

SHELBURNE WATER COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes – May 2, 2023

Present: John Day, Craig Wooster, Jennifer Martinez, Steve Smith, Pete Gadue; also Bart Sherman, Peter Frankenburg, Lee Krohn, John Jackman

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 P.M. Motion by Day to approve the consent agenda, including the meeting agenda and March meeting minutes; seconded by Wooster and approved 4-0. There were no public comments on items not on the agenda. Smith arrived at this time.

Commission reorganization: Day announced his resignation for personal reasons as Chair, effective at the conclusion of today's meeting, and nominated Wooster to become Chair at that time. With no other nominations, Wooster was elected 4-0-1 as Chair (Wooster abstained).

Water Superintendent's report: Sherman reported that meter readings were completed on time; Stage 1 of the water meter replacement project is slated to conclude by June; this was the last meter reading that included Sensus meters. Andrew Driver passed his Class D Operator's license on the first try, and is working out very well. The Department is encouraging customers to transfer to paperless billing for efficiency for all involved. There were few water breaks this year so far. Water loss (billed to us by CWD but unaccounted for in our own billing) is approximately 17%, but this does not account for water used for firefighting, sprinkler testing, hydrant flushing, fire training... so the 'billable loss' is actually less than that. 10% is considered ideal; 20% or less is considered acceptable. It will be interesting to see if/how replacing all of the water meters may improve this circumstance. Day reported his very positive experience with the meter replacement professional.

John Jackman of Hoyle Tanner was introduced, and described his work on the asset management system. He is gathering as much relevant information as possible (valve locations, wet and dry hydrants, pipe segments and age, diameter, material, public or private ownership, and other key data) and to transform all of that into a GIS map-based system. This will make these data far more usable and accessible. It also includes current cost estimates for replacement of all aspects of infrastructure, so this all becomes useful for financial planning. Current estimate of all owned infrastructure is in the \$100M range. If assuming everything had a 100-year life, which it clearly does not, this could require at least a \$1M investment every year. We are nowhere close to that at this time.

Sprint removal of cell infrastructure from the south tank: agreements are all in order. Sprint has hired the Town's tank maintenance company to do all work on the tank itself; they will remove the actual cell panels attached above, as well as the old equipment sheds – all at their sole cost. Our tank maintenance firm will also conduct both pre- and post-inspections to ensure all is done properly and no damage. Staff will coordinate for site access. It was also noted that Sprint had in fact been paying rent (incorporated into recent T Mobile payments) at least through 2021.

T Mobile proposal to add cell infrastructure on the south tank: still in process between T Mobile and our tank maintenance company. Even with agreement, we would still need to negotiate lease terms. The Commission is encouraged to seek the same financial terms as had existed when Sprint was active – Sprint will remove three panels; T Mobile seeks to add three panels for a total of six. There's no reason that the same total lease/rent structure should not continue.

Town Manager's report: it was clarified that he will be departing by early May, but will continue to do his best to support the Commission and all other aspects of town management while he is still here.

Finance Director's update: the department budget remains generally in good shape. Sales are on track; at 83% into the fiscal year, we have billed 95% of anticipated revenue to date – yet not actually received to date. Delinquencies remain; shutoff notices have been delivered to those with the highest fees owed. It was encouraged strongly that delinquencies be pursued aggressively, whether via more timely shutoff notices, use of a collection agency, or other strategies. Payment is owed for services provided, and the water system needs to pay its own bills. Financing will be sought for Stage 2 of the meter replacement program.

Frankenburg also presented a draft budget for review/consideration for the next fiscal year. A key challenge out of the gate is CWD's 9.5% increase in the rate charged to us. That, in addition to our own increases in costs, will present a challenge and a necessary increase in our own rates yet to be determined. In light of the asset management concerns, Sherman requested an increase from \$60,000 to \$110,000 be considered for the capital reserve contribution. It was also noted that a number of property owners have not been responsive to our need to enter their properties to replace water meters. Upon a motion by Day and seconded by Smith, a concept was endorsed to apply a fee of \$100/quarter for continued non-responsiveness or noncompliance; this would be forgivable upon successful completion of this essential task. It would be noted as "meter upgrade failure" on utility bills. All subject to future review and discussion by the Commission.

Town Manager's report: Krohn noted his pending departure, and thanked the Commission for their support and their service. The Commission likewise thanked Krohn for his patience, service, and helpful accomplishments.

Commissioner Concerns: no additional matters not already covered above.

With no other business, the meeting adjourned by consensus at 6:31 P.M.

Next meeting: Tuesday, June 6, 2023.

Respectfully submitted by Lee Krohn