

MINUTES OF THE WATER AND SEWER COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 13, 2016 – 3PM

Present: Chairman Walter Liff, Selectman David McGuckin, Supr. Of Public Works Stephen Tabbutt

Members: John Ireland, Normand Houle

Absent Members: Walter Glidden

Alternate Members: Chet Fessenden, Reg Whitehouse

Secretary: Pamela Cullen

Absent: Accountant Deb Knowles

Guests: Edmund Tarbell, Andrew Schulte, David McArdle, Brad Greeley, Peter Rice

1. Chairman Liff called the meeting was called to at 3pm.

2. Chairman Liff reviewed the checks for the Commission's approval. John Ireland made a motion to approve as read. Normand Houle Seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Deb Knowles was not able to attend the meeting but left figures for the end of March water and sewer funds as follows:

Water - \$132,540.79

Sewer - \$380,874.26

3. The Commission reviewed the minutes of March 9, 2016 minutes. John Ireland made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Normand Houle seconded the motion. Motion carried.

4. Chairman Liff went out of order to accommodate the guests.

a. David McArdle, Trustee of the Trust Funds, said that some of the members may recall that the town voted to have an independent company manage the Trust Funds. McArdle said the town has \$271K in sewer and \$129 K in water trust funds. The funds are staggered out over multiple years, but need input from the commission as for utilization of the funds. McArdle explained about the liquidity and longevity of investing. John Ireland said to keep the funds for easy access for at least a year for both water and sewer. McArdle said that we are in a cash position and can stagger the funds out in a six month horizon or per quarter; the longer the time, the larger the returns. Normand Houle felt the funds should stay liquid as the cost for the study from Underwood will be significant. The other members concurred that the funds should be liquid. Resident Andy Schulte said the trust funds were created in 2009 and read the warrant article (attached). Schulte said the trusts funds were created for funding maintenance, repair and replacement. Chairman Liff said that the commission will accept decisions of the Select Board regarding the funds. The Commission discussed the water and sewer studies to ascertain the replacement costs, assessment of the infrastructure and conditions.

b. Resident Edmund "Mundy" Tarbell came to talk about the water/sewer billing. He said that over the past years he has talked with the Commission about the tier setup, and that the Commission would look into that type of billing but nothing has happened. Tarbell said that he has used 4 units and was billed for 20 units. Chairman Liff appreciated Tarbell's concern and

explained that both John Ireland and Normand Houle had done incredible amounts of work on this issue of tiered billing.

John Ireland said that they haven't done anything for a time. One problem is our present software does not support tiered billing. If the town used a tiered system, it would only benefit about 2 percent of the users. Portsmouth is not involved with our billing. We would talk to them about a fair way to treat all consumers, if and when the water and sewer systems were to be turned over to them.

Portsmouth is not involved with billing and only would be talked about if and when was turned the water and sewer system over to them, so trying to work a fair way to treat all consumers. Normand Houle said the Commission tried to do zero based billing to determine what the real costs are and that everyone should share in the cost but that the Select Board said that we should stay with the current system.

Tarbell asked where the excess money goes. Ireland said that the water and sewer system cannot make money thus excess funds go for emergency repairs and maintenance. Houle said that the rates should be higher as many communities haven't put away funds to repair these systems. Questions then arose to costs for pump stations replacements which would be above grade, and the condition of the current stations.

3. Valve education – Steve Tabbutt reported that he had met with Fire Chief Dave Blanding and Deputy Fire Chief Mark Wooley for an exercise on the two water valves at Wentworth Road and Main Street. Tabbutt said it is important to open the two valves the correct way and painted the caps blue for visibility. Tabbutt said he gave the fire department a gate valve wrench. The Chief will train the fire department. The valves are normally closed to isolate the two water systems on the island.

4. Island Items - Chairman Liff said an article had already been written for the agenda item of Island Items for the May issue.

5. Executive summary – All the members of the Commission have a copy of the Executive Summary from Woodard Engineering sewer study.

6. Change of chairs - Chairman Liff had to leave the meeting and turned the meeting over to John Ireland. Ireland asked for any comments from the Commission.

NHDOT – proposed resurfacing Route 1B - Selectman McGuckin talked about a letter from the NHDOT dated February 26 regarding the manholes that will need to be raised before the paving of Route 1B. Tabbutt explained the procedure on repairing the manholes before paving. Houle wanted to go on record to identify the manholes that need repair as identified in the Underwood Sewer study. Ireland talked about the manholes that need the collars replaced and there may be money in the trust funds for that cost.

6. Petition – Warrant article for Town Meeting.

Normand Houle asked where does the town go from here regarding the warrant article and is Underwood going to give a briefing at the town meeting. Selectman McGuckin answered affirmatively that they would give a briefing. Houle asked if the executive study from Underwood Engineering could be posted on the town website. The secretary will post it on the website. Selectman McGuckin reported that on the March 24th meeting, the Select Board gave Underwood approval to do the 30 percent design.

A question arose if the Commission would have any insight regarding the petition that was presented to the Select Board for the May 2016 town meeting. Selectman McGuckin said that the petition states: "To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$100k for an independent engineering study to evaluate and recommend a capital solutions (s) - by November 1, 2016 – to enable New Castle's water infrastructure to meet National Fire Protection Association standards."

The Select Board didn't support the article and Underwood Engineers will get us to a standard similar to other towns. The NFPA is not used for municipal water systems. The Budget Committee will vote on the petition tomorrow night.

Vice-Chairman Ireland asked for a motion to adjourn. Normand Houle made a motion to adjourn. Chet Fessenden seconded motion. The motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 4:30pm.