

Town of Exeter (NH) Water & Sewer Advisory Committee

FINAL Meeting Minutes

June 12, 2019

1. Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was called to order in the Nowak Room at the Town Office Building, 10 Front Street, Exeter, NH by Chairman Bob Kelly at 6:30 pm. Other Committee members present included Ms. Kelly Warner, Mr. Carl Wikstrom, and Selectboard representative Ms. Molly Cowan. Committee members Mr. Jim Tanis, Mr. Ben Mosher, and Mr. Dave Michelson were unable to attend.

2. Water and Sewer Bill Abatement Requests

Five abatement requests were heard by the Committee.

- a. 84 Front Street. A frozen pipe burst during unexpected and unseasonably cold November 2018 weather. The landlord typically bleeds the piping but were away during the cold weather and did not expect the cold weather. The customer was requesting an abatement for \$1,119.48 for the sewer portion of their bill.

The Committee discussed the occurrence details with the user and agreed with their request noted above. Bob Kelly moved, and Carl Wikstrom seconded, a motion to approve the sewer abatement request for \$1,119.48. All present voted aye, motion carried. **ABATEMENT REQUEST APPROVED.**

- b. 134 Front Street. A commercial building had a tenant bathroom leak that was not discovered by either the tenant or landlord until the Town Water Department notified them of abnormally high usage. The landlord, who was present at the meeting, indicated that the tenant had not been on site for quite a while at the property due to health issues.

The Committee indicated that the landlord is ultimately responsible for such a leak and that he should discuss the tenant's absence and potential responsibility under their lease terms. Therefore, Bob Kelly moved, and Carl Wikstrom

seconded, a motion to deny the abatement request. All present voted aye, motion carried. **ABATEMENT REQUEST DENIED.**

- c. 40 Hampton Road. The property hot water heater leaked and was not discovered for some time. The customer was requesting an abatement for \$59.29 of their bill.

The Committee discussed the occurrence details and felt that due to the relatively small amount of abatement request, perhaps the user would not want to take their one time in ten-year abatement. The Committee **tabled the request** until further discussions with the requestor could be undertaken.

- d. 81 Winter Street. This rental property had several quarters of high usage before the landlord hired a plumber who found a leaking toilet. Prior to that, the landlord had interviewed the tenant who reportedly indicated that there were no serious issues.

The Committee indicated that the landlord is ultimately responsible for such a leak and that he should discuss the tenant's responses and potential responsibility under their lease terms. Therefore, Molly Cowan moved, and Kelly Warner seconded, a motion to deny the abatement request. All present voted aye, motion carried. **ABATEMENT REQUEST DENIED.**

- e. 76 Lincoln Street. This property is a former photo processing business. A frozen pipe burst and was not immediately reported by the tenant to the landlord.

The Committee discussed the occurrence details and, while the tenant should have noted the leak, the total bill was over \$7,000 so they \$500 one-time bill forgiveness under the new SB policy. Therefore, the Committee agreed with their request noted above. Molly Cowan moved, and Carl Wikstrom seconded, a motion to approve the abatement request but capped at \$500 as noted in the new policy. All present voted aye, motion carried. **ABATEMENT REQUEST, subject to \$500 cap, APPROVED.**

3. Regular Business

- a. Utility Operations Report.

- i. TTHMs. The new facility component located at the Portsmouth Avenue surface water treatment plant began operations in April 2019. DPW has indicated that it may take several months for an impact to be made to the water quality in certain sections of town.
- ii. WWTP. The new facility located on Newfields Road is scheduled to begin operations this summer which is ahead of the schedule dictated by US EPA. DPW has indicated that the entire startup process may take several months and will generally continue for the rest of the year.

b. Utility Financial Reports

The reports of April 30, 2019 developed by the Town Finance Department were previously distributed via email to Committee members for review. The reports show healthy reserve accounts of \$1,193,162 for Water and \$2,754,895 for Sewer. Mr. Kelly reminded Committee members that the Sewer account has been “artificially” bolstered by a rate increase in November 2017 to provide a buffer against our approximately \$4M first WWTP bond payment in January 2020.

4. New Business

None at this time.

5. Other Business

- a. The mobile home park, Exeter River Landing, has requested installing a sewer meter so their billing is based on actual sewer flow instead of an estimate of water use, as currently done since the park has a water well. After discussion by the Committee and general agreement that this is a good idea, Molly Cowan moved, and Carl Wikstrom seconded, a motion to approve the installation of a sewer meter at the Exeter River Landing park.

All present voted aye, motion carried to approve the sewer meter installation.

- b. Mr. Kelly indicated that Mr. Jim Tanis, a longtime member of the Committee, has submitted his resignation as he is moving out of state. Mr. Kelly thanked Mr. Tanis for his valuable service and the Committee wished him well.

6. Committee Calendar

The Committee is considering the next meeting for Wednesday July 17. Member vacations and meeting agenda will be considered before a meeting date is selected.

Bob Kelly adjourned the meeting at 7:20 pm.

Respectively submitted,

Bob Kelly
Recording Secretary pro tem