

# Town of Shelburne Water Commission

Meeting minutes, February 1, 2021

Present: John Schold, Chair; John Day, Steve Smith, Craig Wooster, Pete Gadue; also Water Superintendent Rick Lewis, Finance Director Peter Frankenburg, and Town Manager Lee Krohn.

The meeting was called to order via Zoom at 5:00 P.M., with attendees identified. Motion by Smith to approve the agenda; seconded by Schold and approved 5-0.

Motion by Day to approve the January meeting minutes; seconded by Schold and approved 5-0.

Public comments: none.

Frankenburg presented a budget status update. Generally, revenues and expenses are on track (with retail sales > 60% as usual due to summer season watering). Salary line appears a bit high due to 'close out' costs upon employee Chris Carlson's departure; however, that should even out over time as our new employee's salary is somewhat less than Chris's was. Miscellaneous revenue reflects billings for meters; labor reflects repairs done on private lines which is then billed back to property owners. When a problem arises, the Town is often called as private property owners do not know who else to call. In addition, Town staff must often be present anyway to ensure that shutoffs/repairs/service restoration are all done properly, and breaks in private water lines can sometimes create large losses of water for which we must still pay CWD. It was suggested that a policy may be desirable to ensure an appropriate and consistent approach to these matters. Other expenses and revenues all appear to be on track as anticipated.

Delinquencies remain higher than usual (now at roughly \$80,000 out of \$642,000 billed, or 13%). This is higher than at this time last year (\$57,000 delinquent out of \$603,000 billed, or 9.5%). Coupled with COVID-related shutoff moratoria and reluctance to shut off in winter with risk of freezing pipes, we've had less leverage to encourage payments. As always, efforts to seek payments will continue as circumstances allow.

Project updates: Lewis reported on pricing received for two upcoming projects: roughly \$48,000 for the Marsett/Hillside interconnect; and roughly \$293,000 for the Harbor/Depot Roads line replacement, which was thought on the high side. Lewis will inquire further. Work also continues to identify private water lines and owners thereof.

Krohn reported on the great effort recently concluded on the proposed budget for FY '22, which came in at only a 0.62% increase in the municipal portion of the property tax rate. Many other known or new matters continue to demand time and attention.

Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) review: Discussion continued on the suggestion to accelerate replacement of the remote radio read devices to decrease staff time needed to read meters quarterly. Lewis would like to see an additional \$50,000 next year (in addition to the \$35,000 budgeted now for meter replacement). It was suggested that this be on the March agenda as a decision item, giving Frankenburg time to review the CDs held currently and determine which could be cashed in timely for this purpose.

It was noted that as occurs each year, the March meeting will need to be on the second Monday in order to accommodate Town Meeting on the first Monday in March.

Commissioner concerns: it was suggested that we try to revisit the Church Street water line matter with Brian Precourt and the Catholic Church, given its likely long-term benefit to the Town. There was consensus to try again. Lewis confirmed that Parker Excavating is still helping with emergency work. Frankenburg checked in with Commissioners on signing of warrants.

Motion by Day to adjourn at 5:48 P.M., seconded by Schold and approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by Lee Krohn.