

**Milford Water/Wastewater Commissioners’
Meeting Minutes
December 8, 2015**

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

Call to Order

Chairman Putnam called the meeting to order at 5:55 p.m. Ms. Nickerson was welcomed by the Board members and Director Boucher.

Appointment

Ms. Cindy Nickerson stated she was here this evening for a few reasons, most importantly being that she felt Milford water customers should not be shut off for non-payment during the winter season. She questioned why her water bill had doubled. She said she has the payment policy and would like to recommend it be changed for flexibility and to avoid pipe/plumbing problems. She detailed her employment status, financial hardship to remit the amount owed for water, and said she had attempted to negotiate paying half of the \$200 payment due during the disconnection process and the remainder next month, however, her offer had been declined. Chairman Putnam explained that the Water Utilities Department operates similar to any other business, comparing it to the cable and electric companies. He explained this department does not operate on Town funds, but rather is a user-funded process, and that policies must be followed. He referred to the policy distributed by Mr. Boucher. Vice-Chairman White asked Mr. Boucher to discuss what had taken place. Mr. Boucher explained the water/sewer invoices are issued “due upon receipt” and begin to accrue interest after thirty days. A late fee is assessed on the account after an additional 30 days. At 90 days past due, a shut-off notice is issued to the customer. After he said “if payment is not received, or the customer has not contacted the Billing Clerk...”, Ms. Nickerson asked him to please not say that customers are not heard from, because she speaks to Ms. Jessica Hardwick, Water Utilities Billing Clerk, on a regular basis. Mr. Boucher said payment plans are allowed per an agreed upon schedule, weekly or monthly. Ms. Nickerson said no one had ever informed her of this until right at this moment, at this table, and that she had been in Mr. Boucher’s office recently. He repeated that payment plans are offered, and said there could be notes on this in her billing account history. She asked for a reason she was not informed of a payment plan option earlier. Mr. Boucher said he hadn’t had all the information previously, and this was after the fact. She said okay, alright. Mr. White asked whether her water is currently shut off. Both Ms. Nickerson and Mr. Boucher said no. Ms. Nickerson then explained she requested assistance from the Welfare Department and the response she’d been given indicating the Water Utilities Department is difficult to work with. Discussion followed regarding the steps taken to date by all the parties to determine whether a plumbing leak and/or equipment malfunction existed. Mr. Putnam explained the process of monitoring for leaks. He and Mr. White outlined the equipment owned by the trailer park that should be checked and clarified which party is responsible for which equipment in the event of a water leak. Mr. White wants to look closely at the facts involved. He wants to collect additional billing history account information; he

Water/Wastewater Commissioner Meeting Minutes
December 8, 2015

invited Ms. Nickerson to feel free to contact him directly, if she'd like. He said payment plans can be arranged. Ms. Nickerson reiterated no one has ever told her this, adding that she didn't want her water to be shut off this winter due to lack of funds. She invited Mr. White to contact the Welfare Director. Mr. White said payment plans are a possibility and that nothing is as powerful as communication. He said he's been on the Board of Commissioners for six years in March and feels we are a long way from being difficult to work with. He assured Ms. Nickerson that when there are issues, they are dealt with. Mr. Putnam said policies have been in place for a long time. Mr. White added that procedures must be followed. Mr. Boucher listed the water metering equipment tests, and said experienced personnel would observe the tests and report the findings. Ms. Nickerson agreed to contact Ms. Hardwick to arrange the timing of the meter tests. Mr. Putnam said the next commissioners' meeting will be December 22nd and that it may be after the Christmas holiday when she is contacted. Ms. Nickerson said she understands. Laughing, she said she should be good until April, thanked the commissioners and Mr. Boucher, and all said good night. Mr. Putnam, Mr. White and Mr. Boucher briefly reviewed the action items agreed upon this evening.

Decisions/Approvals

Approval of Meeting Minutes – Chairman Putnam made the motion to approve the November 25, 2015 meeting minutes as presented pending any amendment yet to be received from Commissioner Courage, unable to attend this evening's meeting. Vice-Chairman White seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Water Users Fee/Tax Collector's Warrant – The commissioners signed the Tax Collector's Warrant for collection of taxes in the matter of water users fees for the November 2015 Bill Commitment 151130 and for the November 2015 Final Bills issued.

Sewer Users Fee/Tax Collector's Warrant – The commissioners signed the Tax Collector's Warrant for collection of taxes in the matter of sewer users fees for the November 2015 Bill Commitment 151130 and for the November 2015 Final Bills issued.

Water & Sewer Capital Reserve Accounts – December 2015 Transfer Amount – Tabled until the December 22, 2015 meeting.

Discussion/Information Items

2016 Draft Water Utilities Budget – Director Boucher distributed copies of the updated warrant articles that he had submitted to Ms. Tina Philbrick, Executive Assistant, as she requested warrant information for December 7th. He pointed out the language for the second warrant article which referenced a new water source, and noted the indication appearing for this submitted warrant article that the Board of Commissioners had not yet voted nor approved. Mr. White and Mr. Putnam expressed surprise that this information was needed for this year's warrant given that the new water source matter is not complete. Mr. Boucher explained this recommendation had been discussed during the CIP meeting as a land purchase would benefit the Town, adding that the submitted warrant language may still be changed or removed. Mr. Putnam noted the Board of Selectmen may decide to remove or change draft warrant articles as well. Mr. Boucher will inquire what the deadline is to submit final warrant article details. It has not yet been decided whether to finalize a warrant article for a 2016 backhoe purchase. This will be an agenda item for the next commissioners' meeting. Mr. Boucher said he has emailed the NH DES regarding the contract document under review, which he hopes to receive comments from the state by

Friday. He has a list of contractors to whom the ultra-violet disinfection project bid specifications should be sent. He does not anticipate it will be difficult to assemble a list of HVAC contractors. Mr. Boucher will ask a Trojan Technologies representative to assemble sole source numbers to lock in solid U.V. disinfection project bid pricing prior to the contract. He will review and present the general service agreement information at the December 22nd meeting.

Activities and Financial Reports – Reviewed by the commissioners.

Miscellaneous Water Utilities Department Project Updates – Mr. Boucher reported that the Border Street project is complete, cleaned up and partially loamed. The Amherst DPW crew will finalize road shoulder clean-up. Milford’s in-house crew will perform additional loam work in the spring. The Vine Street sewer slip lining project and West Elm Street project is complete. The final payment for the Prospect Tank will be sent this week. Mr. Boucher reported that Mr. Mike McInerney wanted to begin video recording/televising the biweekly commissioners’ meetings this evening, however, had a schedule conflict. He said since the Granite Town Media recently received the necessary portable camera equipment, and that the 6:00 p.m. January 5, 2016, could be the date of the first filmed commissioners’ meeting. The December 22nd meeting is scheduled for 1:00 p.m., said Mr. Boucher. Vice-Chairman White recalled this Board had discussed multiple reasons on several occasions for not going to the trouble and expense of video recording the water and sewer public meeting sessions, not the least of which is that the current right to know laws and RSAs regarding public meetings do not require video recorded sessions. He added that Attorney Drescher, Town Counsel, has affirmed that video recording is not mandatory language referencing public meetings.

Postscript: Commissioner meeting minutes referencing Granite Town Media: April 14, 2015, April 28, 2015, and May 12, 2015.

Future Appointments/Meetings:

The next Commissioners’ meeting will be held on **Tuesday, December 22, 2015 at 1:00** pm at the Water Utilities Department, 564 Nashua Street.

Adjournment:

At 6:48 p.m. Chairman Putnam made the motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Vice-Chairman White. All voted in favor.

Michael E. Putnam, Chairman

Date

Dale A. White, Vice-Chairman

Date