

FINAL MINUTES

WATER & SEWER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MARCH 14, 2012

1. Call to order

Chairman Gene Lambert called The Water and Sewer Advisory Committee to order at 6:30 p.m. in the Nowak Room of the Exeter Town Hall. Other members of The Board present were Selectman Don Clement, Paul Scafidi, Boyd Allen, Bob Kelly, Jim Tanis and Colleen St. Onge.

2. Review and approve draft minutes of January 11, 2012

Mr. Clement notes that his name needs to be added to the list of absentee members.

**Mr. Kelly moves to approve the January minutes with the advised changes. Mr. Allen Seconds. Vote: Unanimous
Mr. Clement and Mr. Scafidi abstain.**

3. Water / Sewer bill abatement requests and/or discussions with customers

Chairman Lambert asks Mike Jeffers to summarize the new abatement request for 14 Bow Street. Mike Jeffers summarizes the abatement request as a vacant building on a commercial property. The previous owner of the property installed an unapproved second service to the smaller building on the property. There was some leaking in the building and a water heater in the small vacant building was spraying water. The leak was found in December, and the water heater was shut down immediately upon discovery. Mr. Clement questions the term "unapproved?" Mr. Jeffers tries to summarize that the unapproved service was installed after the meter. The owner of the property, Brian Lortie is available for discussion. Mr. Jeffers indicates the vacant building had a leak and the water heater had a leak as well, though not at the same time. On January 24, and January 31. This meter has the new 900I head and the leak indicator was flashing. When the ratepayer asked DPW to come in, the history was downloaded and a continuous leak was discovered for a minimum of seven (7) days. Mr. Tanis questions if the leaks were found in the building and who owns it. Mr. Jeffers answers that they were in fact found in the building, which is vacant and the owner of the property is Brian Lortie.

The DPW does not recommend abatement, as this situation was preventable. If the owner of the property can read a flashing icon on the water heater, they should be inspecting their buildings and prevent it. There is very little detail to the statement that the secondary service was unapproved. The co-owner Brian Lortie comes forward to discuss the situation. Mr. Lortie indicates there were no unapproved enhancements to the water or sewer on the property, but a new meter was installed by DPW. The history of the building is that the larger building has a CPA firm in it. The average bill per quarter is \$90-\$100. At some point in either January or February the tenant of the building called Mr. Lortie to indicate that the DPW had called inquiring about a problem. Mr. Lortie went to the property to assess it and he examined both buildings. A tech from the DPW came to the property came out to check the meter. Several days passed before he returned. The new bill came for 127,000 gallons of water. He is unsure of where that large an amount of water could have gone to.

Mr. Lortie did in fact find the leak in the water heater, which was spraying a mist when he located it. Mr. Kelly wonders if the piping for the water and sewer can be seen or if it is buried. Mr. Lortie indicates it must be underground, it can not be seen. Mr. Lortie indicates there was a fire in November 2011 in the small vacant building. The Fire Department responded and all utilities to the vacant building were declared to have been turned off. Mr. Lortie is uncertain why the water was not turned off to the building and he states he has since turned the water off at the valve inside the larger occupied building. There is no indication that the meter that was installed for this building was tested for dysfunction. Mr. Jeffers indicates that typically when a meter is suspected to be malfunctioning, a new meter head is installed immediately and the head that was on the meter is sent out to be tested. There is nothing in the report to indicate that testing of the meter head was performed.

Mr. Lortie indicates there were no reasonable indicators that water was leaking anywhere, there were no running toilets or leaking sinks. There was the sound of running water when he approached his car, which is parked immediately next to the vacant building. It was at this point that the water heater was found to be spraying water. Mr. Tanis reminds the property owner that the Selectman's Ordinances indicate that what happens inside a structure on a property is the responsibility of an owner. Chairman Lambert reads the Selectman's Policy verbatim. In his opinion, in following the policy, there is no

indication that abatement is in order. Ms. St. Onge wonders if a water pipe may have had the opportunity to burst either in the building, or underground in the extreme cold of the winter. This could account for the 127,000-gallon usage.

Mr. Tanis suggests that prior to a recommendation from the Water and Sewer Advisory Committee, Mr. Jeffers and Mr. Lortie are given the opportunity to research the incident further including determining if the meter head that was replaced was tested. The Committee consensus is that this is an acceptable answer.

Mr. Tanis moves to table this abatement request pending further investigation. Mr. Scafidi Seconds. Vote: Unanimous

4. Regular Business

a. DPW operations report

Mr. Jeffers summarizes the DPW operations report for The Committee. The bid for the water treatment plant upgrades is closed. There were 5 bids ranging from the mid \$25,000 to \$30,000. The DPW has recommended the lowest bidder receive the bid in the mid \$20,000 range. The work for this will begin around April 16th. The budget process was also reviewed. The three pumps are about double the life span expectancy. One was repaired last year and another is in the budget for 2012 and is on order. The cost will come in under the expected budget.

Mr. Jeffers updates the Committee on the arsenic drinking water violation. Anyone who receives a water bill or has a business has been notified. There are multiple sample points throughout the town. Each one is tested and an average is determined. The standard is 10 parts per billion and we are at 13 parts per billion. The boilerplate needs to be done. Mr. Clement brings up the point that renters do not receive bills, and can be left unaware. The information is put on the website. Mr. Clement is concerned that there may be a segment of the population that has not been informed. He suggests making a public notice of some sort to reach out to this category of residents. Mr. Tanis wonders if a note can be added to the bottom of the boilerplate violation letter indicating that unit owners or business owners are responsible for inform their tenants. Chairman Lambert wonders if a public notification is necessary, and suggests that maybe a notice can be placed on the board in the Town Hall. Mr. Jeffers advises The Committee that the language in the boilerplate violation letter comes directly from DES and it can not be modified. An addendum can be added, but the notice itself can not be altered in any way.

Mr. Jeffers summarizes the Wastewater treatment issues. The permit has been issued by DES but is primarily driven by the EPA. In 1988 or 1989 monitors to determine water contours were installed. These monitors, that are designed for water quality samples to show if the unlined lagoons are leaking. The clay base that is currently there is not considered a lining. The DPW went out to purge the wells and an engineer on site indicated that the monitors are not designed for sampling. It is still unclear at this point, if the inclinometer can be used for the first round of samples. Mr. Jeffers estimates the cost of new monitors to be \$3,500 - \$5,000. Mr. Jeffers summarizes the Capacity Management Operation and Maintenance Document (CMOM). This document tells the EPA everything about the collection system including job descriptions, Jady Hill details, last year and this years budget and plans of the sewer system, history and inspections that have been done. The Right of way from Ashbrook through PEA goes through wetlands on private property that has not been Tv'd. This needs to be done. The EPA was also given maps of the Sanitary Sewer Overflows. The DPW has committed to identifying and classifying on a scale of 1 to 5 the piping in some of those areas. This will be done by January 31, 2013. This will go hand in hand with replacing sewer lines in the future.

b. Discuss Town-approved DPW warrant articles and 2012 budget planning

Selectman Don Clement advises The Committee that the following warrant articles were passed by the residents of the Town of Exeter: the ground water treatment plant on Lary Lane, Jady Hill Phase ii, the waste stream reduction, the \$335, 000 to begin some of the work on the new waste water treatment plant and &750,000 for water meter replacements. Each article passed with a minimum of 60% voters approving. Russ Dean, Town Manager, indicates that these articles were all bond articles and required a minimum of 60% in favor. There is an upcoming meeting regarding the Wastewater Treatment Plant, the Waste Stream Reduction and water meters to secure a 20% grant for those projects. This would accrue 1.2 million-dollar savings over the course of the three projects. Consultant selections for these projects are underway. Mr. Jeffers summarizes the meter replacements as a conglomerate effort. The residents of the Town will need to make appointments with the DPW to have their meters replaced. Ideally, meter changing would be completed during regular business hours, but with planning and caution, alternative hours can be made also. Mr. Jeffers indicates the entire process of changing a water meter is somewhere around eight (8) minutes. Time consumption has been a concern for much of the population.

5. Old Business

a. Review of 2 abatement requests from the previous meeting in January.

1. 14 Langdon and 70 Main Street

Chairman Lambert questions the two abatements returned for review. The two abatements were sent to The Board of Selectman with recommendations. Mr. Clement vaguely remembers the two abatements coming before the Board of Selectman but can not clearly remember why they were returned to the Advisory Committee. He feels that there ought to be some sort of appeals process for abatement requests that are denied. A short discussion ensues relating to the idea of a process change to include an appeals process for abatement requests that are officially denied. The Committee agrees to table the review of the two abatements pending further information from the Board of Selectman.

6. Committee calendar

a. Next meeting: Wednesday, April 11, 2012 6:30pm

7. Adjourn

Mr. Scafidi moves to adjourn. Mr. Kelly Seconds. Vote: Unanimous

The Committee stands adjourned at 8:23 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennifer Pond
Recording Secretary