

# Town of Shelburne Water Commission

Meeting minutes, January 4, 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 Schold to approve the agenda; seconded by Wooster and approved 4-0.

Motion by Wooster to approve the October meeting minutes; seconded by Schold and approved 4-0.

Public comments: none. Day and Gadue arrived at this time.

Frankenburg presented a budget status update as of the first half of the fiscal year. Generally, revenues and expenses are on track (with retail sales > 50% 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 new employee Dave DiBiase's salary is somewhat less than Chris's was. Debt line also appears high, as the first of the two annual payments includes both principal and interest; the second payment in the spring is for interest only, so that will also even out. Delinquencies are higher than usual (now at roughly \$99,000), similar to property tax delinquencies. 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. The Department has \$535,000 invested in CDs, a portion of which could be put toward smaller capital improvement projects to get them 'off the books'; this would both get these projects done and also lighten debt load in the out years when larger projects must be done.

Along those lines, the current capital project short list was reviewed, understanding that the larger asset management "blue book" is better reviewed when we are able to do so again in person. Suggestions for accelerated work (smaller projects that could be funded by cashing in CDs) were the remote radio read meter replacements (fund two years of work in one year while staff have time and capacity) and the Marsett/Hillside interconnect. While even doing both would leave significant fiscal reserves, Frankenburg suggested it might be prudent for the Commission to have a policy regarding appropriate, adequate reserves to be maintained.

Lewis reviewed other potential capital projects:

Harbor Road/Depot Road line replacement: in engineering design.

Bostwick Road line replacement: in engineering design.

Harbor Road/Bay Road interconnect: on hold for now; multiple options available for the future.

RT 7 South water main: may be much simpler and much less costly to reline existing pipe rather than replace. Under consideration based on others' experience and revised cost estimates.

Upper Meadows pump station: on hold.

Vac-Tron trailer unit: less costly option to rent as needed rather than buy to own.

Wake Robin tank cleaning: may occur this summer; matters to resolve with the State first.

Lewis reported that the experimental approach to leak detection via satellite imaging and detection of chlorine/chloramine (which would be found in supplied water but not in naturally occurring groundwater or surface waters) facilitated cooperatively with CWD, did not work out as hoped. While 22 leaks were thought to be found, when all were checked by staff, no actual leaks were found. CWD will be asked for results from other towns for comparison.

Lewis also noted that while Parker Excavating has decided to abandon emergency work for municipalities, he has been able to convince them to continue doing emergency work for Shelburne, at least for now. They may seek a contractual arrangement to continue. Other options are also being explored for this essential service.

Krohn reported that this time of year is always challenging with budget development for the coming fiscal year, and that all of the long-awaited documents related to the new Wake Robin water tank (easements, plans, transfer of ownership...) have all been signed, sealed, delivered, and recorded in the land records.

Upon questioning, it was noted that work continues on identifying and clarifying private vs. public ownership of water (and sewer) lines.

Staff were commended for their rapid response on New Year's Day to the water line break on Bay Road.

It was suggested that there may need to be a policy regarding maintenance of or response to breaks in private water lines. Depending upon circumstances, these may affect more users on the system than just those served by a broken line.

Effective, efficient strategies were discussed for signing of warrants – members to coordinate with Frankenburg.

Motion by Schold to adjourn at 5:58 P.M., seconded by Gadue and approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by Lee Krohn.