

**Water/Wastewater Commissioners’
Meeting Minutes
October 11, 2011**

Present: Robert E. Courage, Chairman
Michael E. Putnam, Vice-Chairman
Dale A. White, Member
David Boucher
Evelyn Gendron

Call to Order:

Chairman Courage called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Decisions:

Approval of Final Minutes – Commissioner White made the motion to table approval of the minutes of the September 27, 2011 meeting until the next commissioners’ meeting. Vice-Chairman Putnam seconded the motion.

Water Users Fee/Tax Collector’s Warrant – The Commissioners signed this document as presented for the September 2011 Bill Commitment 110930 and for the September 2011 Final Bills issued.

Sewer Users Fee/Tax Collector’s Warrant – The Commissioners signed this document as presented for the September 2011 Bill Commitment 110930 and for the September 2011 Final Bills issued.

Discussion/Information Items:

Proposed 2012 “One” Rate Sewer Charge – Superintendent Boucher distributed spreadsheets depicting the 2011 Sewer Revenue. Mrs. Hardwick, Water Utilities Billing Clerk, being present, explained that Derry and Allenstown bill sewer services as a one-rate sewer charge, and that Wilton will be converting to a one-rate sewer charge soon. Lengthy discussion followed of Milford’s rates, currently \$3.33 for residential and \$4.16 for commercial (a 20% difference), the cubic foot “of use” rate being the difference between residential and commercial users, and how second meters for irrigation purposes and sprinkler systems affect the current billing system. Chairman Courage explained that sewer rates were originally set in 1981 when the Wastewater Treatment Facility went on-line, and the MUNIS customer database and billing system was established in 2002. The commissioners unanimously agreed that the details presented this evening by Mrs. Hardwick and Mr. Boucher recommending a one-rate sewer charge have some merit, and additional justification is needed prior to considering billing calculation changes. Commissioner White said that the Board is sensitive to the water and sewer customers in this difficult economy. Vice-Chairman Putnam made the motion that this topic be tabled to allow for additional research into how the original billing computations were derived and the intent of the original billing is better understood. Chairman Courage seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Mrs. Hardwick will look into the 1981 town reports.

Proposed 2012 Keyes Bath House Sewer Billing – Mrs. Jessica Hardwick explained that there is one 2” meter at the Keyes Pool bath house and that the water is turned on and off with seasonal billing at a flat rate. She distributed adult pool and kiddy pool water usage calculations and consumption inquiry reports that illustrated a fee beyond the current \$113.00 annual flat rate should have been charged to the Parks and Recreation Department. Installing a second meter and adjusting the billing to reflect actual water usage would be the final segment to updating interdepartmental billing for actual water usage. Upon discussion, Chairman Courage made the motion to install a second meter at the Keyes Pool bath house restrooms with internal plumbing connections to the 2” meter to bill for actual water usage. Vice-Chairman Putnam seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Mrs. Hardwick will notify Rick Riendeau, Public Works Director.

Proposed 2012 Water/Sewer Billing Late Fees - Superintendent Boucher said the current late fee is an additional \$50.00 when the water and sewer bills are not paid by the due date, yet many customers would offer to pay the amount originally billed, avoiding the late fee, when the water meter technician arrived to turn off the customer’s water. During the previous water rate study the late fee increased from \$20.00 to \$50.00. Due to customer complaints and recommendations from the Finance and Tax Departments, the Superintendent feels the \$50.00 late fee is excessive and should be changed to a \$10.00 late fee. She distributed page 13 of the Rules and Regulations, explained Article 12, Payment for Water Services, noting the second paragraph relative to payments due. Mrs. Hardwick said that there are some customers that repeatedly receive delinquent shut-off notices with late fees at the 60-day past-due payment deadline. Following discussion, it was decided to table this matter until the Superintendent obtains additional information from town council upon further review of the rules and regulations, recommended language, public notification requirements, etc.

Union Street Water Main Replacement Project Cost Update – Reviewing the hand-out distributed by Superintendent Boucher citing expenditures totaling \$133,592.36, Chairman Courage said he is pleased that project costs are under-budget. Superintendent Boucher said approximately \$112,000 remained in the budget to complete final paving and clean-up work. He received a telephone call from a resident to report lawn damage. This will be attended to in the spring.

Septage Receiving Facility Update - Superintendent Boucher said that Mr. Rene LaBranche from Stantec Consulting would be here Wednesday morning to see the sink hole discovered by the crew digging around the wiring to the U.V. Building and the concrete vault with brittle conduit inside, which is deeper at one end and in some locations closer to the surface of the ground. The concern is where the underground pipes lay. Mr. Boucher said that he will not be in the office on Wednesday but will communicate with Mr. LaBranche by telephone.

Sewer Rate Study Update - Mr. Boucher said that he has nothing new to report. Commissioner White said that he would like to contact Mr. Scaife and Mr. Sheehy regarding the delayed completion of the in-house sewer rate study. Chairman Courage said that in late May he and Superintendent Boucher had delivered information to Mr. Sheehy and updated details were provided in June. The Water Utilities Department had hoped to be in the position to send notices to residents last month of a public hearing, he said, but apparently the 2012 budget work has prevented the Finance Director from completing the sewer rate study. Mr. Boucher said that he received a phone call from Town Administrator Scaife and answered budget questions, but that the rate study was not discussed. Commissioner White will invite Mr. Sheehy and Mr. Scaife to the next commissioners’ meeting.

Curtis Well Field Update - Mr. Boucher explained that two water samples are collected monthly and analyzed for total coliform, which is naturally present in the soil. During the second sampling event, two total coliform bacteria analysis results were high, near Alene Candles and near Millbrook. He is awaiting updated well cleaning information from Mr. Chris Berg, Wright-Pierce. After the new well is on-line, well #2 will be taken off-line for cleaning.

Potential Verizon Wireless Lease - Superintendent Boucher will invite the Verizon Wireless representative to a future commissioners' meeting to discuss Verizon's interest in placing antennas on the town-owned water tank on Shady Lane.

Activities Report - Reviewed by the commissioners. Mr. Boucher answered the commissioners' questions regarding projects.

Miscellaneous Water Utilities Department Project Updates - Superintendent Boucher said that two front tires need to be purchased for the backhoe, which were not budgeted.

Future Appointments/Meetings:

The next Water and Wastewater Commissioners' meeting will be held at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, October 25, 2011 at the Water Utilities Department, 564 Nashua Street.

Adjournment:

A motion to adjourn the regular meeting was made by Chairman Courage at 7:45 p.m. Commissioner White seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Evelyn B. Gendron

Robert E. Courage, Chairman

Date

Michael E. Putnam, Vice-Chairman

Date

Dale A. White, Commissioner

Date