

Milford Water/Wastewater Commissioners' Meeting Minutes

May 15, 2023

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Meeting ID: 816 3335 8881
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Present: **Dale White**, Chairman, **Robert Courage**, Vice-Chairman, **Hunter Philbrick**, Commissioner, **James Pouliot**, Director, Water Utilities Dept., **Jamie Soucy**, Deputy Director, **Evelyn Gendron**, Recording Secretary, Mr. Mike Thornton, Resident

Call to Order & Introductions Chairman White called today's public meeting to order at 11:04 a.m.

Press and Public Comments None

Decisions & Approvals

BOC Meeting Minutes – 5/8/2023 Upon motion by Commissioner Philbrick, seconded by Vice-Chairman Courage, the meeting minutes of 5/8/23 was unanimously approved as presented.

Discussion & Information Items

Water Rate Study – While the Board of Commissioners acknowledged that costs have been steadily rising recently in many personal, consumer categories, affecting all citizens, they recognize that the current Milford water rate is quite low compared to many NH communities. So low, the commissioners believe, that should the cost of water increase 29%, as a prior water rate study suggested, Milford would still rank within the bottom one-third tier of NH's current water rates. It was agreed that smaller, regularly scheduled rate increases would be more manageable and budget friendly to citizens, including retired citizens on fixed incomes, as compared to less frequent/higher water cost increases. For example, 5% annual rate increases would not impact ratepayers nearly as much as would a 29% "three-year catch-up" increase this year, given that 2020 was the previous water rate increase. Chairman White pointed out that maintaining the Town's water and sewer systems responsibly is part of the Town's foundation. Vice-Chairman Courage explained that a 29% increase to the current water rate amounts to \$7.25 per month. The Board favors Mr. Pouliot continue/complete the gathering of water meters/customer units details this week, submit same to the engineering firm to run the water rate study numbers, discuss at the next meeting, prepare for a public hearing by July, and to establish a new water rate for the third quarter.

HDPE Pipe – Director Pouliot clarified that the Olive and Laurel Street project cost spreadsheet pricing, discussed during the May 8th Board meeting, was based upon using HDPE (high density polyethylene) pipe, not ductile iron. Chairman White noted that, as has been previously discussed, an advantage of incorporating HDPE would be the favorable, reduced intake level of copper via residential building services/curb stops. Milford's water regulations,

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however, currently cite cement-lined ductile iron pipe, which has been an industry standard for many years. Mr. White explained that the industry has been trending toward HDPE, and that once an individual becomes familiar with the differences involved with using HDPE (welded pipe with mechanical joint fittings), the forgiving and ease to weld/tap into HDPE pipe, are welcomed advantages. Mr. Pouliot added that the HDPE is more expensive, however, the vendor will train staff, and DPW has one staff member trained in HDPE, this pipe is trending, its flexibility is good with frost heaves, it doesn't crack, and that HDPE pipe cleans well; nothing adheres after flushing. Ductile iron will last between 100 – 150 years, while HDPE is reported to last 150 – 200 years. Without a formal vote, the three commissioners support utilizing HDPE for the Olive and Laurel Street project.

Hydrant Flushing – The water crew involved with this season's aggressive, thorough directional hydrant flushing received Director Pouliot's praise for a job well done, adding that the team has "finally rounded a corner". He showed the Board a sample of iron/manganese build-up taken from one of the Souhegan River cross-overs, mentioning that items like this one were obtained from multiple flushing locations this year, a result of his having purchased a 4-1/2" steamer connection to move more water, instead of using the 2-1/2" nozzle as in previous years. Mr. Pouliot reported that compliments have been received from residents recently regarding staff going above and beyond.

Curtis Well Pumps – The commissioners were pleased to receive SCADA system documentation from Director Pouliot detailing improvements in the operations of the three Curtis Well pumps, consistently at better levels while run together and in combination with the hydrant flushing accomplishments, noted Mr. Pouliot. Chairman White lightheartedly questioned why this level of documentation has never reached the commissioners before today. Deputy Director Soucy responded that the details have been accessible, printable for many years.

Water Utilities Truck List –The Board received a list of vehicle details. Mr. Soucy and will provide additional vehicle details (year, current mileage, maintenance summary) for the May 22nd meeting. Mr. White complimented the Water Utilities mechanical maintenance staff for maintaining department vehicles for noteworthy longevity, as well as complimented Mr. Courage for setting the standard of vehicle care many years ago while leading the Public Works Department.

Non-Public Session – RSA 91-A:3,II(a) Personnel At 11:59 a.m. the Board entered into non-public session.

Adjournment – At 12:11 p.m. the meeting adjourned.

Future Meeting: Monday, May 22, 2023 11:00 a.m. at the Water Utilities Department, 564 Nashua St.

Dale White, Chairman

Date

Robert Courage, Vice-Chairman

Date

Hunter Philbrick, Commissioner

Date

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