

Selectmen's Meeting Minutes
June 25, 2018

At the Selectmen's Meeting held on Monday, June 25, 2018 at 6:30 p.m. the following people were in attendance: Peter Corey, John Tholl, and Stanley Holz.

The following people were in attendance: Cabot Ronish, Fred Ingerson, Claire Houghton, Bob Herman, Louis Gooden, Valerie Yelton, Rick Wright, Terry Welch, Tom Ladd, John Ross, Jr., Marsha Lombardi, and Edie Worcester.

Peter Corey, Chairman of the Board of Selectmen, called the meeting to Water/Sewer Rate Change Public Hearing to order at 6:30 p.m. Peter said we have been raising the rates for a number of years now. Peter said as we look to improve the water/wastewater systems, we realized that the Whitefield rates were unrealistically low and actually in the bottom of the pack in the state for water/wastewater rates so we were unable to compete for grant funding to make necessary changes to the system. In order to make the improvements and in order to apply for grants, we had to embark on a plan to raise the rates to be more in the middle of the pack. We were able to obtain grant funding last year from USDA for a 45% grant and it wasn't more because of where our rates actually are. There is a target of where the rates should be. There is no proposed change to the meter/connection fee. Peter said we are proposing a 50 cent increase for the water usage fee from \$4.15 to \$4.65 per 1,000 gallons actually used and a .50 cent increase in the sewer usage fee from \$4.85 to \$5.35 per 1,000 gallons actually used.

Peter said we looked at the statewide data for water and sewer rates from 2015 (most current available). The state average was \$473.60 for water and \$593.52 for sewer.

Louis Gooden asked about the excess funds in those accounts. Peter said we would use that to pay for the bond loan payments, and it will give us a cushion to do our own projects. Peter also told the group that the Town is receiving \$4.33 million from the state to do additional water projects within the town, which is all grant funds.

Edie asked what the list of projects is for the other \$4.33 million and Peter said we will get her a copy of that. Edie thought when people were here from the state a couple of years ago, they said the average bill was supposed to be \$400, and Peter said we don't recall that. Edie said that they talked about the median income for Coos County and Whitefield was lower than that. Peter said he knows that is not the target we are trying to achieve.

Claire asked if the project across the street will be run on meters—Peter said it is fully metered. Each unit has its own individual meter and the main building has two meters.

Valerie asked when the last increase was and Peter said last year. When we will be where we need to be? Peter said we will do a revaluation of where we are and where we need to be with our engineers. We have secured the funding—we have been guaranteed that. We have been doing yearly increases for a number of years. The project will include new water meters.

Valerie asked about if the contractors are local, and Peter said they are larger projects and need larger contractors. There may be local sub-contractors.

Louis Gooden asked about the hook-up fee for the Morrison, and Peter said they did pay the hook-up fee.

Louis Gooden asked what do you do with excess funds that are collected, and John said it would be used to pay off the bond. Peter said the funds we collect are used to run the department, pay the bond payments, have some money to use towards projects, etc.

John Tholl made a motion that we approve the rates as indicated: Water, increase of .50 cents, from \$4.15 to \$4.65 per 1,000 gallons actually used and Sewer, increase of .50 cents, from \$4.85 to \$5.35 per 1,000 gallons actually used. The motion was seconded by Stanley Holz. All in favor, 3-0. Motion passed.

A motion was made by Stanley Holz to approve the June 11, 2018 Selectmen's Meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by John Tholl. All in favor, 3-0. Motion passed.

Peter Corey said that the Town has not had a formal process to secure goods and services, and we determined we needed a formal process to do this. The Board reviewed the proposed Procurement Policy and Stanley suggested that under the Purchase Orders section that we add after Purchases over \$2,000 – "but less than \$5,000".

A motion was made by Stanley Holz that we adopt the Town's Procurement Policy as amended. The motion was seconded by John Tholl. All in favor, 3-0. Motion passed. Judy will distribute copies to all the Department Heads.

We had a good turn out of people interested in serving on the Conservation Commission who came to the session last week with Barbara Richter of the NH Association of Conservation Commissions. She said state law says you can have 3-7 members and it does not specify a limit to the number of alternates. John thought it might be a good idea to stagger the appointments. Peter asked Judy to draw up the appointment forms and we will determine the terms.

Valerie Yelton said she attended that meeting and found it interesting and she looked over the Natural Resource Inventory that was done in 2005 and found it to be thorough.

Peter said the other project approved at the 2017 town meeting was \$6.5 million for the replacement of the Wastewater Treatment Plant, and we are working through that with our engineering firm. The Board reviewed the e-mail for Tim Vadney, our engineer. Tim met with Rural Development and determined that Rural Development is not able to provide additional grant funding. Tim had suggested that to move the process forward he proposed that we proceed with the preliminary design of the recommended project as presented at our last meeting. This would allow us to get more precise cost estimating numbers for the "recommended project" and also we would structure the design so that the project would include bid alternates to reduce the project cost if the Town is unable to secure additional project funds.

Peter said from his perspective, we were presented with four preliminary design projects. With the funds we currently have available, we can choose something less than what we would need or like or choose something a little more expensive and go back to the Town for more loan funds. Peter is wondering what that would look like as a bond—how we might move forward? Stanley would like another work session before we conclude our preliminary design.

Terry Welch attended the meeting. Terry said what we need is another \$3 million. Terry said we currently cannot comply with the new EPA permit we got. Terry said we need to ask the engineers can you guarantee us the upgrade we go with will have us comply with those EPA guidelines. Terry said we have given them the information they have requested. What we really need for influent numbers it favors us for having lower numbers than what we really have. Terry said they don't have accurate influent numbers. Terry said we have been going through this process with DES and EPA for a number of years. We need to be sure whatever design we go with is going to meet the 25-year design requirements. Peter said we need to speak with the engineer and determine that our user rates and our annual income is going to support what we need to do and what those bond payments would look like for an additional \$2 million in bond funds. It was suggested that we ask about on-going costs to operate. Peter suggested we ask for this information for the recommended upgrade and the complete project.

Peter Corey called the Public Hearing to order at 7:00 p.m. Per NH RSA 41:14-a, the Board of Selectmen are convening two public hearings to take input on the acceptance of property by the Town. A 24+- acre parcel of land shown on a Plan entitled "Boundary Line Adjustment" involving lands of the Town of Whitefield and John B. Dodge Family LLC, off Colby Road, Whitefield, NH (Tax Map 233 Lot 22 and Tax Map 238 Lot 1).

Peter explained that as part of our water improvement project, we are building new pump stations—there is a well off Colby Road and it does not have a proper pump house and it does have the proper protection zone to protect that water source from contamination so we are attempting to acquire a piece of property to create the wellhead protection zone and have enough land for a new pump station. The money for this is included in the project. We have made an offer to the Dodge family. Mr. Gooden asked about the Cherry Mountain well, and Peter said does not have sufficient protection and it never will. The one on Bray Hill we made a land acquisition at the beginning of the year for that protection and the new one going in on Jefferson Road will have it as well.

The public hearing closed at 7:10 p.m. The RSA requires two hearings, and the second hearing will be held on Friday, July 6, 2018 at 9:00 a.m. at the town office along with a work session to discuss the progress of Contract #1 Water Main Replacement with the engineer and construction firm.

Department Head Meeting:

Cabot Ronish – Director of Public Works

Peter said that the N.H. Department of Transportation has announced they have another round of funding for the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). Peter said that two years ago we made an application for sidewalk improvements. These funds are only used for specific things, sidewalks, bike trails, hiking trails, etc. We had to compete with 37 towns in the state that applied for the money. We made an application and had to make a proposal and we were not successful. They felt at that time that we were not maintaining the sidewalks we have so why would they give us money to do it. Peter said since that time, we have done Jefferson Road, School Street, Highland Street, so when we make our application this year we can show what we have done on our own and that will help us in our bid for sidewalks downtown. Claire asked about help for Union Street and with the new apartments there is a lot of pedestrian traffic. We will look and see what we want in this round of funding. It is something that will be considered. Peter said you make an application for whatever project size you need or want and they prioritize if you will get all, a portion of the money, or none of the money. \$3.2 million is what

is available and that is not a lot of money for the entire state of New Hampshire. We will make an application and hopefully we will be successful.

Cabot said we are planning on starting work on Gould Road on Wednesday, new drainage and planning on getting it paved by the end of the year and a dozen culverts we need to replace. It is a large project.

We are doing work on Bray Hill Road, drainage issues and widening a section of the road, planning for the water line project, trying to get in front of them so it is open up when they get up there. Working amongst everything else that comes up. The sidewalk crossings are all painted. Cabot will get with someone from the library to discuss the roof repair project and get something together to put out to bids.

Cabot and Fred said that Highland Street is on the trust funds project list so it would be better to wait until that was done before we replaced the sidewalks. Fred is thinking it is on the list for next year. Peter said we have money for sidewalks, could something else get done this year? Peter said if you read the master plan comments and if you have attended the town meeting, sidewalks are a huge issue, so we need to continue with sidewalks. Union Street is on the list to be done. Stanley is wondering if there is any general maintenance or repair schedule that could be put in place for the town buildings. There is a lot of disrepair. Stanley said could there be a general survey of what we have and what has to be done. We do have problems with rot. Cabot said we can put something together for this. John said it is better to be proactive rather than reactive. Peter said it builds into Cabot's budget request in the fall

Kelly Smith – Recreation Department

They have 34 kids for summer recreation this week. Each week will vary. Kelly said the softball team won the league championship, which was exciting. Kelly said it is with great sadness that she submit her letter of resignation tonight after working for the town for 11 ½ years as our Recreation Director. The Board said they tremendously appreciate her personal sacrifices and challenges she so well dealt with in running the recreation program. Kelly will finish up the summer program and her last day will be Friday, August 24, 2018. Everyone at the meeting gave Kelly a round of applause.

Terry Welch – Treatment plant

Terry said there are no problems. He is covering for Josh, who is putting in a new UV system over in Bethlehem.

Fred Ingerson – Water Department

The 142 project is finished and DOT seems to be happy with how they left things. The valve cluster had to be removed and had to make some adjustments. We got rid of some of the mess that was there and with the trust funds project and the rest of the line being replaced it will take care of that.

Fred said he had a leak last week in a meter pit. We had sent them letters to repair the meter pit. Had to wait for them to pump out the water, had to replace the meter plate. We charge them for the meter plate, but there wasn't really any work Fred did besides wait around. The meter pit keeps filling with water from the well tiles and groundwater keeps coming in. It is probably about a foot below the ground level. Peter asked if we can we discontinue the service if they don't take care of it? Terry Welch said if

there is a backflow preventer before the pit then if there is a break and loss of pressure it sucks all the water out of the tank and back into the system.

Fred said that he has done most of the hydrant flushing in town. Working on painting the hydrants. Some we are going to repair and extend. Fred said about half dozen were not working.

Coleman has been working on the water project, and it has been a slow process. They have broken some of their equipment. John Ross said they are going to do blasting up there next week. We will discuss our concerns with them next Friday at the work session meeting.

Fred said he has been doing curb stop markings for the trust fund project. Sewer lines are being marked as well.

Underwater Solutions has completed their work inside the water tanks.

John Ross, Jr. – Whitefield Fire Department

The truck was officially ordered on May 23rd—had some design issues because it was a new chassis and with the lag in ordering it became a 2019 so we will have a newer truck. 120 days maximum on the chassis. The north country emergency response team is going away. There is not enough manpower to continue it. John said that we got their thermal imaging camera so that will be able to go on one of the trucks.

The Board signed for a new member for EMS.

Cabot said the Skid steer for the transfer station is supposed to be here mid-July.

A motion was made by Stanley Holz to enter non-public session at 8:00 p.m. pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II (I) consideration of legal advice provided by legal counsel, either in writing or orally, to one or more members of the public body, even where legal counsel is not present. The motion was seconded by John Tholl. Roll call to enter into non-public session: Corey-Yes; Tholl-Yes; Holz-Yes.

The meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.