

**Joint Meeting of the Water & Sewer Commission
And the Electric Utility Commission
Meeting Minutes, December 6, 2021**

Roll Call: Steve Fitzhugh, Dennis Donahue, John Stevens (absent), Charlie Morse. Others present: Town Manager Jeff Schulz, Patrick Demasi, Utility Superintendent. The meeting started at 6:30 PM.

Approval of Minutes of October 4, 2021

Motion by Dennis Donahue, seconded by Charlie Morse, to approve the minutes of the June 7, 2021 meeting. **Motion approved with 3-0.**

Meeting of the Electric Commission

Update on Renewable Energy Projects

Steve Fitzhugh presented an update on the Bone Hill Solar Project noting that GMP is installing the direct transfer trip elements to eliminate back feed into NED's system. Steve added that the project continues to be delayed due to the difficulty in getting steel for the racking and transformers.

Steve also reported that VPPSA has obtained bids for battery storage from contractors to supply battery storage to its members, and that the low bidder (on their own accord) has obtained an option on the abandoned home located next to the King Street sub-station which the Town had previously considered purchasing. Steve added that battery storage increasing needed for electrical systems with the shift to renewables (primarily solar) which can be unreliable, especially during peak times. Charlie Morse asked who the contractor is and will municipal taxes be paid. Steve responded that the contractor is DeLorean Power Systems and the contractor has been vetted by VPPSA through the RFP process. The contractor will pay taxes on the property and will need to enter into a power purchase agreement with either VPPSA or Northfield. VPPSA and the contractor will present project details at the February Commission meeting.

Steve noted that Ken Nolan and Ken St Amor of VPPSA will attend the Commission's January 3, 2022 Commission meeting to discuss VPPSA's efforts on Advance Metering Infrastructure (AMI) for its members. VPPSA is working with consultants and companies to prepare for and to assist in the implementation of AMI/smart meters to its members.

Meeting of Water and Sewer Commission

Sludge Management Issues

Jeff Schulz reported that the Sewer Department is working to change its sludge management disposal process and start sending its sludge directly to Canada versus to Barre City. Currently, the Sewer Department sends its sludge to Barre City who in turn sends it to Canada. The Sewer Department proposes the change because Barre City has raised concerns about the odor and it is likely that Northfield's costs with Barre will increase by 30%. In order to have the Canadians haul the sludge, it requires modifications to the sewer plant with the construction of a concrete holding area, which is completed. However, there also is the need to purchase or obtain the use of loader to load the sludge into the Canadian's truck. The Commission discussed the issue and based upon the Town having two loaders, the Commission agreed that the Sewer Department should rent one of the Town loaders.

Federal Infrastructure Funding

Jeff reported that the Federal Government recently passed an \$1.2 trillion infrastructure bill which will result in Vermont receiving \$2.2 billion for infrastructure projects; including: roads, bridges, broad band, flood hazard mitigation, water and sewer projects and other areas. One specific element for funding is to eliminate lead in water lines. As a result, Jeff reported that he proposes 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%).

Jeff also noted that Northfield has received a 100% grant from the State of Vermont in an amount of up to \$2 million for the Main Street Stormwater and CSO abatement project. The grant funds are ARPA funds separate from the \$1.92million ARPA the Town previously received.

Other Business

Jeff noted that the Water Department had the three municipal wells pump tested and the equipment inspected. The inspection results state the wells and the equipment are in good condition and that well yields meet or exceed the design flows.

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