



## Hill Water Works – Commissioners Meeting

**Meeting Minutes**

**\* Amended Draft \***

**July 11th, 2023**

**Regularly Scheduled Meeting** – Commission Meetings are held Monthly on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. in the Hill Public Library located at 30 Crescent Street Hill, NH 03243.

**Board Members Present** Charles Estes, Chairman / System Superintendent , Stephen Thomson, Selectman & Water Commissioner Ex Officio, Tony Cartier, Water Commissioner.

Charles Estes declared the meeting open at 6:30 p.m.

**Public Attendance** – David Thomson, Shaun Bresnahan and Frank Razzaboni.

Charlie and his son Anthony did the meter reading for July billing during the weekend before the warrant creation on July 11th. It took approx. 4 ½ hours after multiple delays with the meter reading equipment to capture 96% of the working and improperly functioning meters. Many meters do not read. Others read improperly. Some residents admit to not having a meter at all. One resident proclaimed in the NINE YEARS of living in Hill, they have never had a water meter. (The resident was informed that this will be looked into.) The Command Link (blue box) required for reading automated sending units (radio readers) is battery powered. The unit has been plugged in at the town office for as long as we know of. The unit was taken out of the office on Thursday Morning July 6<sup>th</sup>, and was plugged in until Saturday morning July 8<sup>th</sup>,. When attempting to use the Command Link on the road, the box was dead. On Monday, We sought Lisa Seymour's assistance and she was able to plug the box in at the town office. She re-linked the command box to the tablet and then when the box was unplugged, it immediately powered off. Having an AC outlet in the vehicle, the blue box was plugged into Charlie's truck. Lisa followed us outside and again was able to link the box to the tablet. We drove by and captured the automated sending units readings. After arriving back home, Charlie and Anthony checked the batteries in the blue box. The box had regular Duracell batteries size AA. The batteries removed from the box were corroded and had split. They WERE NOT rechargeable batteries. It is impossible to know if they have been replaced since purchasing the box or if the box was provided to us with the Duracell AA non rechargeable batteries included. We will acquire some rechargeable batteries to replace the batteries currently in the box, the box is currently powered off and is not plugged in.

The Board of Commissioners reviewed a billing warrant prepared for the July billing period. The billing warrant was signed to provide for the billing to proceed. Charlie will review the warrant in comparison to the meter reading and prepared a report for the next meeting. The signed warrant will be placed in the billing agents drop box before leaving Tuesday night. The Board also reviewed a journal record for the payment of invoices including the first half of the year payment for the Town Treasurer. In preparation for a warrant Charles talked with Judy Brady, the town treasurer, who explained that all invoices must be accompanied by a Treasurer's Warrant in order to be approved by the Commissioners of the Water Works. The Warrant is to be signed by at least two Commissioners and is to be placed in the Treasurer's drop box before the following Wednesday morning. QuickBooks reports would not print a Treasurers Warrant in preparation for this meeting. A journal record was produced for this meeting so Judy could look into why QuickBooks would not print the proper Warrant.

Charlie also informed the Board, with regard to employee records and payroll, the Hill Water Works records have been considerably comingled with Town of Hill taxation records that a good step forward would be to untangle Warrants and Billing records, as well as Hill Water Works payroll.

Charlie explained how easily this “inadvertently” may have happened as a result of the resignation of the previous commissioners and the process required to produce a warrant from Interim Selectmen Water Commissioners. The drop down box in the Sensus Software automatically alters the wording of the warrant to the Tax Collector when choosing “Selectmen” opposed to “Commissioners.” The Warrant is produced as a Town of Hill Tax Warrant for billing to be collected by the Town of Hill to be deposited in the accounts of the Water Works. By choosing “Commissioners” in the software, the system automatically produces a Hill Water Works Commissioner’s Warrant. It was a simple oversight picked up on by Shelly. To her credit, Shelly recognized the previous warrants were inaccurate. It is better that they are now accurately from the Hill Water Works and not Town of Hill Selectmen.

The meeting proceeded with the Commissioners reviewing the minutes of the previous meeting. Approval of minutes was prolonged. The board attended to other business. Charlie asked Stephen if he was interested in being sworn in officially. He responded yes. Charlie made a motion that Stephen seek an appointment by the Selectmen to close the loop on the 3 Commissioner issue. Tony seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. [ Frank Razzaboni questioned the previous minutes with regard to his remarks about plastic meters. The minutes will be amended to include Frank's amended statement of Solid State meters. Approval of the minutes was delayed table until the next meeting.

### Old Business –

The commission for 36 and 41 New Chester Road. Stephen to follow up with the contractor. The site work at 36 and 41 New Chester continues. Gravel and stones were added on the Town side of the repairs. Loam and seeding is still required to fix the resident portion of the repairs. Estimates still have not been provided to repair residents portion.

The pavement repair on Murray Hill Road was completed.

The Board again reviewed the bulleted points from the previous minutes as a conclusion to the transition phase from Interim Selectmen Water Commissioner's to Sworn Water Commissioner Board members.

- Hydrant flushing will be scheduled and will be the responsibility of the Water Commission. The Water Commission will draft and approve a process that will apply to hydrant flushing. At this point the issue was raised that Charlie received a text message from the fire department regarding the July 15<sup>th</sup> splish / splash fund raiser. The text exchange occurred between Charlie and Mark Labonte. Messages immediately became defensive of topics the Water Commission never raised. Mark was advised – **“This event can proceed. A water commissioner should be present. Training can be scheduled. Forms can be created. I wouldn't look at this as if you're seeking permission as much as just scheduling to fulfill a requirement. Fires are the documented exception to the regulation.”** As a result, a form was created. The Form was provided to the fire department. It was not returned prior to the commissioners meeting. Access via hydrant was approved for the event. The Board reviewed the form created and approved the form. >>>**Shaun Bresnahan requested the Commission include in the amended minutes (in addition to the notation of correspondence sent to Capt. Labonte) that a motion by the board was made to approve the event. As requested - A motion was made by Tony Cartier to approve the access to the system for the splish / splash event for July 15th. Stephen 2<sup>nd</sup>. The motion passed unanimously.<<<** The board also agreed the form should be required for access to the water system henceforth. The form has been forwarded to Lisa for distribution. >>>**The Commission unanimously agreed that submission of a request can be reviewed and approved by the system Superintendent if time does not allow for the commission to review at a regularly scheduled meeting.<<<**
- Charles maintains the Public Works email.

- Charles is responsible for DES Reporting. The forms providing DES Contact information and pursuant to NH RSA 38:19 have been forwarded to the appropriate persons.
- Diamond Mapping Systems – Charlie has been given Administrator access to Diamond Mapping. Shaun remains an administrator for Town of Hill use and development as a town wide assets management tool.
- A water leak was identified at 47 Old Town Road. The leak presented potential erosion possibility to Old Town Road so it was considered “warranted” for immediate repair. The property was determined to be on an isolated line . The water was shut off to the isolated property and the property owner was contacted . Water Works communicated with the property owner to avoid any inconvenience by disruption of service . It was determined the leak was the result of the use of a plastic fitting . The repair was performed and the service to the property was restored. As a sign of good faith, Anthony Estes mowed a section of the owner’s law. He mowed the driveway entrance and front yard including the steep hill. The owner expressed his gratitude. Anthony donated his time without compensation.
- Review of Previous meter reading and billing warrant continue. To be review after tonight's meeting, it appears the billing warrant is inconsistent with the meter readings. Gallons consumed is not what appears us the billing warrant. This will require some investigation and assessment.

The Commission reviewed and discussed several newly prepared reports.

- HILL Water Works unpaid receivables,
- HILL Water Master Route report,
- HILL Water Non-Route Exception report,
- HILL Water Non-Read Exception report,
- The copy of the tax collectors warrant for billing and attached pages, and
- The Record Journal incorrectly referred at times as the Treasurer’s warrant.

\*\* Because of the printing issues with QuickBooks, not all reports were not available for tonight’s meeting.

**New Business –**

Charles continues to familiarize himself with the software with the assistance of Judy Brady, Lisa Seymour and Shelly Henry. Unfortunately the time allowed for use of the computer in the Town clerks area is considerably limited. In the previous meeting Stephen Thomson requested that we look at the entire billing and payment process. The Commission unanimously agreed this would be a good part of the Audit. It is nearly impossible to perform the tasks to the satisfaction of the board with the Water Works computer limited to the Town Clerk’s hours of operation. The Water Works requires it’s own work station. Lisa previously provided a quote of \$1,400 for a network connection to the water works office downstairs. Charlie notes there is a suspended ceiling in the downstairs within 15 linear feet of the network service. Running a CAT 5 cable to the network requires no more than a standard 20 ft cable extension to a duplex Jack. This can be done for less than \$25. There is also a computer on the table downstairs that has been sitting unplugged for an unknown period of time. Shaun Bresnahan said he agreed that it should not cost this much and should not be so difficult to get a computer put downstairs . Charlie proposed to utilize the monitor in the water works office, to plug in the computer that’s there and see what’s on it. The Selectmen in attendance had no objection. Stephen made a motion that Hill Water Works establish an office and formally move the water works workstation downstairs to that office. Tony 2<sup>nd</sup> the Motion. The motion passed unanimously . The water commission will set up a computer down stair and will operate out of its own work space henceforth. The current computer in the Town Clerk’s office will remain for the billing agent to collect payments of water bills and other related uses. Charlie also suggested the purchase of a locking cabinet of up to approx. \$150 to lock up the \$6,000 worth of meter reading equipment. It was agreed the cabinet is to have a powered outlet to keep the equipment plugged in and charged. Stephen made a motion we purchase a locking, powered cabinet. Tony 2<sup>nd</sup> and the motion passed unanimously.

Before the meeting concluded – Frank Razzaboni asserted that he had one order of business to be addressed in the best interest of the Town for liability purposes – youth employment paper work is required for the Town to be covered. - Frank questioned the hiring of Anthony Estes as a meter reader asserting there are regulations for youth employees and there is liability. Shaun Bresnahan asserted that Charlie should not be hypocritical. He

asserted that Charlie has “gone pretty hard at the Seymours for “Conflict of Interest” with Tom Seymour, while as the Chairman of the Selectmen's office, advocated for and effectively hiring his wife as the Executive Board’s Administrative Assistant. Charlie said in response, The Hill Water Works hiring his son as a “meter reader” is hardly the same as the Chairman of the Executive Board of which Tom was the Chairman, hiring his wife to the position of Administrative Assistant to the Executive Board on behalf of the Town where she perform duties including setting her own salary and hours with her husband's approval. Shaun said “Agree to Disagree.” He asked who authorized Anthony's hiring. Charlie stated it was a decision of the Superintendent. Shaun questioned what Superintendent. Charlie responded pursuant to **RSA 38:20** that Shaun has referenced numerous times. It's a lawful position and as a Superintendent, it's the same as the School Superintendent is accountable for school employees independent of the School Board, the Superintendent of the Water Works possesses similar authority. However it was added that it was also first discussed with the Board and the Board had no objection. To the contrary, the board resoundingly approved. David Thomson spoke up in favor of hiring a young person to do the meter reading. It gives them a job and gets a job done that nobody else seems to want to do. Charlie noted that the Board's non objection to hiring Anthony was an oversight in the previous minutes. Stephen motioned that we table approval of the previous minutes until an amended version could be prepared for review. Tony seconded the motion. The Motion passed unanimously. Approval The minutes from June 13<sup>th</sup> are tabled until amendments could be presented to the board at the next meeting.

It was determined that Charlie will perform the meter reading until Anthony turns 16 in September. Proper paper work will be provided for all employees as the situation requires.

Having no other business on the Agenda, Stephen Thomson made a motion to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Charles Estes, Superintendent Hill Water Works on July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023.