

Franconia Water Department Monthly Meeting

Thursday June 11, 2020

Via Zoom 5pm

In Attendance: Water Commissioners Darrel Dietlein & Dan Walker; Meaghan Caron, Water Department Secretary

Darrel motions to open the meeting at 5:03pm. Dan is in favor and the meeting begins.

Discussion begins on the water main break at the market that took place on June 3rd. Circumstantially, the records that we have did show the Main water line that Scott Clang marked. Dan says that Presby did call Dig Safe prior to the work they were performing as well as calling in Mac (Richard McLachlin) to review the lay of the land who mentioned that they needed to go easy in the area when digging due to additional water lines that would not have shown on the maps or with GSRWA's marking of the main line. As soon as the break happened, Thad Presby called Mac. Presby asked the two best resources to have a look at the area prior to the day the work was to start. The break was certainly unintentional and unexpected and both Presby and the Water Department with LRW stepped up to fix the problem as quickly as possible.

The boil order that was required and issued per the state due to the main break took longer than expected due to shorter staffing measures (COVID) and fewer bacteria samples taken on Fridays. This caused our Thursday sample to be void because the Friday sample could not be accepted and therefore we had to start over with another round of samples on Monday June 8 and Tuesday June 9 with final lift of the boil order on Wednesday June 9.

Darrel proposes that we prepare a statement for occurrences like this when customers ask to know who is to blame or who is going to pay. For example: "The boil order was forced to be extended due to limited staffing (at the laboratory) because of corona virus. The Water Department continually working with the records that have been kept over the years as well as with those who have knowledge of the system and it's structures. The contractor in question did their due diligence and is in not culpable."

There is no full understanding as to why the pipe that was hit was there. Even Pete was baffled about the location of the pipe that came out from under the building. It was an 8" pipe in good condition. We need to get a better understanding of the valves in the area of the market building. We need to verify locations and will need to build up our CIP lines in order to save for this in the future.

Meg will put together a summary for a response to be put on the website. Ultimately, we want our townspeople and customers to know that we are paying attention to the situation and that the "contractor and the water department partnered to facilitate the repair by pulling resources together to take joint ownership of the situation" Presby did provide the excavator, the pumps and fill sand while fixing the leak.

Our water customer, Joanne Cortese has asked for consideration for an abatement due to her water bill being much larger during this last billing period (2020W02). We look over the history of her bills and are able to see that the leak began slowly back near the end of November and that her 2020W01 bill was also larger than previous billing issues. Due to this, we feel that any abatement considerations need to be according to the origination of the leak. If a customer allows a leak to continue for a long period of time we cannot give an abatement based on multiple billing periods. Meg sends out an informative flyer once a year with bills to customers encouraging them to sign up for our Eye On Water online water usage monitoring program. It is free to our customers and allows them to view their usage up to the hour and in some cases up to the minute. This in itself gives responsibility of tracking leaks and high usage to the customers. We would like to consider the option of an abatement but only if a customer formally requests one at the onset of the leak, in an appropriate amount of time, and shows that the leak is being taken care of. Meg will ask Joanne to make a formal request to the commissioners.

After Dan and Darrel discuss this matter they decide that they would like to hear Kevin's opinion on the matter and then the board can collaborate in developing a formal procedure for our rules and regulations.

We have had one applicant submit their resume for the Office Assistant position. We will get them scheduled for a Zoom interview next week.

Our next meeting will be Thursday July 9th. It may be via Zoom or could possibly be in person if the Town Hall opens by that time.

Darrel moves to close the meeting at 6:09pm. Dan seconds and the meeting closes.

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.