

**Joint Meeting of the Water & Sewer Commission  
And the Electric Utility Commission  
Meeting Minutes, January 3, 2022**

**Roll Call:** Steve Fitzhugh, Dennis Donahue, John Stevens (absent), Charlie Morse.  
Others present: Town Manager Jeff Schulz, Utility Superintendent, Patrick Demasi,  
VPPSA Representatives Ken Nolan and Ken St. Amor the meeting started at 6:30 PM.

**Meeting of the Electric Commission**

Northfield resident Sue McMartin asked to speak to the Utility Commission regarding her concerns on climate change. The Commission agreed to allow Sue to speak. Sue stated that she wishes to undertake projects to increase the Communities awareness of the issue and is seeking Town support for this effort. Sue noted that she has two initial projects which include: an Arts Festival with a climate change theme combined with a brochure with information on the issue which could be distributed on Earth Day. The Commission agreed and Charlie Morse volunteered to meet with Sue to further discuss the effort.

**VPPSA Presentation on Advanced Metering Technology**

VPPSA Representatives, Ken Nolan and Ken St. Amor attended the meeting to discuss VPPSA efforts on Advanced Metering Technology (AMI).

Steve Fitzhugh introduced Ken Nolan, VPPSA Executive Director, noting that Ken has been the Director for several years and prior to that was at Burlington. Ken also worked on the smart grid investment project in Burlington. Steve then introduced Ken St Amor noting that Ken is the technology guru at VPPSA.

Ken St Amor noted that he would provide the technical details and background for VPPSA work on AMI on behalf of its members. Ken noted that the AMI has been a three-year process starting in 2019 VPPSA signing a contract with a consultant to perform an assessment of each utilities readiness to upgrade tis metering system to AMI. Next, VPPSA performed an RFP process and selected a vendor to do the AMI install when the member utilities are ready move forward. Most recently, VPPSA and the consultant a performed project Cost/Benefit Analysis, cash flow analysis and the cyber security component. Next, Ken St. Amor discussed the technical elements of the AMI, and the cyber security elements.

Next, Ken Nolan presented an AMI business case noting that AMI has many advantages over the current metering system in regards to both metering operations and enhanced customer service and billing operation. Also, with the current and future data collection and other mandates imposed by the VT Department of Public Service, smart meter technology will be needed within several years.

The estimated cost of the project for Northfield is \$1,263,000 and the anticipated payback time is 4.83 years.

VPPSA is lobbying the VT Legislature to award VPPSA ARPA grant funding to offset a portion of the smart meter upgrade for its member committees. The next steps in the process will be for VPPSA to complete its legal/financial reviews and document preparations, and to lobby the VT legislature for project funding which for Northfield could be approximately \$500,000. After that process, Northfield should consider whether or not to move forward with smart meters.

### **Other Business**

Steve Fitzhugh presented an update on the Bone Hill Solar Project noting that the facility should be up and running by 1/11/2022.

### **Approval of Minutes of December 6, 2021**

Motion by Charlie Morse, seconded by Dennis Donahue, to approve the minutes of the December 6, 2021 meeting. **Motion approved with 3-0.**

### **Meeting of Water and Sewer Commission**

#### **South Main Street Water Line Replacement**

Jeff Schulz updated the Commission stating that he is working with an engineer to begin the engineering for the replacement of the water line on Main Street which is 100 plus years old and contains lead connections and goosenecks. The State currently has 50% loan subsidies for the engineering. Completing the engineering for this project at this time is prudent because the State is likely to require that the line be replaced in the next few years due to the lead components, and if the project is fully engineered and considered shovel ready, it is likely that the State will fund at least 50% of the project cost (possibly up to 80%).

## Other Business

Jeff noted that the Northfield's Sewer Plant permit requires that the Town submit numerous compliance and monitoring reports to the VTDEC. Recently, we submitted the phosphorus optimization plan/report (POP), which is of special note due the EPA's and State of Vermont's mandate that Town's significantly reduce the phosphorous load releases from municipal sewer plants. We reported to the State that Northfield has reduced the loads well below the new permit requirements. Also, the Town of Northfield has completed the following stormwater separation projects: storm line improvements on Central Street, the Downtown Common, Summer Street and several other small separation projects. Stormwater on Central Street and the Downtown Common has been redirected to two stormwater treatment structures: the end of Central Street and on municipal property. These projects have reduced stormwater flows to the Northfield Sewer Treatment Plant and lowered the phosphorous load releases. The phosphorous levels over the past six month to a year have dropped significantly and are averaging less than .01 milliliter per liter. Further, we anticipate the annual lbs. of phosphorus to be 350 or less. Northfield's permit sets the release limits at 450 lbs.

In an unrelated issue, the VTDEC recently notified the Town that the effluent from the sewer plant contains high levels of copper. Fortunately, the Town's water source does not have high copper levels. The source of the copper appears to be from stormwater and copper pipes in the water customer's service lines. This issue is frustrating in that the Town's current wastewater permit for the sewer plant does not have maximum copper levels or reporting, and that the sewer plant is not designed to address copper. Regardless, we are meeting with the State to develop a plan to address the issue which may include increased chemicals.

The Commission discussed this issue and generally concluded that the source of the copper is likely from the copper lines in the customers service line.

Jeff updated the Commission on sludge management issue noting that the Canadians have starting hauling Northfield sludge and thus far the process is working well.

Motion by Charlie Morse, second by Dennis Donahue to adjourn the Joint Meeting of the Electric and the Water/Sewer Commission. **Motion passed 3-0.**

Jeff Schulz, Town Manager