

SHELBURNE WATER COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes – March 12, 2022

Present: John Day, Craig Wooster, Steve Smith, Pete Gadue; also Dave DiBiase, Peter Frankenburg, Lee Krohn.

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 P.M. By consensus, the agenda and the January meeting minutes were approved. There was no public comment on items not on the agenda.

The budget is generally in good shape to date, although as noted before, delinquencies remain higher than usual due to the COVID-related shutoff moratorium. Shutoff notices will be initiated in the spring when we are allowed to do so, although it is a labor-intensive process per statute. We should consider whether there is a different process we could use to limit our exposure. As with property taxes, there seems little incentive to pay bills if the service continues uninterrupted. Expenses are generally on track at 75% through the fiscal year, although we had more line breaks/use of contractors this past quarter. Revenues are up due to new construction at Kwiniaska and elsewhere. Transition is underway with the radio read meter replacement/upgrade project. Administrative fees paid to the Town for time/effort with billing and accounting are paid once at the end of the fiscal year; same with the Wastewater Department. The arrangement and fees may need revisiting in the future. Transfer to capital was for the meter upgrade project. We will want to consider opportunities for suggested use of ARPA funds as that conversation begins with the Selectboard and other parties.

Two recent water line breaks; only three so far this winter, which is good. The School Street repair will be done at a time to limit impact on school traffic. New employee doing well so far. Standby generator still on order (supply chain issue). Grants being pursued that may have little or no local match required, including a hydraulic system analysis to be done by Otter Creek Engineering, and GIS/GPS system mapping to be done by Hoyle/Tanner. CEA is working on key details for the potential RT 7 water line upgrade, to get that in a form ready to bid. Unlike our previous supplier, Neptune delivered 500 radio read meters in two days! Work is underway to get these in place as we can. Department truck was transferred to the Town, a good deal for both parties; the new truck has been ordered. All three Department employees assisted the Fire Department at the recent structure fire on South Ridge, part of building a stronger and more collaborative working relationship. A large format scanner may be acquired, cost and use to be shared with Wastewater.

Questions followed regarding the Water Commission charter and responsibilities – what they are today, what might be desirable, clarifying expectations of the Commission, employees, and interrelationships. The charter will be researched as a starting point for future conversation. DiBiase was praised for his initiative and leadership as Superintendent, moving the department forward, seeking grants, modernizing operations. We still need an additional member – or members – perhaps the size of the Commission might be expanded to accommodate what appear to be three qualified applicants?

With no other business, the meeting adjourned at 6:03 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by Lee Krohn