

WATER AND SEWER COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9, 2016 – 3PM

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

Members: John Ireland, Walter Glidden, Normand Houle

Alternate members: Chet Fessenden, Reggie Whitehouse

Secretary: Pamela Cullen

Accountant: Debra Knowles

Guests: Damon Frampton, Jane Finn, VJ Strehl

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Liff at 3pm.

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

The minutes of February 10 were reviewed by the Commission. Normand Houle made a motion to approve minutes as amended. Walter Glidden seconded the motion. Motion carried.

The Commission Chairman Liff went out of order to accommodate guests.

1. New Business:

a. Jane Finn, 169 Portsmouth Avenue, came to the Commission to discuss the sewer break at her property at 161 Portsmouth Avenue. Finn explained that she was not notified of the sewer break and asked what the protocol for notifying property owners. She also wanted to review the bills related to this break and if they are available. She then questioned where the actual break occurred on the line. Steve Tabbutt responded that the break was right on the 2 inch copper tubing which goes to property of 161 Portsmouth Avenue. Tabbutt explained because it was a sewer line break and potential pollution hazard, it had to be controlled immediately. This is why she was not notified at the time. He had Chris-Co Company do the repair. There was a charge for sewerage removal from the sight, transported to Peirce Island and a charge at Peirce Island to receive it. There will be a cost for repaving the area. Finn thanked the Commission.

b. Costs - Steve Tabbutt reported the cost of new a hydrant was \$2,735 with installation costs of \$1,636, and \$956.25 was to repair the water break on Goat Island.

c. Deb Knowles gave the balances for the checking accounts:

As of February 29, 2016:

Water \$138,350.24

Sewer \$411, 468.70

Knowles reported that currently there are only two outstanding water/sewer payments due on the New Castle portion of the island and about five for sewer bills on the Portsmouth billing side of the island. She then informed the Commission that she will be unable to attend the April 10th meeting but will have the checks ready for their approval.

d. Letter from Joe Cuetara, 127 Main Street, dated February 29. The Commission discussed the letter sent by Resident Joe Cuetara and of the non-clarity of his intentions for the letter. Chairman Liff said he invited Cuetara to the meeting but that he was unable to attend but will try to make the April meeting. Selectman McGuckin asked that Cuetara have a clear intention of what his intentions/requests are.

e. Underwood Study – The Board discussed the Underwood Engineering study/evaluation of the New Castle’s sewer infrastructure. Normand Houle asked if the town has received an executive summary. Selectman McGuckin said that they have not received the summary.

The town has not received a bill from the Underwood Engineering for the sewer study. Normand Houle asked if the town should take this fee out of the Enterprise Fund. Knowles explained that this amount would be transferred from the Enterprise Fund. Selectman McGuckin said that the Trustees of the Trust Funds know about this pending bill.

McGuckin said that it is the Select Board’s priority to put water issues over sewer issues, and they have put together a task force consisting of three people to help guide the town through the water service so that it can be addressed at the May town meeting. This task force was approved at the BOS meeting of February 16, 2016. The committee is composed of Brad Greeley, Nancy Jackson, and Pam Yonkin. The Select Board are still looking at the task force’s responsibilities and gave an explanation of why those people were chosen. This group will be talking with the fire department, Select Board, Water and Sewer Commission, and any other entity relative to water issues else to gather information.

McGuckin felt there would be a strong possibility for having information to report at the town meeting.

John Ireland said that the town has a serious problem more with sewer than water. Steve Tabbutt gave an observation that the pump stations, other than life safety, have out lived their normal life expectancy and mentioned the number of call outs he receives.

Old Business

a. Update 33 Walbach Street – Steve Tabbutt said that he had spoken to the contractor of 33 Walbach Street regarding the water break, and that he knows the break and associated costs are the home owner’s responsibility, and will convey this to the property owner. Tabbutt gave a brief history of the break and what occurred at the property.

b. Update on water usage during January 2016 Tarbell fire - Steve Tabbutt presented the Commission with reports (see attachments) of the water flow charts during the Tarbell fire at 152 Portsmouth Avenue, and during the water break on Goat Island. The charts show usage at the beginning of the fire and then when the leak occurred. The normal consumption of water per day for the town is between 32,000 to 42,000 gallons per day, during the fire it was 45,000 gallons per hour. At beginning of the fire, there was good water pressure, then the leak occurred about 3 to 4 hours into the fire and shows low pressure about 10 pounds per square inch less (psi reading before fire was 38psi and after 48psi). Tabbutt said to think of an 80 X 80 area 30 feet high which would hold 1.3 million gallons, which is the amount used during the fire.

The Commission discussed the water pit at the corner of Main Street and Wentworth Road. John Ireland said that the Commission had paid an engineering firm to design an upgrade for the water pit. Before the upgrade could be installed, Portsmouth would not agree to it because of the possible contamination problems. Reggie Whitehouse said that the fire department is not trained on the water valves and that some open right and some left which creates problems. Steve Tabbutt explained the valves and how to train someone to open them. Tabbutt talked about the increase of water flow if valves could be opened and the water problem on Wild Rose Lane. Normand Houle suggested that Tabbutt could have a dialog with the fire chief regarding training on the valves. The Commission discussed difference scenarios about having Tabbutt or Pufahl notified during a fire to help with those valves. Reg Whitehouse said that it would be the fire chief's decision about training. The Commission wanted to go on record to the chief about this issue and to have Tabbutt talk to the chief and report back to the Commission.

c. Chair any other business to come before the Commission.

Normand Houle said that the task force group needs to be encouraged to come to the Water and Sewer Commission's meeting. Selectman McGuckin said that this task force will study everything other than what the Underwood Engineering provided. Their role will be to ease the concerns of citizens, many residents are really upset, concerned and scared, which has become a consuming conversation. McGuckin said they will look at things like educating residents, smoke alarms, centralized alarm systems, looking at zoning ordinances for fire alarms and/or sprinklers, or possibly tax breaks associated with safety, and other various water issues. They should have a mission statement.

Reg Whitehouse said that the one thing he would advocate is to call 911. If you smell smoke, call 911 before trying to put out fires by themselves.

Chair asked for a motion to adjourn. Normand Houle made a motion to adjourn. John Ireland seconded the motion. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 4:15 pm.