

**FINAL APPROVED**  
**Water & Sewer Commission Minutes**  
**Wednesday, October 10, 2018, 3:00 PM**

**Members Present:** Normand Houle, Chair, Clint Springer (Alt), Carl Roediger (Alt), Steve Tabbutt, DPW, Selectman Damon Frampton, Ex-Officio.

**Absent:** John Ireland, Walter Liff

**Also in attendance:** Ben Jankowski, DPW, Christiane McAllister, Accountant, Bette Jane Riordan, Recording Secretary.

Chair Houle opened the meeting at 3:00, noting the presence of a quorum.

**1. Public Questions: None**

**2. Individual Applications and Petitions: None** (Note discussion at end of minutes from DPW Steve Tabbutt regarding request for sewer tie in: Former Kimball property, Walton Road.)

**3. Approve Minutes of September 12, 2018.**

After review and edits, Clint Springer made a Motion to Approve the Water and Sewer Commission minutes of September 12, 2018 as amended. Selectman Damon Frampton seconded, and the Motion carried.

**4. Selectmen's Report:**

Damon referred the current TTHM testing report to Steve Tabbutt. Steve reported on the results of the recent TTHM tests, October 7<sup>th</sup>, indicating that the Town is ok for the running average. 84.6 total (96.8 at the school. Town Hall 96.5, Shapleigh Island 94.4.) He indicated next year the bleeding at the school will be done in the summer months. On October 15, 2018 the hydrants will be flushed. On October 23<sup>rd</sup> the final test that counts will be done. The reading needs to come in under 80. The test site will be changed from the school to Town Hall, mainly due to the fact that the water just sits there at the school in the summer.

Damon reported that at the last Select Board meeting, Selectman Stewart reported that the surveying for the water infrastructure project is almost completed. The Board will be meeting with property owners in the private loops and others to determine the potential need for easements, as the project moves forward with the design phase. Request for bids will go out in early spring 2019. Carl Roediger questioned whether there was a back up plan to deal with those owners who are resistant to the needed easements. He felt it should be a "taking". It was noted that Underwood has devised a system of monetary incentives should the need arise.

## **5. Financials**

### **a. Review, approve and sign checks.**

Christiane handed out summaries of 2018 year-end revenues and expenditures, and also included year to date for FY 2019 through October 10, 2018. She also distributed a list of checks written for review and approval. She noted that things are settling down with the SCADA system. When questioned by Chair Houle, she noted, along with Steve and Ben that we are getting accurate reliable figures on which to base the billings.

Carl Roediger asked about the spare parts package to support the SCADA system. There was discussion about the \$6000 for the parts package which is kept on site. Ben explained the process that if a part breaks and is replaced within the warranty period, it will be replaced by NEI under a one year warranty. Ben Jankowski provided a copy of the warranty to the Commission. the Town must now consider a maintenance contract for \$12,000 for next fiscal year. Christiane did note that the Town has retained \$10,895.00 from Northeast Integration payments until July 18, 2019, the date the warranty expires, which is part of the contract with the Town.

Chair Houle then went through each of the checks as written and reprinted. After discussion, Clint Springer made a Motion to Approve the checks as written and presented. Damon Frampton seconded, and the Motion carried.

### **b. Accountant's Report.**

Christiane reported as follows:

**Water: August's reported revenues: \$58,976.79; expenditures: \$24,015.33.  
September's reported revenues: (854.92); expenditures: \$11,510.64  
Checking Account: \$173,805.91**

**Sewer: August's reported revenues: \$95,688.68; expenditures: \$3153.80  
September's reported revenue:\$155,226.54; expenditures: \$128,222.86  
Checking Account: \$157,538.10.**

## **6. Continuing business.**

### **a. Status of payments to NEI: Completed. \$10,895 held back as per the contract.**

### **b. Status of cost estimate for bulkhead and riser work at River Road:**

Steve Tabbutt reported he is still negotiating with a vendor as to scope of service and cost. He expects to have final numbers for the next Water & Sewer meeting.

**c. Bi-directional valve at Wentworth Road & Main Street and water project:**

After brief discussion, it was agreed this should be part of the water project going forward.

**d. Sewer rate analysis:**

Chair Houle reported on his discussion with Bill Stewart, and concluded there will be no specific action taken at this time on this issue. The matter was tabled indefinitely. Chair Houle had looked at the City of Portsmouth's website, and their information on capital outlays for the sewerage treatment plant. After brief discussion, it was agreed that more work needs to be done to account for all capital outlays by the City. He noted when Christiane has more available time the matter will be addressed. He noted that the Select Board is interested in whatever rate relief Norm and Christiane come up with. Carl Roediger suggested looking to surrounding towns to discern how they are handling their waste.

**7. New Business.**

**a. Terms of NEI warranty: Discussed earlier in meeting.**

**b. Island Items article:**

Chair Houle distributed a draft of an article from the Water & Sewer Commission called "Listen to Your House" to be inserted in Island Items in November, which encourages homeowners to be more aware of their utility usage, and preventive measures to take to assure economical use. He asked the Commission for its input. Christiane offered to do a companion article on what the term "average usage" means. She would explain such matters as Portsmouth bills once per month, whereas the Town is three times per year, and would provide more information on what a "unit" converts to in terms of gallon and price. One comment for Norm's article was to clarify the use of the term "DIY" (do it yourself) and calling a plumber and not the DPW for repairs to individual homes, should a problem occur. After discussion and minor editing the Commission agreed to submit the public informational article. Christiane received input on what she should include to clarify what is average usage in order to cut down on the number of inquiries from customers. She gave examples of the types of inquiries she receives, and suggested information which should help educate the customers. It was agreed she would draft an article. Chair Houle suggested Christiane check the website to see what the posted information says. If changes needed to be made, then the website could be corrected.

**c. Capital Projects:**

At Selectman Bill Stewart's request, Chair Houle noted that he met with him to discuss approaches to dealing with capital projects. Discussion included possibly referring the issues from Water & Sewer to the CIP committee. Norm agreed that the Commission should provide a list of needed and recommended projects with cost estimates to the

Select Board or to the CIP. He referenced the list he distributed a few meetings ago and again requested input and feedback from Commission members.

Christiane explained the formation and purpose of CIP and suggested that Water & Sewer could come up with a prioritization method, including how soon in time would the listed item need to be addressed? (age of the item and safety issues). Some of them will be funded through rates and some might be tax-based. It was suggested that Chair Houle speak with Jeff Hughes, Chair of CIP Committee, but only after checking with Select Board Chair Tom Maher. For Chair Houle, the most immediate need is resolving the sewer line situation under the Sawtelle Bridge.

#### **d. Budgeting for capital reserve lines.**

Chair Houle discussed the option of passing on the costs to customers of replenishing the capital reserves ,which were reduced in last year’s budgeting process. Currently there is \$39,500 in the sewer trust fund and we certainly could not have the Sawtelle Bridge sewer line issue resolved for that amount of money. His plan is to replenish the amount lost in the 2019 budgeting process within three years. That amount was \$51,000 pulled from FY 2019. He suggested \$17,000 per year over three years to get the money back. Christiane noted it may be premature to pick that specific figure, as it is budget dependent. After making a motion to settle on the payback of \$17,000 for three years, he withdrew his motion after hearing various suggestions. He went on record to note he would not support reducing any rates until that amount is put back in the fund. He asked members to consider this matter and make suggestions in anticipation of and preparation for a meeting with the Select Board. Damon Frampton stated that the BOS is really trying to do the right thing and come up with a plan to replenish the fund. Norm talked about the concept of “lending to yourself” and how that would apply. Carl Roediger asserted that nothing good comes from suppressing the rates. To operate the system and plan for the future requires that the customers be fully aware of the ramifications of artificial rate suppression.

The kick off meeting with Underwood was briefly discussed, and the need to have the Commission represented at this meeting to be held on October 16<sup>th</sup>.

#### **8. Any other business to come before the Commission.**

Steve Tabbutt alerted the Commission that a request has been made by new owners of the Kimball property on Walton Road to receive a permit from the Commission to tie in to the municipal sewer. He explained the history of the property, and said any permit should come with certain conditions, so that the Town doesn’t end up with the three separate small lines down Ocean Street situation. Steve suggested that the Commission condition the permit to require the owner to put in a larger pipe allowing others to tie into the pipe if they paid to hook into the owner’s sewer pipe. Steve noted no permit has been puled yet nor has any home been built. He just wanted the Commission to be aware of it. Chair Houle asked for input as to what is the next step. Damon asked if it may be a good idea to invite the potential applicant to come before the Commission for discussion. No

final decision was reached at this meeting. Chair Houle suggested this item should be placed on next month's agenda.

There being no further business to come before the Board, Carol Roediger made a Motion to Adjourn, which was seconded by Clint Springer. Motion carried.

Meeting Adjourned at 5:16 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Bette Jane Riordan  
Recording Secretary.