

Draft Minutes

Exeter Water & Sewer Advisory Committee

October 9, 2013

Call Meeting to Order

Chairman Bob Kelly called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm in the Nowak Room of the Exeter Town Offices building. Other members present were Vice Chairman Boyd Allen, Selectman Frank Ferraro, Jim Tanis, and Paul Scafidi. Gene Lampert was absent.

1. Review and approve draft Minutes of 8/7/13 meeting

Mr. Allen had the following amendments:

Page one, paragraph 5, change the Motion to read "A Motion was made by Mr. Gilbert and seconded by Mr. Allen to accept..."

Page one, last paragraph, take the apostrophe out of CSO's to read CSOs

Page two, paragraph 5, change the last sentence to read "...easily with three filters, Chairman Kelly would like to finalize the numbers and have them..."

Page two, last paragraph, change "Man Quandt" to "Matt Quandt"

Page three, take apostrophes out of all CSO's and SSO's to read CSOs and SSOs

Selectman Ferraro had an amendment to Page 3, paragraph 2, striking the word "savings" out of the first sentence.

A Motion was made by Mr. Allen and seconded by Selectman Ferraro to accept the minutes of the August 7, 2013 meeting as amended. Motion carried – all in favor. One abstention from Mr. Scafidi.

2. Water/Sewer Bill Abatement Requests and/or discussions with customers

Mike Jeffers reported the following abatements:

- 53 Hampton Road, the upstairs toilet was leaking. The owner repaired. He didn't know it was leaking until he got a large bill. He would like an abatement. The owner, Dr. Judson, was present. Chairman Kelly asked him if he was aware of the policy. He said he was but he knows the Committee could say yes or no. Mr. Scafidi said they could not take responsibility for things not applied to the towns system.

Selectman Ferraro said the policy is clear. He moved to deny. Dr. Judson said there was no way to know. A Motion was made by Selectman Ferraro and seconded by Mr. Scafidi to not grant this abatement. Motion carried – all in favor.

- 44 Hampton Road, had a leak in the service, not sure if it was in the plumbing or in the service. The owner was present, and spoke. He said he left the spicket on, but said the sewer wasn't working and it was hard to tell considering it was a dirt floor basement. Chairman Kelly asked if there was a leak in the sewer pipe. The owner answered no, they thought there was a burst but it was the spicket. Selectman Ferraro said the issue is the owner would like an abatement on the sewer aspect because it didn't drain. He asked how much the bill was. Mr. Jeffers said the total bill was around \$800 so the sewer portion was probably around \$350. Mr. Scafidi said there still needs to be a charge for the average sewer bill and subtract the difference from this bill. A Motion was made by Mr. Allen and seconded by Selectman Ferraro to grant the abatement on the sewer portion for the difference between the average bill and this bill. Motion carried – all in favor.

- 61 Hayes Manufactured Home Park, the toilet kept running. The tenants are hard of hearing and never hear the toilet. They only found out when they got a high bill. Mr. Scafidi said this does not fit into the policy. Mr. Jeffers agreed. A Motion was made by Selectman Ferraro and seconded by Mr. Tanis to deny abatement. Motion carried – all in favor.

- 2 Allen Street, high bill but technicians did not find any leaks. The new meter done in June showed a leak. It indicated an intermittent leak. No indication anything was repaired. Nobody knows the source. Mr. Scafidi asked if the leak happened before and after the meter replacement. Mr. Jeffers said yes, but the problem was never determined. He said if the tenants corrected the problem, they never told DPW. A Motion was made by Mr. Scafidi and seconded by Selectman Ferraro to deny abatement. Motion carried – all in favor.

3. Regular Business

a. Projects Update: Mike Jeffers

Mr. Jeffers handed out his W & S report, which consisted of information on Water Meter SRF Project, Water Treatment Plant Waste Water Reduction SRF Project, Town Building Sump Pump Removals from Town Sanitary Sewer, and GWTP SRF Project. Selectman Ferraro had a question about billing, asking if it can be changed to monthly billing with the utility software. Mr. Jeffers said that is one of their goals. Mr. Allen asked if data can be logged manually with the new meters. Mr. Jeffers said yes.

Selectman Ferraro had a question about the meters, asking if they can be monitored monthly. Mr. Jeffers said he is pushing for weekly or biweekly so a leak can be found faster. Selectman Ferraro said monthly monitoring will find a leak faster than quarterly, so why use the man power weekly? He doesn't think the town should be dedicating a person just to drive around and collect data. Chairman Kelly suggested instead of going 90 days to a week, going somewhere in between. He thinks with the manpower issues that already exist, doing 30 days is reasonable.

Chairman Kelly asked if there were any curb balls in the water treatment plant. Mr. Jeffers, Mr. Tanis, and Paul Roy all said no, everything is going smoothly. Mr. Jeffers gave some figures, saying in 2009 the average raw sewage has dropped from 2.3 MGD to 1.7 MGD. Selectman Ferraro asked why 2009 was the date used. Mr. Jeffers said that was the worst recent year. Selectman Ferraro asked why compare one of the worst years to a dry year. Mr. Scafidi said to be happy it is 600,000 MGD less.

b. Financial Reports

Chairman Kelly said Laura has distributed her report. The report said over 90 receivables have not changed much. He asked if this has been an issue with the BOS. Selectman Ferraro said they have not been discussing it much. He said one customer makes up a bulk of this. The BOS was told it would go down but it hasn't much. Chairman Kelly said this account does not use town water. However, they had a problem with their water for a bit so they used town water in the meantime. When they went back to their water they had a bill that was never paid. Mr. Tanis asked why it cannot be shut off. Chairman Kelly asked why not shut off their sewer? Mr. Scafidi suggested going after them legally for the money owed. Selectman Ferraro thinks the Water/Sewer Committee should send a letter to the BOS expressing concern. Chairman Kelly said he would work on that. Selectman Ferraro suggested not discussing specifics, just focusing on that it is outstanding.

Selectman Ferraro talked about the increase in water/sewer fund balance. He said rates are set for this year, which did not reflect the \$300,000 in the water fund and \$300,000 in the sewer fund. Chairman Kelly said they are starting a budget review with requirements on the sewer side to use some of that money to stabilize rates. Mr. Tanis said they informally agreed to maintain a fund balance of \$500,000 in each fund. Chairman Kelly said once budget takes its own form they can go over that in January 2014.

Chairman Kelly skipped to agenda item 4 b. to accommodate those in attendance.

4. Old Business

b. WWTP Facilities Plan interaction

Chairman Kelly said the process is out on the street. Chairman Kelly asked if anyone wants to be a part of the process they should be on the Committee and tell Jennifer Perry. Mr. Tanis said he is interested.

5. 2014 Draft Water and Sewer Budget

Chairman Kelly, Bob Wentworth, and Nancy Bergeron make up the DPW Budget Subcommittee and met with Jennifer and Mr. Jeffers this morning (Oct.9). Chairman Kelly talked about the budget. He passed out a handout to the Committee. He wanted to talk about the CIP. Selectman Ferraro had a question on the billing/collection portion and Chairman Kelly said on the water side it is called distribution. Brian Griset spoke, questioning since the collection/billing percentage is down, are they still being charged the same percentage. Chairman Kelly said he will check on that. Mr. Griset also wondered if the budget recommendation process is still the same. He said before it went from water/sewer to budget committee and now it goes from the budget committee to the water/sewer committee. Chairman Kelly said he is on both committees so he knows everything that is going on. He said before the budget committee did not know a lot about DPW.

Chairman Kelly talked about three points of interest on the water side. He said on the CIP sheet there is a new truck, a new backhoe, and the redo of the Hampton Road water tank. He said the current truck needs to be replaced. It is part of the town upgrade program. He said the backhoe was in good condition a couple years ago, but now it is needing repairs that have added up to \$6,000 last year. He said it is a \$170,000 piece of equipment. He wondered if these should be bought outright. Mr. Scafidi said some of the fund balance can be used for them. Selectman Ferraro asked if the truck should be replaced even though it still runs well. Also, he would like to know what the cost would be to repair the backhoe. Chairman Kelly said he will be looking into that. Mr. Jeffers said he does not have the details on the backhoe but said it has died a few times during a job. He is concerned because they can't trust the piece of machinery to complete a job. Chairman Kelly said if they can repair it that should be done. He said paying 5-10% of its total cost to repair is not unreasonable.

Chairman Kelly went on to talk about the Hampton Road water tank. It is a steel tank. It is old, being built in the 1950's. He said the last time it was maintained was in the early 1990's. The last time they looked into rehab for the tank, which was 2008, it was going to cost \$500,000. He talked about a new plan for the tank.

Selectman Ferraro said the question on all of these items is how they are going to be paid for. Chairman Kelly said on the water side the budget is up 2%. Debt is up 17% due to some projects. Capital outlay is up 40%. It would be reasonable to take some money out of

reserves. He said they would see the numbers then come up with a strategy. Selectman Ferraro said they will go through the budget season first, then come back and see. Chairman Kelly said the backhoe and truck will be split evenly between sewer and water.

Chairman Kelly said the Wastewater Treatment Plant is underway. He wants to show EPA they mean business in going forward. It is a \$6 million project, which would be \$350,000-400,000 a year to bond that. Mr. Tanis talked about nitrogen levels in the bay. He had some issues about rate payers said only a small amount of nitrogen is going into bay. Chairman Kelly said he would take that issue to his subcommittee.

Chairman Kelly talked about Mr. Dean's suggestion to pay off some debt early on the outfall project and the Water St. interceptor. This will save thousands of dollars in interest. He said it is just an idea. He said they would save \$45,000/year in interest. There is a total of \$270,000 to retire those principals.

So to summarize, Chairman Kelly said he would get the budget revised to add the CIP requests. Then, they will review as a budget subcommittee then bring to the Water/Sewer then make recommendations to the Budget Committee. Mr. Griset spoke, talking about Mr. Dean's ideas and saying he attended the BOS meeting when this was discussed.

4 a. Exeter/Stratham interconnection project status

Chairman Kelly said on the financial side the numbers have changed. He talked about the hired UNH graduate student that is doing an analysis on various scenarios. He said the general conclusion was to stay straight up with the rates. He talked about the non-usage fee what was suggested to be included. He provided the Committee with some spreadsheets. He said they are looking at real money that could be generated by the largest consumer in town to use Exeter's facilities.

He went on to say they are still negotiating. Stratham has the model and is reviewing it. He said they should hear from Stratham soon. He wants info to go to Stratham's residents in March 2014. Mr. Tanis asked if the impact fee and the tune in are the same. Chairman Kelly said yes, they are. He went on to explain the impact fee and how he came up with the numbers. He said, however, that the numbers can change depending on what the rate is. Selectman Ferraro said he would like to see the UNH spreadsheet.

6. Other Business to be brought before the Committee

No other business.

7. Committee Calendar

The next regular meeting will be scheduled for Wednesday, November 13, 2013 at 6:30 pm in the Nowak Room at the Town Office.

Chairman Kelly adjourned the meeting at 8:34pm.

Respectively submitted,

Nicole McCormack
Recording Secretary