



Hill Water Works – Commissioners Meeting

Meeting Minutes

APPROVED

Sept 18th, 2023

SPECIAL Scheduled Meeting – The regularly scheduled meeting for Sept 12th, was postponed. A Special Meeting was rescheduled for Sept 18th. The meeting, properly posted as a special 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, Commissioner Chairman, Stephen Thomson, Water Commissioner, Tony Cartier, Water Commissioner.

Public Attendance – Joann Irving, Ellen Guild and David Thomson.

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

Old Business-

Approval of Previous Minutes – The amended minutes for July 11th, and August 08th, were presented. Steve made a motion to accept the minutes as amended. Tony seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Charlie will provide the draft of the Emergency Meeting Minutes from September 6th thru September 11th, for the next meeting. Regarding time and money spent searching in the woods to find an unmarked valve, Stephen states the Commissioners need to locate and document the valve locations. The current method of documenting valve locations is out of date. The Mapping system currently utilized is inaccurate at best. Stephen asked Who OWNS the Diamond Mapping Software. Charlie stated the concept of a mapping software started years ago with Gerry Desrochers. It was picked up by Shaun Bresnahan last year. Shaun is an administrator and Charlie is. The Water Works paid for the implementation of the software. It's yet to be determined who the monthly invoice goes to. It is not the Water Works. Steve and Tony to be added as users on the Diamond Mapping online program. Charlie will review the users permissions and last log in to see who is actively using the software. D.O.T. excavation permit applications have been filled out and will be provided to Danny at SKR SITE Services for signature.

David Thomson asked a question about Primex Insurance and if the system is covered under the insurance? Stephen stated it needs to be looked into. Also the Water Commission needs to look into transfer of ownership of the property where the Pump house is located in the protected well head area. Stephen commented that we need to review all the accounts and reports received from Judy regarding the Works. Charlie and Tony both commented on the need for an ASSETTS MANAGEMENT assessment of the Water Works in order to seek grant funding. Funding for repairs and upgrading the system will be imperative for the betterment of the system. **The current disrepair of the system at the rate of deterioration is untenable. Repairs will bankrupt the Water System at the current rate based on decades of neglect. Asserts Management is paramount.**

The Billing Warrant was signed by Tony and Charlie on September 14th. The executed warrant was provided to the billing agent with a due date of October 16th, 2023. Due to ongoing Software related issues with the meter reading devices and hardware implementation in the water works office, the September bills are set to flat rate of \$58.00 for all customers of the public works. The Commissioners reviewed and discussed receipt of bank statements. A Treasurer's warrant remains pending.

Charlie proposed to the commission to clean up the accounting before beginning preparation of the annual budget, transfer of property and other needed discussions with the Selectmen.

- **Judy – Treasurer first half 2023 - \$600 -
Invoiced and approved for payment. STATUS?**
- **Lisa Secretary Pay for May transition. \$200.00
Lisa Meter Reading June Unpaid \$200.00**
- **Charlie Secretary June/July/August/Sept \$800.00
Charlie Meter Reading July /August \$400.00**
- **Commissioners Salary: Q2 – April (@3) May (@2) June (@3) -
(April) Steve/Shawn/Frank (May) Steve / Charlie (June Steve/Charlie/Tony)**

New Business -

Establish Water Commission "Board Meeting" Format. Commissioners Meetings are open to the public for the public to observe. There will be no "Public Session" unless a Public Hearing is officially posted. Being present at a Commissioners Meeting does not automatically provide for a person to speak out. Commissioners, at their discretion, may answer questions once the board has reached a consensus about subjects currently on the Agenda and are being discussed. Topic off subject of the commissioners agenda will not be considered except in case of emergency. All questions should be directed to the Chairman for the Commission to consider as a board before responding. No one individual speaks for the board as a whole without prior discussion.

Charlie proposed a communication policy be established whereby anyone seeking discussion with the Water Commission shall submit a written request for time to address the Commissioner at a board meeting. The request shall be submitted to the Superintendent of the works no sooner than 48 hrs. (2 business days) in advance. The written request will state a brief description of the subject matter to be discussed with the Board. The Superintendent will confer with the Water Commission to schedule time on the Commissioners agenda. It will be at the Commissions discretion if or when to take up the subject matter of the request. Tony made a Motion that the communications policy be adopted. Stephen seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Stephen commented that the commissioners need to review the Water Works Policy of 2022 to make any amendments. Charlie will put Water Works Policy on the next meeting's agenda.

Charlie requested the board revisit the "Appointment of Superintendent" A concerted, however misguided, effort by a few individuals has been pursued seeking Charlie's removal from office. Speculation suggest the end game is to prevent a re-appointment as commissioner. Through erroneous written complaints to the Executive Board the offenders are attempting to establish a history. The complaints contain defamatory and slanderous assertions about Charlie. A motion by the Selectmen, having no authority to adjudicate such matters, was made to place these written complaints on file and take no action. In doing so however the Selectmen failed to note that they made no actual **finding of fact** in placing anything on file.

Charlie proposed that the Water Commission revisit its discussion related to Administrative Duties pursuant to NH RSA 38:20 - Compensation and Organization. ***“The compensation of the commissioners shall be fixed by the municipality. They shall be sworn to the faithful discharge of their duties. They shall annually organize by choosing one of their number as chairperson of their board. They shall appoint a clerk and a superintendent of the works and such other officers as they may deem necessary, and shall thereupon furnish a certificate of such organization to the clerk of the municipality, who shall record the same in the clerk's records. The commissioners shall fix the compensation of all officers and agents appointed by them, and all officers and agents shall be sworn to the faithful discharge of their duties.”***

The Commission upheld that Charlie is appointed as the Superintendent of the Works. Also that this appointment by the Commissioners, is not subject to removal by the Selectmen and does not require that the Superintendent be a Commissioner of the Water Works. Charlie will remain Superintendent until or unless replaced by the Water Commission. Charlie proposed to the commission that he would perform the administrative duties at no additional fees as the regulations provide, unless approved by the Water Commission.

Charlie spent approx. 7 hrs. on the phone over a two day period with the IT Department for the Town of Hill to get the Water Works office fully set up downstairs. It is now complete.

The water works also received a donation of a used copier from the school. Communications cables are required to connect the copier/printer to the Water Works computer. The Commission continues to review Water metering software to upgrade the system. The Water Commission updated the QuickBooks software. The cost of \$90 a month is currently charged to the Superintendent's credit card. Stephen made a motion to reimburse the cost of QuickBooks on a monthly basis. Tony seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

With regard to review of the annual budget, Charlie commented that he saw a proposed 60 minutes for budget committee to review the Water Works Annual budget. The Board discussed that the Water Works regulations, combined with billing warrant revenues, make up the vast majority of the annual budget. These are not aspects the budget committee can alter or adjust. Additionally it was discussed that NH RSA dictates that an annual budget will be provided to the Municipality. Water Works Policy dictates that the annual budget shall be submitted to the Selectmen. Water Commissioners meeting with the budget committee to go over what is already provided to the Selectmen would simply be redundant. Anticipating the next comment, “That's the way its always been done;” does not justify redundancy. Joann Irving questioned what makes up the essential budget for the Water Works. Charlie outlined it for her. It's monthly expenses of the Pump House for upkeep and H2O treatment. Monthly administrative expenses such as meter reading, secretarial, software licenses, fees and I.T., State and DES water testing regulations fees and lab costs and then maintenance of the system combined with billed A/R (revenues). The Water Works Annual Budget is not in any way, shape or form a balance sheet.

Charlie informed the water commissioners of a phone call he received earlier in the day from Fire Chief Jamie Moulton. The communication was very good. The conversation was congenial, very courteous and very productive. Chief Moulton sought to establish where the best place would be for water to be obtained from the system in the event of an emergency requiring the fire department to utilize tankers. It was established that the hydrant closest the pump house would be the best location to satisfy this requirement. Steven commented about treatment of the water. It was suggested that the fire department consider, whenever possible, freshwater siphon from alternate water sources. The commission also discussed establishing an

outlet at the pump house having a hose connection providing water prior to treatment additives to the system. All of these things will be discussed again. For the time being the hydrant at the pump house will be the fire department's established location for water other than at the point of service in the event of an emergency.

The Commissioners reviewed an email request submitted by David Kirsch related to Brookside Mobile Home Park. Mr. Kirsch requested the commission reduced the amount of flat rate billing from 21 services to 19 services. The commission agreed the bill would be adjusted to the total number of services utilized.

The commissioner is also reviewed documentation provided by the billing agent regarding the property located at 12 Old Town Road. The account of Joshua Tucker was billed a flat rate amount of \$1,490.25 without any prior notice and without explanation. Based on the documents provided, it appeared that muster Tucker's account was billed in June of 2022 more than a year after the tax lien of the previous owner was satisfied by the transfer of title from the previous owner to Mr. Tucker. Mr. Tucker seeing the imposition of a tax lien for the past due balance, made several large installments bringing the account to a zero balance. The current Commission finds no justification for the Account Adjustment in the amount of \$1,490.25. Charlie advised that he had stopped and spoken to Mr. Tucker who could offer no further information then was provided except to say that he had no idea why he was billed this amount but he didn't want to lose his home to a tax lien over a water bill. Charlie proposed that the Water Commission issue Mr. Tucker a credit in the full amount and deduct his monthly billing from the credit until the amount is satisfied. Steven Thompson made a motion to issue Mr. Tucker a credit and reduce his bill by the amount of flat rate plus usage until the amount of adjustment is depleted. Tony Cartier seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Charlie will notify Mr. Tucker of the board's decision.

Before closing Ellen Guild stated that she wanted to say that the Water Commission is doing a very good job.

Having no other business – The meeting adjourned at 7:53 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted - Charles Estes