

MINUTES OF THE WATER & SEWER COMMISSION MEETING
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2017
3:00 P.M.

Members Present: Walter Liff, Chair, Damon Frampton, Ex-Officio Select Board, Steve Tabbutt, Supervisor of Public Works, Richard White, Member, Normand Houle, Member, Clint Springer, Alternate

Members Absent: John Ireland, Member, Chet Fessenden, Alternate

Also Present: Christiane McAllister, Accountant, Anne Miller, Secretary, Ben Jankowski, Department of Public Works

Public Present: Bill Stewart

Mr. Walter Liff opened the meeting at 3:00 p.m. and, noting the absence of Mr. John Ireland, elevated Mr. Clint Springer to voting member. Members agreed to re-order the agenda to begin with an update from Select Board Chair, Mr. Bill Stewart.

1. Water and Sewer Project Updates from Select Board Chair, Bill Stewart

a. Sewer Pump Project

The by-passes are complete and usable. Due to pump order lead time, the pumps won't be available until the winter. Both the contractor and Mr. Steve Tabbutt agree that the work should be held off until the thaw; the anticipated start date is approximately the third week in April to be complete by the first week in May, at a rate of one station per week. Contingency plans are in place for the interim period. An emergency pumping contractor has been identified, and the generator service is in good working order in the event of a power failure. There is redundancy with two pumps per station. Mr. Tabbutt concurred with Mr. Stewart's assessment.

Ms. McAllister noted that the first installment payment may be due within the month, following contract finalization. The Commission's approval is being requested now, but the check will be held in accounting until a proper contract is in place. The contractor's receipt of the check will initiate the ordering of the pumps.

Mr. Richard White stated his opposition to upfront payments. Mr. Stewart agreed, but the contract requires 20% down to order pumps which will be built on spec. Consultant, Underwood Engineering, believed the request to be reasonable. A signed contract and performance bonds must and will be in place before payment is made.

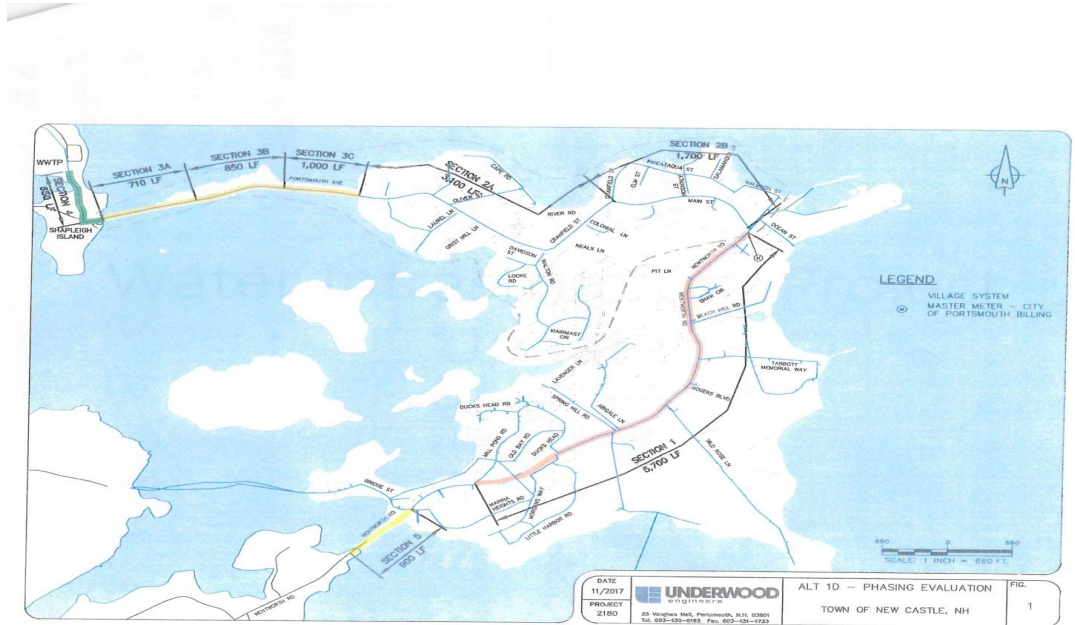
Mr. Normand Houle asked, and Mr. Stewart affirmed, that NH DES approval of the pumps contributed to the project's delay. Mr. Tabbutt clarified that the contractor on call for emergency pumping is not under

contract, but has agreed to respond to the town’s needs when called upon. Separately, the sewer pump project contract includes the provision for a by-pass pumping contractor during the construction period.

b. Water Infrastructure Project

The Select Board continues to have discussions with the City of Portsmouth while planning to move ahead with the town’s portion. A warrant article will be proposed for the entire project, but work is proposed in phases. Mr. Stewart cautioned that the plan may continue to evolve.

Phase 1: Replace a large portion of the town’s system comprised of Section 3, from the Shapleigh Island meter pit to the end of the causeway, and Section 2A, from the end of the causeway, along Portsmouth Avenue, to the intersection of Cranfield and Main Streets. (see map)



Phase 2: Once the City of Portsmouth completes the Wentworth Road work, the “loop roads” (e.g. Wild Rose Lane) will be connected. Timing is unknown. While funds are identified in Portsmouth’s Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), the City intends to wait until the Rye to New Castle bridge work is complete--possibly 2021-- in order to bring in construction vehicles and, in the event the bridge is replaced with a fixed bridge, affix the water pipe to the bridge. (see map)

Phase 3: Replace the last section, Section 2B, in town. This order will enable the town to measure the impact of the previous phases’ work to the 2B area prior to beginning work there. (see map)

Mr. Houle asked, and Mr. Stewart clarified, that although the scope of the plans include New Castle-funded improvements to the City of Portsmouth’s system on the loop roads, Portsmouth will retain their ownership of their system.

Mr. Clint Springer asked what the City of Portsmouth’s plans are to improve the delivery of water up to their border with New Castle. Ultimately their plan is to replace the section of line from Marcy Street

through the Wastewater Treatment Plant and the 600' section from the Wastewater Treatment Plant through to the Shapleigh Island meter pit. They've agreed, in principle, that this work will be done as their final phase of the Wastewater Treatment Plant construction project. Replacement of the final section of pipe that runs over the Pierce Island bridge will be held off until the bridge is replaced, estimated to be seven years.

Despite the seven year delay for the final link of the improved pipeline, Mr. Stewart rationalized the benefit of expediting the town's portion of the initiative.

- There is a need to fix that portion of the line that contributes to the town's water quality degradation by approximately 30 to 40 total trihalomethane (TTHM) parts per billion. While the water arrives from Portsmouth near the TTHM threshold, it is still qualified water. TTHMs rise to the level of violation within the New Castle system.
- Interest rates are low.
- The opportunity exists.

Mr. White voiced his agreement adding that the longer a project is postponed, the higher the cost due to increases in construction costs and changing regulations and, once the town sections are complete, flow tests can verify the engineering report. His only concern is Portsmouth's propensity to shun their responsibility.

Mr. White does not expect to see improved flow from the tie-in to the Rye system on Wentworth Road based on the Rye-side hydrant flow of 500 gallons/minute, which he measured during the pre-planning phase of the hotel's renovation. However, he believes the tie-in from Wentworth Road to Main Street will be beneficial. Recalling that in the past, Portsmouth objected to a two-way meter at the corner of Main Street and Wentworth Avenue because the City wouldn't be able to control the water quality coming through the New Castle system into its system, Mr. White wonders why and how Portsmouth would be comfortable with the current plan that allows water to flow through the Rye system before entering its system on Wentworth Road. It doesn't seem likely that Portsmouth would reconsider the proposed Wentworth Road and Main Street two-way meter until the pipes are replaced due to the risk of New Castle's elevated TTHM level water flowing into the passable TTHM level water in the Portsmouth system.

Mr. Houle is skeptical about Phase 2 with no definitive date, and the prerequisite that the bridge work be completed. For years, the City of Portsmouth CIP postponed funding for a New Castle line improvement project. Mr. Houle believes that politically, the Portsmouth City Council has no incentive to delegate funds for a New Castle improvement. Accordingly, he asked whether it would make sense for New Castle to take over the City of Portsmouth system (within the town of New Castle.)

Mr. Stewart responded that it doesn't make sense to take on a \$3 million project that the ratepayers have already been paying for through their water rates unless there is a monetary concession from Portsmouth. While skepticism is warranted, the phased plan allows for Phase 1 to improve water quality, better flows to the "downtown area," and demonstrate good faith but Phase 2 wouldn't move forward until Portsmouth reciprocates with their commitment. There have been many options, but the Select Board believes this to

be the best plan to propose at Town Meeting. Mr. White added that any transfer of the Portsmouth system to New Castle would most certainly include the underwater pipes which would likely add significant maintenance cost.

Mr. White cautioned that the flows shown in the study are based on the completion of the entire project, from Marcy Street through to Wentworth Road. Mr. Stewart described that a second engineering study was completed to look at the flow models as the phases are completed.

2. Review, Approve and Sign Checks

Checks included the first payment, \$108,949, to Northeast Integration (NEI) for the sewer pump contract to initiate the order for the pumps. This represents 20% of the \$544,745 contract total. An additional 20% is to be paid upon completion of each pump, with the final 20% due after the supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) systems instruction is complete. Mr. White described that there should be both a performance bond that insures quality work, and a labor and materials bond to insure that subcontractors and vendors are paid.

The City of Portsmouth sewer bill is \$33,393.26.

Mr. Houle moved to approve the checks as called out. Mr. White seconded the motion and made a motion to amend it with caveat that the contractor isn't paid until the contract, performance bond, and labor and materials bond are in place and approved Underwood Engineering. Mr. Liff called for a vote on the amendment which was approved unanimously.

3. Account Balances

Water

October Revenue:	\$399.87
October Expenditures:	\$10,226.15
Checking account balance as of October 31, 2017:	\$143,029.75
Trust balance as of September 30, 2017:	\$130,740.84

Sewer

October Revenue:	(\$1,163.60) likely represents a refund
October Expenses:	\$ 42,741.54
Checking account balance as of October 31, 2017:	\$ 428,827.28
Trust balance as of September 30, 2017	\$ 39,266.92

Members agreed to continue to have the budgets read out at subsequent meetings.

4. Review and approve Minutes of the October 11, 2017 Meeting

Mr. White moved, and Mr. Springer seconded, to accept minutes of the October 11, 2017 meeting as amended. Motion carried, unanimously.

5. Water and Sewer Rate Survey

As instructed by the Commission, Ms. McAllister reported that she submitted the town's water and sewer rates to NH DES for their database and, in turn, received a link to access information in the rate database.

6. Water and Sewer Applications for applicant Laurie Clark, Laurel Lane

Mr. Liff noted that because the application and supporting materials have been provided for applicant, Laurie Clark to tie into the gravity line at her Laurel Lane property, an engineering presentation is not required. Mr. Houle and Mr. White were assured that the connection was straightforward and not crossing other properties. Mr. White moved that the applicant may proceed if payment is made and approval is granted by Mr. Tabbutt. Members agreed.

7. Old Business

a. Update Water and Sewer Ordinance

Mr. Houle noted that some of the changes are highlighted in the draft:

Governance

- P. 3 Commissioners section- Added "The Commission has authorized the Superintendent of Public Works to unilaterally spend up to \$5,000 for emergency repairs incident to actual or imminent failure of either utility."
- P. 4 Violations, Enforcement, and Penalties section- Deleted reference to *immediate* arrest per suggestion of Police Chief White who indicated it will be enforceable as criminal trespass or criminal mischief. Mr. Houle will add that language as well.
- P. 4 Violations, Enforcement, and Penalties section- Added reference to *trespass*. "No person shall trespass onto town property containing any utility equipment. Any person violating this provision shall be subject to immediate arrest under charge of disorderly conduct."

Ordinance Elements Common to Water and Sewer

- P. 5, Application for Service section- Mr. Houle spoke with Ms. Darcy Horgan, Planning Board Chair, with regard to the Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and read the definition as well as those ADU criteria that he deemed relevant to water and sewer. Importantly, the ADU ordinance requires a demonstration of adequate water and wastewater systems:
An applicant shall demonstrate adequate provisions for water supply and for those not served by public sewer, for waste discharged. Water and wastewater systems for the primary and accessory units may be combined or separate.

Mr. Houle presented options to address ADUs in the Water & Sewer Ordinance. Members agreed with a simplified approach, removing the last sentence, "The application must state that the purpose of the extension of service shall not be for living quarters."

- P. 5, Installation, Maintenance, Repair section- Altered language to state "All new, altered, extended, or replaced water/sewer service shall be left uncovered and unconcealed until it has been inspected by the Public Works Department. The owner or his contractor shall notify the Public Works Supervisor 48 hours in advance when the service line is ready for inspection and

connection to the water/sewer main. The water/sewer connection shall be made under the supervision of the Public Works Supervisor or his representative.”

New sections were reviewed.

- P. 6, Billing and Payments, Trimester Billing section- Ms. McAllister requested that this section clarify cycle, reading and billing dates. She will draft proposed language for the Commission’s review.
- P. 6, Billing and Payments, Property Transfers section- Ms. McAllister noted that the ordinance should indicate a final meter read charge which can be added in the schedule of fees. Mr. White suggested that the ordinance make clear that the owner at the end of the cycle assumes responsibility for the entire cycle unless the cycle has previously been partially paid by the seller, and that a mid-cycle meter read and invoice needs to be scheduled with 72 hours’ notice to the accountant. Further, members discussed revisiting the meter read fee to better capture the cost to the town. Ms. McAllister will draft language and calculate a fee the Commission’s review.
- P. 6, Billing and Payments- Members agreed not to separately address irrigation metered billing.

Issues for next month were previewed.

- Mr. Tabbutt to look over the equipment references to ensure that they are accurate and up-to-date. Mr. White suggested, and Mr. Houle agreed, that the equipment should be separately listed in an index to simplify frequent revisions.
- P. 8, P. 9 Cross Connections section- Mr. Houle asked about the reference to a “Model Cross Connection Control Program.” While the town has a requirement for backflow prevention, it does not have a formalized Control Program. Mr. Houle will draft language to accurately reflect that reality.

b. 17 Walton Road

Mr. Liff stated that, as agreed to by the Commission, a letter was sent to Ms. O’Connor, 17 Walton Road, indicating that a copy would be kept at Town Hall with the property card.

8. New Business- Budget

Mr. Houle suggested that the budget process start at the December meeting in attempt to avoid last year’s difficulties. Specifically, discussions concerning a Capital Improvements line item can begin. Ms. McAllister will provide year-to-date actuals as worksheets for the discussion.

Mr. White also expressed the need to track water in and water out (sewer). The actual readings are at the heart of how funds are generated. The data will also allow for comparisons between inflow and outflow volumes and help to identify infiltration.

Mr. Houle described that New Castle sewer infiltration was calculated to be within the reasonable range, approximately 22%-23%, separately by both Underwood Engineering and by the town accountant. Further, this range was about equal to the City of Portsmouth's inflation.

9. Adjourn

Mr. Houle moved to adjourn. Mr. Damon Frampton seconded. Motion carried, unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 5:07 p.m.