

EXETER WATER & SEWER ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES February 13, 2013

Convene Meeting:

Chairman Robert Kelly, Vice-Chair Gene Lambert, Frank Ferraro – Selectmen’s Rep., Boyd Allen, Jim Tanis, John Gilbert, Paul Scafidi, Mike Jeffers – Water/Sewer Managing Engineer, Paul Vlasich – Town Engineer, were all in attendance. Robert Kelly convened the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Minutes of 12/12/12 and 01/09/13:

Motion: Gene Lambert moved to accept the minutes of December 12, 2012, seconded by Boyd Allen. Unanimous.

Motion: Gene Lambert moved to accept the minutes of January 9, 2013, seconded by Boyd Allen. 5 in favor, Paul Scafidi and John Gilbert abstained.

Water / Sewer Bill Abatement Requests – Mike Jeffers:

Mike Jeffers brought forward the abatement request of the owner of 9 Hillside Drive. The owners went on vacation and according to the trend chart the residence began using max flow the day after they left, for a period of 5-6 days. This is believed to be possible vandalism. The initial bill is for \$1,014.67, usage during this period was \$626.42 and taking into account a 50% reduction of the amount used during that time according to the abatement guidelines, an abatement of \$313.42 is requested.

There was discussion as to what category this request falls under in the abatement guidelines.

Motion: Paul Scafidi moved to recommend the abatement request of \$313.42 to the Board of Selectmen, seconded by Boyd Allen. Unanimous.

Regular Business – Projects Update – Mike Jeffers:

See attached **January/February 2013, W & S Managing Engineer Report**, hereinafter referred to as The Report

Mike pointed out that in **item 2** of The Report, the food services businesses have been very helpful in making repairs to their systems which has greatly helped the Town’s system.

Frank Ferraro asked about the finished pipes referenced in **item 3** of The Report. Mike stated that those would be Larry Lane, Court Street, some PEA and unknown others.

Mike advised the Committee that the pump bids referenced in **item 4** of The Report came in between \$63,000 and \$83,000. He is reviewing the bids. There was discussion as to whether the Town would be coming in well under budget for the project, since the pumps are the most

expensive single part of the project. Mr. Jeffers stated that he does expect that could happen, however there is still a lot more of the project to finance.

Boyd Allen asked if the meter installations referenced in **item 5** of The Report are taking the amount of time expected. Mike stated that they are actually going faster for the most part, although there are some that take longer due to issues found during installation.

Jim Tanis asked Mike if the EPA normally takes about 7 months to respond to letters from the Town, and Mike stated that it is not unusual for them to take 6-7 months.

Regular Business – Financial Reports Review:

The Committee has received the Financial Reports from Laura Hill. They are still in good shape with some money coming from reserves to keep the rates stable. Mike Jeffers said that letters have recently been sent out on overdue bills.

Jim Tanis asked about the one customer who has a bill greater than \$97,000 and more than 90 days past due. Mike stated that he knew that the owner of that property did advise the Town last year that it was going to take a long time to pay that bill. Mike doesn't know what the payment arrangements are that were made with the Town or where it stands. Bob Kelly told the Committee that he will talk to Laura or Linda about it and report back to the members.

Jim also asked about the electric savings in the Water & Sewer budget. Mike stated that the savings is in part because the biggest pumps have been being replaced with more efficient motors.

Jim also asked about the large legal/consultant fees in the budget. Mike stated that these were for Dana Bisbee, the town's counsel, while the Town was part of a 22 town group responding to the proposed EPA permit conditions.

Jim also asked about the \$70,000 principal payment in 2012 that doesn't appear to have been made on the Water Street project. Mike said that the last he knew everything was on track and there were no problems with it. Bob Kelly told the Committee that he will also discuss this with Linda and get back to the members.

Old Business – I/I management Study and Cost Review – Paul Vlasich & Mike Jeffers:

Bob Kelly gave an update on meeting with Underwood Engineers on February 11, 2013. The plan was pared down to 5 years and \$1,250,000 for additional investments for West Side Drive and Downing Court, above the amount already invested in Jady Hill. The EPA was notified in a letter requesting an extension that the Town wants to know how effective the improvements to these areas are before committing to work on the entire town. It was also stressed that any expenditures were pending town voter's approval. The EPA will also be provided with the current CIP which describes the projects and shows what dollars are being expended.

EPA granted an extension from this week to the middle of March. Bob also stated that the EPA seems to understand through ongoing discussions that there are financial considerations.

Bob also said that half of the “commitment” money (\$265,000 one year and \$250,000 another year) will be used over a couple of years on evaluations of how things are working, and smoke testing to try to identify private drains causing issues.

Frank Ferraro confirmed what Bob reported from the meeting on the 11th and also said that this is a 5 year v. a 30 year with evaluations prior to committing more money.

Mike Jeffers said that there is high inflow in some areas that were not expected to be issue areas. There is also an article on the town warrant for \$940,000 for Portsmouth Avenue. The Board of Selectmen has not seen the letter being drafted from this meeting yet.

Brian Griset, a resident in the audience, asked if there had been a sump pump fee discussed, as it had been in the past when he was on the Committee, which could be used to generate income. He also asked if it is possible that the Board of Selectmen could pass a temporary ordinance to be used to motivate those who are not being compliant to co-operate.

Gene Lambert asked if there are fines on those with unknown sump pumps that are found out about, and is something being done to recoup the cost of the ones who are just not co-operating.

Frank said that part of the problem is that it is unknown where some of the sump pumps are, and Mike said that finding the places requires professional dye testing to be done. Frank was concerned with the fairness of fees for those that are found and those not found.

Bob advised Brian that it is certainly in the Board’s plans for the future to review the ordinances and their enforcement.

Brian also suggested that part of the West Side Drive problem could be from a railroad culvert not being maintained. He said that over 50% is obstructed and causes damming during large storm events. Is the Town working on that?

Frank asked Paul Vlasich to investigate the railroad culvert.

Motion: Paul Scafidi moved to recommend proceeding with the 5 year plan that Underwood Engineering is developing based on the January concerns expressed and with a better technical management approach, seconded by Jim Tanis. Unanimous.

Other Business – Public Concerns:

Brian Griset had a question on the 23% completion, has there been any analysis/projections regarding revenues. Mike Jeffers said that with new efficient meters v. the old inefficient there is an expected increase in revenues.

Brian also expressed his concerns with the SB 11 which was discussed at the Board of Selectmen’s meeting on February 11, 2013, which concerns utility districts and the mandates involved in it. The bill is very specific on what can be charged (costs passed along, bricks and

mortar, how towns can allocate costs, and representation on the governing board.) He felt that the Committee may want to weigh in with the Selectmen on this legislation.

Frank Ferraro explained that it is enabling legislation and does not require districts, but the Board of Selectmen requested further information on what happens if Exeter doesn't form a district but Stratham does? Is Exeter limited on what they can charge in that case? The district does have strict limits on the cost formula.

John Gilbert offered to look into some legislation and send a memo to the other Committee members on his reading of it.

Frank also said that there is currently an RSA which allows towns to sell and buy from each other. There is a public meeting scheduled for February 21, 2013 at 6:00 p.m. on the Exeter/Stratham Interconnection Study.

Other Business – Riverwoods Pump Station – Mike Jeffers:

Mike Jeffers told the Committee that Riverwoods pump station has accounted for many of the night time call outs that create overtime. He met with the management of Riverwoods and asked them to install a (muffin monster) grinder, and they readily agreed. Riverwoods *will* (not yet) use power from the Town pump station but will be metered to pay for the power used by "muffin monster" they will own and operate. The completion of this project should result in a decrease of overtime pay.

Committee Calendar:

The next regular meeting will be scheduled for March 20, 2013 at 6:30 p.m. in the Nowak Room of the Town Office, as Bob Kelly, Gene Lambert and Boyd Allen are not available on the customary date.

Adjourn the Meeting:

The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.