

## **DRAFT Meeting Minutes**

For Meeting of March 10, 2021

### **1. Welcome and Introductions**

The meeting was called to order via **Zoom** video conference by Chairman Bob Kelly on Wednesday March 10, 2021 at 6:30 pm. Other Committee members present on the video conference included Mr. Carl Wikstrom, Ms. Kelly Warner, Mr. Ben Mosher, Mr. Mark Fabian and Selectboard representative Ms. Molly Cowan.

Representatives of the Department of Public Works were in attendance to discuss several items, noted below. Jennifer Perry, Director; Paul Vlasich, Town Engineer; Matt Berube, Water and Sewer Engineer; Jennifer Mates, Asst. Town Engineer.

### **2. Water and Sewer Bill Abatement Requests**

Five abatement requests were discussed by the Committee.

- a. Ike Njoku, 40 Hampton Rd., B-5. The customer, Mr. Njoku, who was in video attendance, was seeking an abatement on his water and sewer bill for increased usage from a toilet and pipe leak. Apparently due to some COVID restrictions, it took repeated tries to contact the customer.

The Committee discussed the aspects of the request outlined in the application and assessed that the user should receive a 50% Water and Sewer bill abatement for usage in excess of his average annual quarterly usage. Mr. Mosher moved, and Ms. Warner seconded, a motion to **recommend an ABATEMENT REQUEST** of \$297.17 based on DPW's calculations. The motion passed 6-0.

- b. Just Doo It, Lisa Kelly, 137 Epping Road. The customer, Ms. Kelly who was attendance on behalf, was seeking an abatement for an excessive water and sewer bill related to a leaky toilet. Reportedly, the ratepayer found a leak in his

system after several days but was not able to get a plumber due to quarantine protocols.

The Committee discussed the aspects of the request outlined in the application and assessed that the user should receive a 50% Water and Sewer bill abatement for usage in excess of their average annual quarterly usage. Mr. Wikstrom moved, and Mr. Kelly seconded, a motion to **recommend an ABATEMENT REQUEST** of \$607.29 based on DPW's calculations. The motion passed 6-0.

- c. Island Hospitality (Hampton Inn), 59 Portsmouth Avenue. The customer, for whom Lauren Shaley in attendance, was seeking an abatement for an excessive water and sewer bill for a leaky spa line in their pool/spa area. The customer has a high and low flow meter for varied usage during different times of the year. It appeared that the line leaked into underlying soil beneath the building slab so did not use town sewer services.

The Committee discussed the aspects of the request outlined in the application and assessed that the user should receive a full Sewer bill abatement for usage in excess of his average annual quarterly usage. Mr. Wikstrom moved, and Mr. Mosher seconded, a motion to **recommend an ABATEMENT REQUEST** of (\$1,099.18 + \$1,408.54) \$2,507.72 based on DPW's calculations. The motion passed 6-0.

- d. Anne Curran, 20 First Street. The customer, of whom no one was in attendance, was seeking an abatement for an excessive water and sewer bill related to a leaking toilet. The leak was discovered and fixed quickly.

The Committee discussed the occurrence details and felt that this excess usage, was an accident though somewhat the ratepayer's responsibility under the Abatement Policy. The Committee originally felt that perhaps the customer would want to postpone the request at it was only \$132.50 and there is only one abatement request allowed in a 10 year period. However, after the meeting DPW indicated that the customer would prefer the abatement as requested. Therefore, based on the Committee's indication of wanting to approve a partial abatement, Mr. Kelly **approved an ABATEMENT REQUEST** on 80% of the excess water and sewer usage of \$132.50.

- e. Robert McLoughlin, 38 Exeter Farms Road. The customer, for whom was in video attendance, was seeking an abatement for an excessive water and sewer bill related to a leaky toilet and humidifier in a blocked off area of the home during the winter.

The Committee discussed the occurrence details and felt that this excess usage was an accident though somewhat the ratepayer's responsibility under the Abatement Policy. The resident did not immediately notice the leak because it was in a remote area of the house. Mr. Mosher moved, and Mr. Kelly seconded, a motion to **approve an ABATEMENT REQUEST** on 50% of the excess water and sewer usage of \$398.11. The motion passed 6-0.

### **3. Regular Business**

- a. Utility Operations

No change from previous reporting.

- b. Utility Financial Reports

Mr. Kelly discussed reports that had been previously distributed to the Committee by the Town Finance Department. Continued note was made of a large Sewer bond payment at the end of 2020. Town Manager Russ Dean and Mr. Kelly are monitoring cash flow in the Sewer account to assess impacts on rates as the year progresses.

### **4. New Business**

None at this time.

### **5. Other Business**

- a. Salem Street Utility Project

Representatives of DPW provided an update on the project approved by the voters for 2021. Mr. Vlasich discussed a cost sharing program first used on the Jady Hill project whereby residents kicked in a portion of the cost of re-installing their property services on a 10 year payback program. Discussion centered around the several fold increase in the cost for this project as it has a larger scope and unit costs are higher than at Jady Hill.

The Committee indicated to DPW that we should entertain a cost sharing program for this neighborhood, but specifics shouldn't be publicized until detailed cost data is available for review.

b. Squamscott River Siphons

The Town has embarked on rehabilitating the 8" sewer siphons under the Squamscott River based on a warrant article last year. Early TV results indicate that the siphons are in worse condition than anticipated; some areas could not be televised due to blockages, and some holes into the river were observed. Mr. Vlasich displayed a table outlining preliminary cost data for several rehabilitation/replacement options.

The Committee agreed that we need to address this as an emergency situation due to the potential environmental hazards, however, they requested more detailed cost and scope of work information before an informed decision could be made. Mr. Vlasich indicated he would provide same within a few days.

c. Webster Avenue Pumping Station

Mr. Vlasich indicated that this facility was in the CIP last year and would probably be discussed this year. Due to increases in commercial and residential properties on the east side of the river, the capacity of this PS needs to be increased. Preliminary numbers indicate a jump from \$2.5M to \$4.3M for these improvements.

Mr. Vlasich said he would send the report to the Committee in digital form.

d. General WWTP permit

Ms. Perry indicated the Town has received a new General Permit for the WWTP. One of the provisions of the permit is to meet with Great Bay communities with the aim for jointly further reducing nitrogen emissions and discharges into the Bay.

e. Capacity Analysis

Mr. Berube indicated that DPW was undertaking a hydraulic capacity analysis to identify pinch points in our services throughout the water and sewer systems. This analysis will continue throughout 2021 with final conclusions and recommendations toward the end of the year.

#### **f. Committee Calendar**

The Committee tentatively scheduled their next meeting for the middle of May 2021. The actual date will depend on abatement request volume and some members' time constraints. If the Town Office has not reopened due to continued protocols associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, then the meeting will be conducted as a Zoom video conference. The agenda will reflect how the meeting will be conducted.

Mr. Kelly adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:30 pm.

Respectively submitted,

Bob Kelly  
Chair and Recording Secretary  
March 22, 2021