

**Joint Meeting of the Water & Sewer Commission
and the Electric Utility Commission
Monday August 11, 2014**

I. Roll Call: Commissioners Steve Fitzhugh, Chris Bradley, Jim Wilson, and Dennis Donahue, Town Manager Jeff Schulz, Nanci Allard

II. Approval of Minutes: Mr. Wilson moved approval, Mr. Fitzhugh seconded. Minutes approved 5-0-0.

III. Joint Discussion:

- Commission By-laws: Mr. Fitzhugh contacted VLCT for guidance in creating by-laws for a commission. Unfortunately VLCT does not have anything of this nature to aide communities with, but would, for a fee help us create our own by-laws for the commission. Mr. Bradley wondered is any other towns with commissions had by-laws we could use a guidelines. Mr. Donahue believed that Richmond or Randolph might have some possible insight. Mr. Bradley volunteered to check with these communities and Mr. Fitzhugh will check with VPPSA and out legal representatives.

- Upcoming Utility Projects:

Central Street Water Project: The current eight inch water main was installed in 1906 and will be replaced with a new ductile iron 12” main line. With this project the community will have an uninterrupted flow of new pipe from the well field to the storage tanks on Garvey Hill. This leg of the overall water project was designed years ago, but lacked a funding source until this year when the Village qualified for the State Revolving Loan Fund. Manager Schulz feels the timing of the project is late and there is a poor bidding climate. We should hold off on putting this and the other two recently bonded projects project out to bid until this winter for spring construction.

King Street Water Project: The fire hydrants on King Street are capped off due to low flow. Also when the Town fills the pool the residents cannot use their water because of poor flow. The commission also wanted to note that the two water projects are water rate payer funded and the catch basin replacement project is tax payer funded.

Ms. Allard voiced a concern over the funding of the sidewalk installation. She feels the water rate payers shouldn’t foot the bill for the entire sidewalk repair. Also she mentioned the need or lack of need of the sidewalk on the west side of Central Street.

Electric Projects: The power line realignment over the former police station that Mr. Lyons purchased from the Village has take place. This was completed because of violation of Federal Safety codes. The LED streetlight project is finished. LED bulbs are being ordered for the lights on the interior of the common and hopefully they will be here before the Labor Day Festivities.

Misc. Mr. Donahue asked who pays the bill for streetlights on State highways. The town requested lights there and therefore they pay for them. Mr. Donahue also suggested planting a tree line buffer along the eastern side of the well field to help protect against any possible surface or ground pollutants.

IV. Water and Sewer Commission:

- Rate comparison: At one point during the budget process a Selectboard member had asked for a water rate comparison. Mr. Fitzhugh contacted VLCT on this matter and again they were not very useful, because they do not compare communities. Mr. Fitzhugh also noted he had looked at an Essex Junction water bill. He noticed that certain charges were less, but also other charges were more. If we do compare water rates with other communities we need to be sure we are comparing apples to apples and not oranges to bananas. Also on a side note the State of VT average yearly water bill is \$437.00, Northfields runs less at around \$360.00, which is why we don't qualify for a lot of the funding out there.
- Mr. Bradley will also ask about rates when he contacts the other communities about the by-law question

V. Electric Commission:

- Lien Authority Discussion: The new charter gives the electric utility the authority to levy a lien against a property that hasn't paid their bill. The issue that this creates is a landlord who requires a tenant to place the utility bill in the tenants name has no way to make sure the tenant is paying their bill. The lien is levied against the landlord and not the tenant. The electric utility would like to have our legal representative come to a commission meeting with and meet with landlords that have any questions about this. This meeting will be October 6, 2014 at seven PM at the start of the regularly scheduled commission meeting. Manager Schulz will draft the letter and work with the utility office to disseminate to landlords.

Smart Meters: Mr. Wilson inquired on when we should begin looking at smart meters. Mr. Fitzhugh will check with Green Mountain Power and the utility office about a strategy for deployment, but generally feels we should wait as long as we can before deploying.

Solar project: a discussion on possible locations for solar power was had by the commission.

Penta Poles: No news to report on yet.

VI: Public Participation: None

VII: Adjournment: The commission unanimously adjourned at 8:30pm

Respectfully Submitted
Acting Clerk
Dennis Donahue