

WATER AND SEWER COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES  
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2016

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

Members: John Ireland, Walter Glidden, Normand Houle

Alternate Members: Reg Whitehouse, Chet Fessenden

Accountant: Deb Knowles

Secretary: Pamela Cullen

Guests: Tom Smith, Treasurer, Doug Palardy

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Liff. The Commission met at 2pm to finalize the Water and Sewer Ordinances. The Chair then opened the regular meeting at 3pm. Chairman Liff took items out of order on the agenda to accommodate guests.

1. Chairman Liff reviewed the checks for the Commission's approval. Normand Houle made a motion to approve checks as written. John Ireland seconded the motion. Motion carried.

2. John Ireland made a motion to approve minutes of January 13, 2016 as amended. Walter Glidden seconded the motion. Motion carried.

3. New business:

a. 33 Walbach Street - Steve Tabbutt reported that he was called out on Sunday, January 24<sup>th</sup> at 33 Walbach Street for a water break. Doug Palardy introduced himself and said he was owner of 33 Walbach Street. He said he received a call from the fire department on Sunday and was informed that the water line had burst on his property.

Chairman Liff asked Palardy if he was asking the town to repair and/or pay for the water break. Palardy felt that the break was oddly suspicious as that it happened during the time when the devastating fire happened at 148/152 Portsmouth Avenue, and possibly the break could have happened from a water hammer. Chairman Liff said that the owner has always been responsible for any repairs and costs for the water lines from the curbstop to the house. Tabbutt said he would be interested in seeing the pipe for a better understanding of what happened and the reason for the break. After the Commission discussed the break, it was determined that Tabbutt would view the water line see the cause of the break. The Commission agreed to revisit this subject next month after hearing Tabbutt's findings.

b. Fire Hydrant - Steve Tabbutt discussed the fire hydrant located on Goat Island. He informed the Commission that he bought a replacement hydrant and explained the difficulties of replacing it. Last Thursday, he said there was a lot of rust on connection and he had to leave the ditch open but opted to fill the hole because of bad weather. A contractor will be in town to replace this hydrant next week. Tabbutt asked if the Commission wanted to consider changing the gate valve at that time. This type of change would affect water availability for a portion of the town. Tabbutt said the valve is holding and works fine and he recommends not replacing it at this time. Normand Houle asked about the hydrant on Oliver Street and Portsmouth Avenue. Tabbutt said that he winterized that hydrant but during the fire, the fire department questioned the flow.

Tabbutt said that he went back on the Tuesday after the fire and flowed the hydrant and rewinterized again.

c. Accounting update – Accountant Deb Knowles reported on the checking account funds as of January 31, 2016:

Water account has \$14,953.33

Sewer account has \$357,466.06

Deb Knowles said that she had put together some figures for water and sewer, but had asked Selectman Buxton and Treasurer Tom Smith to review for a good idea as what amounts to transfer from checking to trust funds.

Treasurer Tom Smith gave the Commission an overview of the trust funds and what has transpired since last town meeting in May of 2015. Tom Smith said that as of June 30 the water trust fund had \$130,000 and the sewer trust fund had \$272,500.

Smith explained that there has not been any transfers for the last couple of years. He gave an overview of the town playing catch up and the lack luster performance of the current investments of the trust funds.

Smith's proposal for the water department said that we should have a working capital balance of \$100k which means we could transfer \$50k to the trust funds. Since we collect revenue every four months, it was proposed that transfers be made every four months in the amount of \$15K, \$15K, and \$20K for the year.

For the sewer fund we should have a working capital balance of \$200K. Since we collect revenue every four months, it was proposed we could transfer \$150k to the trust funds then in the amount of \$50K, \$50k and \$50k for the year. He then said that both accounts would be reviewed in a year's time so that yearly transfers could be made, should be Commission desire it. Smith suggested that the Commission meet with the Trustees of the Trust Funds to understand how monies are invested and what potential risks may exist. He then reminded the Commission of the change voted in at the town meeting last May with the trust funds outsourcing the accounts for investments.

John Ireland read Normand Houle's previous motions regarding transferring money to the trust funds. The Commission consider having the trustees explain the procedure of investing and asking for funds. Knowles questioned that they may want to hold off on transferring any funds. The commission agreed to hold the funds for the present time being.

d. Billing - The Commission discussed the water/sewer billing for 148 and 152 Portsmouth Avenue where the fire of January 23, 2016 demolished the entire home. The town was unable to recover any water meters after the fire. Knowles said that the town only has readings from December 1<sup>st</sup> 2015, and when it comes time to do billing in April, she wanted to know how to bill the property owner. After a brief discussion, the Commission decided not to bill the property owner in April 2016.

4. Old business:

a. The Commission was informed that the report from Woodard and Curran on the sewer infrastructure is ready. There will be a meeting tomorrow, Thursday, February 11, 2016, at their office at 1pm.

b. Member Reggie Whitehouse said he spoke to the fire chief about a letter to Portsmouth regarding water. John Ireland said with emotion and candor that the town of New Castle is getting short changed when it comes to the water lines/pressure with the city of Portsmouth, and it was time that something was done. Ireland said that Portsmouth knows that there are problems. Selectman McGuckin said that the Wentworth bridge delay was because the US Coast Guard hasn't made a decision regarding the type of bridge whether fixed or raised. The Commission discussed the past water problems starting back with fires in the sixties. Selectman McGuckin said that the Select Board would be discussing the water issue at their meeting.

Chairman Liff asked for any other business to come before the commission. There being none, the chair as for a motion to adjourn. Walter Glidden made a motion to adjourn the meeting. John Ireland seconded the motion. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 4:35pm.