

Franconia Water Department Monthly Meeting

Wednesday October 10, 2018

Town Hall Meeting Room

In Attendance: Water Commissioners Joan Hartford and Darrel Dietlein; Pete Hilton, Lakes Region Water; Meaghan Caron, Water Department Secretary

Public In Attendance: Laura Morgan, Legal Counsel via phone, Deane Haskell from Hillwinds Lodge, Kevin Johnson, Gale River Motel, Peter Gignac

Meeting Began at 4:32 pm

Laura Morgan is called in to join the meeting via phone conversation. Joan makes a motion to appoint Darrel as Chair. Darrel seconds. All are in favor.

Mr. Haskell begins. He had handed in a letter and spreadsheets to the department ahead of time. He states that he doesn't believe that the current meter charges are correct or that they were legally adopted per the minutes. He refers to Kevin Johnson's statement of requesting a refund to those commercial customers who have paid out the new meter fee. He asks that the situation be addressed. Darrel states that the Department is working with Stephen St. Cyr, and that we are working on making well educated decisions to access the current situation. Mr. Haskell is happy to hear that the department is working to address the situation.

Mr. Haskell believes that Hillwinds is at a competitive disadvantage because his property has 3 meters, an "accident of history", and compares his business to the Best Western. The BW being 2 times the size of his property and uses about 3 times more water and pays about 50% more. He believes there are 3 options to address his concerns.

Option 1- Cost of 1.5" meter is \$500 and he has 3 meters at his property. 1" meter is \$150.00. He would see relief if he were charged a lesser fee for his 3 meters.

Option 2- He would like to have one account and to be considered "one customer" with one meter fee.

Option 3 - Replace 1.5" meters with 1" meters. He understands that the water department previously expressed concern with this (regarding the water pressure to the far ends of his building being enough for his customers) but he feels it is his decision to make, not the departments. He says he has more than enough water pressure currently and doesn't think that his customers would be affected.

Lastly, Mr. Haskell asks that the commission consider omitting all meter fees and only charge per usage. With his spreadsheets and research he worked out an example with \$1.83 per 100 gallon across the board to all customers. He thinks this would give relief to those who use less water and the largest users would pay the most. He recognizes that State law says

commissioners are able to set their rates as long as it is equitable and he feels that this would be an equitable change to the system. He asks that the commissioners look at his spreadsheets showing the drastic differences (based on his findings) between what customers are paying when looking at the rates based on usage per 100 gallons. He says the current system rates are not equitable. Darrel thanks Mr. Haskell for all of his effort in providing information and time.

Peter Gignac asks to be added to the next meeting's agenda and confirms that there is still an opening for a commissioner. He will write a formal letter of interest.

Kevin Johnson: He is hoping to avoid filing in superior court to resolve non-compliance with section 91-A. Pursuant to the open meetings law he has asked for a definition of "commercial" based at the beginning of 2018 relating to the current meter rates, not an anticipated definition with the work currently happening with Stephen St. Cyr. He is still awaiting an answer. Also has asked for an explanation of the means and methodology of how we came to new rates. He has obtained the tax records for 9 Main Street from the town and hands these records to Joan for review. Laura suggests that we answer this question after review with her in counsel meeting. Kevin says that notes since January of this year show no record of official votes to change the rates. He also states that he doesn't believe that these meetings were posted and therefore requests that hard copies are provided. Meaghan confirms that all meetings have been and continue to be posted on the website and on the bulletin board outside of town hall regularly and that the meetings he is referring to (1/23/18 and 1/31/18) were in fact posted. Kevin says he requested copies of the postings from the bulletin board that are "supposed to be preserved" and has not received them. Darrel explains, and Laura conforms, that physical copies of paper postings are not required by law to be retained. Kevin requests a letter from the commission detailing answers to all of his previous requests and detailing the process in which the rates were established. Darrel states that we will follow up with answers but cannot guaranty all answers will be ready within a month.

4:55pm

Darrel announces the Department will be temporarily adjourning the meeting to confer with Council. Joan makes the Motion and Darrel seconds.

Joan Motions to come back into public session, Darrel seconds.

Public Session begins at 5:20pm

Kevin Johnson rejoins the meeting

Meeting minutes from September 13, 2018 were reviewed. One amendment is made regarding a duplication of the word Rural. Darrel moves to approve, Joan seconds.

Lien Abatement is signed per Carol's request.

Greg Shaw abatement is approved and signed. Incorrect billing.

Mission statement is reviewed. Darrel motions to approve the Mission Statement and add them to the By-Laws. Joan seconds the motion.

Meg reviews Stiles CO billing and explains it is tedious task to iron out the details of credits and payouts. Meaghan has all hard copies of bills to cross check with records of what has been paid out. A very time consuming task.

Pete flushed up on Woodchuck trail again. He will continue to flush up there monthly until the bleeder is started.

Regarding the vacant Commissioner position, Darrel says we are comfortable waiting a bit longer for additional interested candidates.

Follow up with Presby. Meg will check on AHJ for septic systems. Who is our local inspector or state inspector that needs to be contacted to be sure that everything is up to code and built according to plans.

Granite State Rural water: Scott Clang has spoken to Darrel who has offered to come and talk to us about our water system, to help educate us. We would like our first meeting to be introductory for him to get to know us and our system. Joan to research questions for Scott to present at the next meeting. Darrel to approach Scott and ask him to join us and help us understand what The Water Department's relationship with GSRWA would bring to the table?

Meg to call stiles Fuel regarding their appointment. Did it happen? Why didn't they call Darrel regarding the mice?

Meg to forward emails with Stephen St Cyr to Joan and Darrel.

Beacon site shows some homes may have small leaks. After Meg sent out a notice to sign up for EyeOnWater there were additional customers who signed up for the program.

Horizon Engineers: Pete has been in contact with this firm and they would like to come down to talk to the commissioners to discuss future projects and endeavors.

Darrel brings up the point of needing a work session in addition to our regularly scheduled meetings. Meg to have numbers (budget vs actual) ready for next meeting.

We are down to one chlorine pump. It is working but we usually run two. Pete would like to switch to something else. He wants to go to a different stlye/New chemical feed pump. He would like to be approved to purchase a multiplier LMI pump. This will cost more but would be a better option for us as it could be connected to the computer. This is an ASAP project. Pete will email Meaghan an estimate to forward to Joan and Darrel for review. Electrician work would be approx hours 3-4.

Brush cutback, tidy up around the pump stations is needed. We need to ask Holly to see if Cory can do this.

Hydrant is fixed. Pete needed to upright it and repair it, not fully replace it. New bill will be sent separately so Meg can submit it to the Police Department and to Primex.

Pete has contacted Tim from BlackTop Pavers and the paving up at 3 spots in Mittersill and one spot up on Coal Hill should be done within the next 2-3 weeks.

Looking forward towards winter time when a handful of customers that open winter bleeders for when lines freeze. Fox Hill is an example. Darrel would like to readdress this issue

State requires monthly chlorine testing. Can we buy a hand held tester? We need a portable one that Pete can use during flushing and for other times when the testing is required. Iron, manganese, hardness etc...can all be tested. He submitted prices and examples for review by Joan and Darrel.

Old meters need to be taken care of...Pete can get rid of them, they are all out behind the pump house accumulating. He will take them to the dump.

Two old forced hot air heaters in the old Mittersill pump house. We will re-address this after Darrel does a walk around with Pete.

A Work Session is scheduled for Thursday October 25th at 4:30pm.

Again, Kevin Johnson speaks requesting satisfactory solution to meter rates issue. How was determination made and we assure him that we are engaged in resolving the differences he is concerned with and making this right.

At 6:14pm a motion is made by Darrel to go into Non-Public Session per RSA91-A:3,II. Joan seconds the motion.

Motion to go back into Public Session is made and approved.

Public session is immediately adjourned at 6:31 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Meaghan Caron

Administrative Secretary

These minutes of the Franconia Water Department have been recorded by its Secretary. Though believed to be accurate and correct they are subject to additions, deletions and corrections by the Board of Commissioners of the Water Department at its next meeting when the Board votes its final approval of the minutes. They are being made available at this time to conform to the requirements of New Hampshire RSA 91-A:2.