



Hill Water Works – Commissioners Meeting

Meeting Minutes

*** Approved ***

December 12th, 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,
Excused Absence - Tony Cartier, Water Commissioner. (A quorum was present)

Public Attendance – David Thomson, Shelly Henry, Joann Irving and Shaun Bresnahan.

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

Approval of Previous Minutes – Steve made a motion to accept the minutes as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

Old Business-

- Steve and Charlie reviewed and signed the December Billing Warrant with a due date of January 16th, 2024. It was given to Shelly being present at the meeting.
- Shelly wanted the commissioners to confirm that changes are pending with regard to billing. She claims she has heard these things from Charlie but denies Steve and Tony have agreed or said anything to her. Previous minutes show numerous times this was discussed and all commissioners were in agreement. A letter has been drafted to customers of the utility that is being circulated between the commissioners before being sent to residents. The Selectmen have been advised of the change. The Water Commission is moving to a direct billing method beginning in January 2024. Shelly wants an exact date. An exact date could not be confirmed, but it is estimated to be on or around January 16th, 2024.
- Shelly informed the commissioners that she is requesting an audit be performed of her system before relinquishing utility billing over to the Water Department. She reports that she has gotten an estimate of \$3,000 - \$5,000, payable by the Town, (not the water dept.) to audit her records. She asserts that once the audit is complete, she is out of the water works system and wanted confirmation. The commissioners confirmed that is the intention. Direct billing will no longer include the Tax Collector on a basis of immediate tax lien. Shelly advised that she has already informed the Selectmen of her request. Water Commission feels an impromptu audit is unwarranted at this time and poses an unnecessary cost to the town.
- Joann and David joined the discussion asking why Shelly insisted on an audit of her system? Charlie stated this is not an authorized cost to the Water Works. Stephen agreed. Several options were

presented to avoid this unwarranted cost. Shelly insists it is to protect her and insists the audit be performed. Without further discussion, the meeting moved on.

- December Billing Warrant Due Date 01/16/2024 – The “Smart” Comlink box aka the radio reader has been returned to the supplier for repair. Residence with smart readers were billed flat rate without usage.
- Joshua Tucker was provided the Credit previously approved. The credit will apply monthly until his account is reconciled. Shelly needs to abate the account 134 New Chester Rd. The monthly billing has been suspended.

New Business-

- The Board reviewed open invoices. Charlie made a Motion to prepare a warrant to pay open invoices. Stephen seconded and the Motion passed unanimously. Charlie reported invoices are all caught up. SKR Services has been paid.
- The commission discussed the upcoming requirement of Lead and Copper inventory and system abatement of all copper and lead materials. PSI & SKR are involved in the process. This will be a long process but the results will be fantastic.

Budget Review –

- The Commission reviewed the most recent Financial Reports from the Treasurer. Charlie prepared a budget proposal based on the financials currently available. The budget was prepared with a base rate of \$58 and estimate expenditures. An alternate budget was prepared if the commission extended a moderate rate adjustment to \$52 monthly. Showing a rate reduction provides very little for system improvement. Leaving the flat rate at the current rate and managing the water works better provides retainage to put funds into upgrading the system.
- The commission continues to discuss a base usage with a scaled billing for higher consumption. The Board agreed to review usage and rates in the first quarter.
- Stephen wants to push the budget out to customers for their input before finalizing. Everyone agrees this is a good suggestion. The question is how to get it in the hands of everyone and still meet the deadline of the end of the year to present the budget to the Selectmen. Shaun suggested submitting the budget without the rate increase and then if the budget is less due to the rate increase, they will at least have the higher figure. Steve will present the water works budget at the next Selectmen's meeting. The Commission will prepare its presentation for the budget committee for a meeting on 01/22/2024.

Water Works Funds –

- The Commissioners reviewed the bank statements for November. Stephen asked again about access to real time bank records. With confirmation of the minutes, Charlie will ask Judy to transfer \$12,800. into the emergency repair fund restoring the capital reserve.
- Charlie has the documentation prepared to take to Franklin Savings Bank for their records. Stephen recommends the three commissioners go together. We will properly post and go to the bank in the coming weeks. We will work around Tony's schedule.

- The debt service was discussed again. Charlie will review any documentation available to confirm the terms of loans. The commission wants to repay loans early in order to save on the high interest rate being applied to the loans.
- The subject of Primex liability insurance of the Water Works was raised again for discussion. It is a matter of law referenced by Selectman Bresnahan in a July 2023 email that the Town provide certain services for the Water Works that the Utility pay the Municipality for. For example, Town Treasurer, Insurance etc. The Town currently is not, and has never obtained insurance for the water system. It is not included in the Water System's annual budget. With Selectman Bresnahan present, a quote was requested. He is uncertain of the current status.

Having no other business – The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted - Charles Estes