

TOWN OF NORTH HAMPTON

PO BOX 710
NORTH HAMPTON, NH 03862



Water Commission

Henry Fuller, Co- Chair
Robert Landman, Co-Chair
Tim Harned, Secretary
Richard Bettcher
John Rineman, Select Board Rep

DRAFT

Minutes of North Hampton Water Commission Meeting 26-May-2009

1. Call to Order

Bob Landman, Co-Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM. Present were Commissioners Fuller, Harned, Bettcher, Select Board Rep Rineman, Penny Holbert (scribe)

Present for Agenda Item 3 — Carl McMorrان, Aquarion Operations Manager, Harry Hibbard, Aquarion Vice President of Operations

Present for Agenda Item 4 — Richard “Red” Mabey, North Hampton Building Inspector

2. Administrative Business

Election of officers

Tim Harned made a motion to re-elect the same slate of officers: Bob Landman and Henry Fuller as Co-Chairs and Tim Harned as Secretary. John Rineman seconded the motion. Richard Bettcher proposed that Henry Fuller be elected Chair, with Bob Landman as Co-Chair. The motion passed 3-1-0. Mr. Bettcher in the negative. It was agreed to have a further discussion at the end of the meeting or at the next meeting. Due to the lengthy agenda for this meeting, a final vote on the motion was tabled until the next meeting.

3. Aquarion Water Company, New VP of Operations

Harry Hibbard, Senior Vice President of Operations, MA & NH, Aquarion Water Company, introduced himself to the Water Commissioners. He was hired the beginning of March. He was an attorney for twenty-five years and has been active in the community. Due to an imminent domain matter in Massachusetts, which has temporarily dominated his time, he has been in the New Hampshire office eight or nine days since starting with the company. He expressed an interest in learning the concerns, issues, and comments of the Water Commissioners.

Aquarion website

Landman mentioned the need to update the Aquarion website so that it no longer defaults to Connecticut, by offering a simple selection method for gaining the page that is of interest to residents of New Hampshire. Harned stated that the solution was simple and should be implemented.

Response: Hibbard stated that the redesign is planned so that pages will be identified as New Hampshire.

North Road by Rollins Furniture

Fuller mentioned the “speed bump” on North Road near the Little River where Aquarion did not put down the final paving.

Response: McMorrان will investigate.

Poor Water Quality

Landman mentioned the poor water quality at Grandview Terrace at a dead end. The hot water circulating heating systems in that area must be replaced with far greater frequency than other North Hampton residents have experienced. Fuller added that there have been eighteen complaints.

Response: Hibbard made note of the issue.

Hydrant Flushing

Landman mentioned that the data reports are better with the computer system compared to the manual system used previously. Flushing seems to be happening regularly.

Response: McMorran stated the flushing was finished during the prior month. Seasonal workers would be painting the hydrants. Upgrading the booster pump would be doubling the size. Requests for bids have been issued. The water line from Woodland to Maple would be accomplished in three phases beginning next spring. The Company is hoping for stimulus money to focus on infrastructure.

Radio-Read Meters

Landman addressed monthly meter reading and billing, stating that it would help with lead detection and water conservation. The customers want to be part of the solution.

Response: Hibbard agreed that monthly billing would serve many interests, including conservation, the community, the PUC, and cash flow. They are working toward 55% radio-read meters.

New Wells

Harned expressed the Commissioners' expectation that they be notified by e-mail sooner if exploration for new sources were being considered. Considerable funds were expended for placement of a well near a SuperFund site, which, if involved sooner in the decision process, the Commissioners could have provided information that could have demonstrated the futility of the project prior to Aquarion incurring the costs.

Response: McMorran agreed that sharing information in a timely manner would be beneficial, then briefly discussed alternative supply, desalination, and recycling as options to new wells.

Hydrant and Usage Fees

Bettcher stated that there needed to be a change in the way fees are allocated between hydrants and water usage fees. Landman noted that what is keeping the water usage fees down is the higher hydrant fees, which resulted in an increase in that budget line item for the Town of 21%. Harned stated that the allocation methodology should be revisited—if a resident does not have a hydrant, the citizen must pay for something they won't be able to use. He emphasized that this issue is one of high visibility and sensitivity and should be reconsidered.

Response: Hibbard explained that a cost of service study is conducted for that level of service. The cost is not simply for the hydrant, but the fire protection program as a whole. The PUC determines the appropriate charge—it is not an Aquarion issue. McMorran stated that though pipes are in place for service to the area, the pipe diameter required for fire protection has a greater diameter and require maintenance at a higher cost. The cost of the pipe is capitalized over time. The engineers do a cost of service study, assign a percentage to maintain fire protection service, and then the PUC grants the fees. With respect to the allocation of fees to hydrants rather than water consumption, Hibbard stated that as long as investors get the desired rate of return that they want, the allocation method is up to the PUC. However more risk is assumed by the stockholder if the fees are based on usage rather than systemic charges.

Newsletter

McMorran asked for feedback regarding the recent paring back on the size of the newsletter.

Commissioner Response: Harned is interested in the data—amount being pumped, rain, etc., and any new developments impacting the service to the community.

Hydroseeders Problem

Harned discussed the issue. According to state regulations hydroseeders must have the permission of an abutter to a water source to draw water from that source. Due to problems with hydroseeders spilling oil, green die and other materials used in hydroseeding and concerns about backflow check valves, the Water Commission has taken a stand to clamp down on hydroseeders withdrawing water without landowners permission. Mr. Harned had previously discussed with Aquarion the possibility of Aquarion providing a metered hookup where hydroseeders could withdraw water.

Response: Mr McMorran indicated he was aware Aquarion had started to look into this issue and he would revisit the issue with Aquarion to determine if a metered hookup could be provided.

4. Potential violations of town ordinances affecting water quality

#1 The DES response indicated no waivers were required. Mr. Harned indicated he felt this was incorrect. The septic system was placed within 15 ft of poorly drained wetlands requiring a waiver from the DES. Further, the reason this subject was brought to the attention of the DES was when the DES grants waivers, there is no attempt by the DES to get other facts or another side of the issue. The DES only relies on data provided by the applicant.

The Water Commission had request the DES review their process and respond on how the DES could improve their “discovery process” to include notification of and data input from interested 3rd parties. This would make the DES waiver process similar to the procedures of the Planning and ZBA boards in gathering data from all interested parties.

#2 (scribe notes incomplete)

#3 Mabey reported that the town and the state had both cited resident Wood on Post Road about a commercial recycling operation with several dumpsters operating without a permit on his residential property. The property is literally in the aquifer as there is a pond nearby and the property is a former gravel pit. The case has been turned over to the Attorney General to assess a fine and to cease and decist the illegal operation.

#4 Hired soil scientist—claims no wrong.

#5 Got loam from school, intends to build a home. Mabey sees only compost and loam. Harned noted that so much loam was taken, that only gravel and rubble remains....not regulated by State.

#6 The dumpsters have been removed to Seabrook.

#7-#10 Mabey will check 54 Walnut. 51 Mill. Still working on, bad spills, needs to clean up and remove equipment. He will follow up.

#12 Aquifer at that location. Further action required.

#13 DES has purview

#14 (scribe notes incomplete)

#15 Illegal junkyard On Mill Road containing 30-40 cars where Cedar intersects with Mill. Mabey will call Planning Board member Shep Kroner for details.

5. DES and EPA Dye Study on Little River in North Hampton

The Water Commission noted that they believe the DEA and EPA did not notify town authorities of their plans to conduct the dye study. The purpose of the study was to understand the flow pattern of the Little River emptying into the ocean

Did not notify the Town Administrator or Inspector of the intent to conduct this study. Ecoli (feces in Little River)
How Little River flows into ocean

6. Approval of Minutes

Harned moved to accept the minutes for August 28, 2008. Fuller seconded the motion. There was no discussion. Four voted to approve, with one abstention by Rineman, as he was not present at the referenced meeting.

Harned moved to accept the minutes for July 24, 2007. Fuller seconded the motion. There was no discussion. Four voted to approve, with one abstention by Rineman, as he was not present at the referenced meeting.

Harned moved to accept the minutes for April 24, 2007. Fuller seconded the motion. There was no discussion. Four voted to approve, with one abstention by Rineman, as he was not present at the referenced meeting.

Harned moved to accept the minutes for March 8, 2007. Fuller seconded the motion. There was no discussion. Four voted to approve, with one abstention by Rineman, as he was not present at the referenced meeting.

Harned moved to accept the minutes for November 8, 2006. Fuller seconded the motion. There was no discussion. Four voted to approve, with one abstention by Rineman, as he was not present at the referenced meeting.

Harned moved to accept the minutes for August 24, 2005. Fuller seconded the motion. There was no discussion. Four voted to approve, with one abstention by Rineman, as he was not present at the referenced meeting.

7. Other Business

No other business was discussed.

8. Schedule Next Meeting

Meetings held the 4th Tuesday of the month. Next meeting not scheduled date not scheduled.

9. Adjournment

Landman made a motion to adjourn at 8:30 p.m. Fuller seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Penny Holbert, Scribe
Bob Landman, Co-Chair
Tim Harned, Secretary