



Hill Water Works – Commissioners Meeting

Meeting Minutes

*** DRAFT ***

October 10th, 2023

Regularly Scheduled Meeting – A regularly scheduled Water Commissioner's meeting was held in the Hill Public Library at 6:30 p.m. located at 30 Crescent Street Hill, NH 03243.

Board Members Present Charles Estes Chairman, Stephen Thomson, Water Commissioner, Tony Cartier, Water Commissioner.

Public Attendance – David Thomson, Shelly Henry and Donald Reese.

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

Approval of Previous Minutes – The Emergency Meeting minutes for September 6th and Special Meeting minutes for September 18th were presented. Steve made a motion to accept the minutes as presented. Tony seconded with a note of correction to spelling. The motion was amended to accept the meeting minutes as amended. Motion was seconded by Tony and the motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Old Business-

SKR Site Services – Open Invoice requires breakdown. Tabled until the next meeting.

Water Commission Office is now fully set up down stairs in the Town Office building. A Dell desktop computer and printer, both re-purposed from the school district to the Water Works, are now fully functional in the Commissioner's office. A meter reading was performed over the weekend of October 8th, and a billing warrant is currently in process to be given to the billing agent no later than Thursday morning. A Treasurer is warrant is pending with current invoices. Charlie will draft a letter to customers explaining the increase in this month's bill being the result of the previous month's usage being included in the October bill.

New Business-

Shelly Henry appeared before the board of commissioners and, despite the adoption of the new communications policy, as the billing agent, she was provided time to address the board unexpectedly with a list of items for discussion. This will not be allowed in the future. The board's communications policy adopted on September 18th applies to everyone.

Shelly started by saying the Frasers, located at 134 New Chester, are asking if their water has been shut off and questioning their bill. Valerie Fraser corresponded with Charlie on Sept. 24th confirming their water was shut off as of that date. The October bill will include the Aug – Sept & Sept thru Sept 24, usage. Shelly said "Well I don't like this." When asked she couldn't really define what "This" is.

Shelly is not satisfied with changes occurring in the Water Works by the new water commissioners.

Shelly asserted that she gave Charlie two flash drives of water works records in May and was told the flash drives would be returned. After review of the contention the drives, it was deemed that these flash drives are Hill Water Works records that belong in the possession of the Water Commissioners. This was stated to the Selectmen and was said to Shaun Bresnahan precisely. For that reason the flash drives were being stored in the desk of the water commissioners in the office downstairs. Apparently Shelly is not satisfied with that conclusion. She was very contentious in her approach to matters and topics she wanted to discuss with the board. Shelly insists the flash drives need to be returned to her. Charlie said he would return them on Wednesday morning and that will put an end to that.

The next subject on Shelly's list was communications. Shelly feels the communications are not to her satisfaction. Shelly says she thinks the Water Commissioners are "being secretive." {For anyone who thinks the Water Commission is being secretive, you're encouraged to review the meeting minutes since May 2023 to see how transparent the commission has been regarding the Commissioner's actions.} It has been stated several times that the water commissioners are no longer going to do things simply because it's the way it has always been done in the past. Shelly takes issue with this statement. Stephen Thomson stated that things that have become antiquated in the Hill Water Works and things need to be updated. Changes will happen. Maintenance and general systems assets management has been neglected. The system requires update which includes processes. Charlie stated the Water Commission is currently following the 2022 Water Works policies and regulations until such time as the regulations are updated by the current commissioners. The Water Commissioners are the governing body and have the right to update the policies and procedures as deemed appropriate.

Shelly then addressed the iCloud invoicing. There remain two customers whose payments were processed as insufficient funds or other. Charlie said this is on the agenda to be discussed tonight and would be addressed. Shelly's list includes billing of the fire hydrants. She reminds the Commission that the Town needs to be billed for the hydrants. Water commissioners responded that the policy will be reviewed and a decision will be made. Shelly stayed for the remainder of the meeting taking notes.

Charlie brought to the board's attention that the commissioners need to review once again the processing of Invoices, Bills, Warrants and review some decisions of the commission. The undeniable fact is that other Municipal Officials and Municipal Employees are not accepting the Water Commissioners decisions about processing warrants and following the current regulations as written. The Treasurer is only paying, or not paying, line items based on her determinations not based on the Warrant of July/August or September/October. The Administrative Assistant for the Executive Board is processing, or not processing, invoicing or reimbursements of Water Works expenses based on her determination. Initially it was stated that the water commissioners would follow the current process of reimbursing the town of Hill. The town of Hill invoices the Water Works for the Water Works to create a Warrant to the treasurer for things such as compensation to commissioners, secretary, meter reader and other expenses all as reimbursements of expenses to the town. The Water Commissioners disagree with this form of accounting. Notwithstanding, Motions, Votes and/or determinations of the Water Commissioners are being disregarded or worse yet, outright contended. The billing agent appearing argumentative and contentious, dissatisfied with the Water Commission and the way the Commissioners are doing things, fully aware of the new communications policy, was purely obstinate. Decisions of the Water Commission WILL be abided by.

ALL THIS OBSTRUCTIONISM AND ARROGANCE NEEDS TO STOP!!

The Board proceeded with its Agenda;

The Board discussed once again the manner in which they shall process compensation and expenses of the Water Works. Stephen made a motion that the Water Commission keep its own financial records for expenses and compensation. Tony seconded .

Charlie advised the board of a recent phone call he had received from Natch Greyes from the State of New Hampshire Municipal Association. Mr. Greyes published an article a couple years ago outlining and defining the differences between Municipal Officials and Municipal Employees. Several handbooks and articles produced by the state of New Hampshire outline that Municipal officials should not be misconstrued as Municipal Employees and Municipal officials should not be compensated in a way that would misconstrue them as Municipal Employees. Charlie advised of their discussion regarding the probability of paying compensation, as vendors are paid as subcontractors, and then producing a form 1099 reporting money paid to the recipient as other income on behalf of the Hill Water Works. Mr. Greyes confirmed this would be appropriate. Steven made a motion that we follow this process of compensation for public officials and any expenses paid to officials. Tony seconded the motion. The motion past unanimously. Payment of compensation of Water Commissioners, Administration, (Secretary) and Meter Reading services will be paid pursuant to regulations and shall be processed with a signed warrant that will be paid by the Treasurer. The Water Commission shall utilize the 1099 form method of compensation and shall report to the Federal Government with copies of 1099s.

The Board also discussed the need for ALL invoices for services to be reviewed prior to payment. ALL estimates and contracts for services will be reviewed, and approved, prior to execution.

Charlie presented the board with an invoice for \$3250.00 for 13 months of billing at \$250.00 per month. Shelly was asked, as the billing agent, about the invoice. She insisted this was not for her. This created a confusion amongst the board. Charlie asked if this was Shelly's compensation for billing for the year 2023 and asked why is it being billed in the month of September for 13 months? Shelly said this money is not paid to her. She stated this is the town's compensation for the tax collector services being utilized as a billing agent on behalf of the Water Works. She reiterated that she does not receive this money. For clarification Charlie asked again are you saying this money goes to the town but is not included in your salary? Charlie asked Shelly if this was included in her budget as a tax collector and she said no. Charlie asked if this was included as part of the compensation to the assistant to the tax collector? Shelly said no. Charlie asked if this money was in any way included in the Executive offices budget prepared for the budget committee? Is it in some way paid to her and she doesn't know about it. Shelly said NO...I do not get paid this money and it is not part of her town clerk's office budget. Charlie stated – but it is shown as an expense of the Water Works in the annual budget. Shelly said that's an issue for the Town - The town gets this money. There was an obvious question over why the town should receive \$250 a month for something that has absolutely nothing to do with the town?

Water Commission discussed the need for hydrant flushing to be done by the Water Commissioners. Charlie will prepare a written procedure for the Commissioner's t review. The hydrants will be flushed and the valve pocket drained and prepared for winter. It was determined the hydrant flushing would occur on October 21st and 28th from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. or until completed. I noticed will be sent out by the town clerk notifying the customers of the Waterworks of the hydrant flushing to occur.

Having no other business – The meeting adjourned at 8:22 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted - Charles Estes