

Exeter Water & Sewer Advisory Committee

DRAFT Meeting Minutes

March 27, 2017

1. Welcome and Introductions

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 Chair Gene Lambert, Jim Tanis, Peter Lennon, new member Kelly Warner and Selectboard representative Don Clement.

2. Approve meeting minutes

Mr. Kelly presented the draft January 11, 2017 meeting minutes for review. Mr. Lambert moved and Mr. Lennon seconded a motion to approve the January minutes as written. The minutes were approved 5-0.

3. Abatements

There were no abatement requests for this meeting.

4. Regular Business

a. Managing Engineer's Report

Mr. Jeffers' report of March 6 was discussed by the Committee. Particular note was made of the receipt of a favorable bid from Apex Construction for the WWTP construction project. The BOS approved a contract to Apex at a recent meeting and construction is slated to begin in April.

b. Financial Reports

Financial reports from Ms. Laura Zogopoulos of the Finance Dept. were distributed by email to the Committee members at an earlier date. The new water and sewer rates have only been in place for one quarter's billing so not much of an impact on the fund balances has yet to be realized. However, it is anticipated that we have fixed a shortfall in the fund balances and they should be replenished to acceptable levels in the next 6 months or so.

5. Old Business

a. Disinfection Byproducts (DBP or TTHMs) Update

Mike Jeffers reported in a March 6 email that consideration was being mulled for multiple ideas on how to reduce DBPs in our water supply. The \$1.5 million warrant article for consultants, equipment and/or facilities to address this problem was approved by the voters on March 16. Also, a review of the relationship with our vendor SUEZ/USG versus using Wright Peirce for engineering design was still being sorted out. Mike anticipates making some headway on the TTHM issue in the next 2-3 months.

In addition, the Town Manager sent a draft Administrative Order on Consent (AOC) from NHDES for the Committee to review and comment. This document had first been reviewed by the Selectboard at their meeting on March 27. Mr. Kelly observed that although we haven't signed the document yet and our Board

was still in the process of reviewing it, there were two upcoming dates in the next 60 days in which we have to submit documents to DES or face a fine. There was also discussion among the committee members as to why we were being issued the AOC at all. Mr. Kelly summarized some background on this issue: In December 2015, 3-4 regulators from NHDES met with DPW officials and our consultants at the PW garage after the GWTP ribbon cutting ceremony, a meeting at which Mr. Tanis, Mr. Kelly, and Mr. Clement also attended. At that meeting, Rick Skarinka (sp) indicated that they (DES) would give us “a year”, basically until the end of 2016, to attend to the TTHM issue and the continued testing violations for DBP. During 2016, we all attended several follow-up meetings with DES describing our progress on various assessments and bench tests that we and our consultants were undertaking to isolate the problem. Due, in part, to the fact that we could not find a relatively quick, low cost (i.e. within current budget limitations) solution, DPW came to the Budget Recommendations Committee with a Warrant Article proposal for \$1.5M to conduct tests and fund equipment and/or facilities to fix the problem. Due to the fact we are an SB2 town, this expenditure could not legally be approved until our 2017 Town Meeting. NHDES knows this, and obviously, from responses at various meetings, the town (DPW, BOS, and technical advisory committee) were all on board.

Mr. Clement advised the Committee that the TTHM WAR of \$1.5 M passed with over 80% yes, less than 20% no. So, again, obviously, the entire town is on board with this. The Committee felt that the AOC was a premature legal contract with stipulated financial penalties and seemed quite disingenuous on the part of NHDES after the progress, effort, funding, and analysis we have put into this.

Mr. Kelly moved and Mr. Lambert seconded a motion to have Mr. Kelly summarize the Committee’s position on this and forward it to the Town Manager for inclusion in the Selectboard packet next week. In summary, the W&S Committee would recommend that the Selectboard request a deferment of the AOC in general for at least 6 months to see what progress we make, and have been working towards for over a year, as the DES had originally promised. Again, if we were a Town Council community, perhaps we could have authorized funds last fall for the equipment/facility fixes to be within DES’ stipulated “year” of forgiveness, but we’re not, so we should not be penalized for this. Given the constraints of our town charter, we have clearly allocated resources and funding to fix this problem in an expeditious fashion. If this is not in the cards, and we feel some real push back here is required, we recommend that the first two “order” deadlines of April 30 and May 31 be removed from the AOC. The goal here, and we have clearly proven that the Town of Exeter is on board with this, is to upgrade our facilities to meet current drinking water standards. If we don’t by 2019, then we deserve any penalty they want to incur. That should be the only Order deadline in the AOC.

The Committee approved the above motion by a 5-0 count.

b. WWTP Update

As noted earlier, the WWTP bid award to Apex Construction was approved by the Selectboard on March 13. Work should begin in April sometime and it is anticipated that the plant will go on line sometime toward the end of 2018.

6. New Business (or other business brought before the Committee)

Mr. Kelly noted that the Exeter River Study Committee was being reconstituted as just the River Committee to keep tabs on how the river responds to the dam removal process of last year. Mr. Lennon agreed to be the Committee representative on that committee.

Mr. Lambert had indicated earlier that his work schedule made it difficult to prepare for and attend meetings so he was not renewing his membership for at least the next year or two. He did not rule out returning to the Committee in the future. Mr. Kelly and the Committee expressed their gratitude to Mr. Lambert for his many years of service.

7. Committee Calendar

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 10, 2017 at 6:30 pm in the Nowak Room at the Town Offices.

Mr. Kelly adjourned the meeting at 7:40 pm.

Respectively submitted,

Robert Kelly
Recording Secretary pro tem