Selectman McGuckin's question about starting over being arbitrary, Mr. Houle asked Commission how it wanted to catch up? Using \$50,000 is the quickest way. If the Commission goes to \$10,000 on both water and sewer, it is arbitrary, although the Commission is attempting to minimize pain on the ratepayer. Selectman McGuckin asked if there was nothing left to depreciate and the answer was no.

Town Accountant Deb Knowles stated that part of the problem is the pumping stations issue of book depreciation versus what the Town has to charge.

Mr. Houle asked what would it cost to replace the pumping stations today? The answer was 1.5 million over 30 years. (Assuming the pumps last 30 years). This may not be enough to catch up.

Selectman McGuckin expressed his concern about the politics involved in this issue, as well as the public perception. He noted that the Commission needs to address the justification for any figure arrived at. He questioned the cost to replace the pumping station. Deb Knowles pointed out the Town would now be required to put the pumping stations above ground. The current ones are underground.

Mr. Houle suggested getting a rough estimate for the cost of new pumping stations, The Commission agreed with Selectman McGuckin to have Steve Tabbutt speak with officials from Portsmouth who have expertise and staff to provide some guidance on this matter.

John Ireland stated it is not just pumping stations but the whole piping system which must be considered. Selectman McGuckin is concerned about a major cost figure. He stated that should there be a break, the Town could float a bond. Mr. Ireland believes there should be a vote of the Water & Sewer Commission to authorize Steve Tabbutt to get a cost estimate for new pumping stations. After further discussion, Mr. Ireland made the following Motion:

To authorize the Director of Public Works to obtain cost information for purchasing new pumping stations and to have Selectman Buxton and Town Accountant Deb Knowles come up with a calculation for piping.

Mr. Houle seconded, and the Motion carried.

New rates are 81 cents per unit for water usage and \$11.77 for sewer which includes 5% increase per unit.

2. Approve Minutes of May 13, 2015.

Mr. Ireland made a Motion to Approve the minutes of the May 13, 2015 meeting as amended. Selectman McGuckin seconded and the Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS.

a. Update on water meter for Municipal Safety Building.

In response to a request from the Commission to explore tracking and billing for water usage in the Municipal Safety Building, Steve Tabbutt reported that a meter would be needed for the 1 ½ pipe, which costs several hundred dollars. This would measure only domestic use inside the building. He stated he would get a firm figure for this expenditure. Selectman McGuckin asked member Reg Whitehouse how much water is used annually? Mr. Whitehouse stated given the Fire Engine fill occurs five times per year, only a couple of units are used, and the Commission concluded it would not be worth tracking. However,

the Commission decided to reconsider this matter after the cost of the meter and installation is confirmed by Steve Tabbutt.

4. NEW BUSINESS. – None.

There being no further business to come before the Board, Chair Liff called for a Motion to Adjourn, which was made by Selectman McGuckin. Chet Fessenden seconded, and the Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 3:53 PM.