

**Joint Meeting of the Water & Sewer Commission
And the Electric Utility Commission
Meeting Minutes, November 2, 2020**

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

Approval of Minutes from the September 14, 2020 Meeting

Motion by Dennis Donahue, seconded by Steve Fitzhugh, to approve the minutes of October 5 meeting. **Motion passed 3-0.**

Meeting of the Electric Commission

Budget Status

Jeff stated that an electric budget status report was not available at this time and that a report would be provided at the next meeting.

Other Business

Steve stated that the actual connection for the West Hill interconnect, whereby NED will wheel GMP power on NED lines to serve GMP residents in the areas of West Hill and above in Northfield, is complete. Accordingly, the project is fully complete.

Steve noted that thus far 40 percent of the State funding to cover past due electric utility bills in Northfield has been applied for by NED customers.

Construction on the Bone Hill Solar project should be underway within the next few weeks with the developer, Encore, planning to get conduit in the ground in December, weather permitting. The cost of the conduit is approximately \$8,000.

Meeting of Water and Sewer Commission

Budget Status

Jeff presented a water and sewer budget status report for the period ending October 30, noting that the overall water revenues are generally on track for the period. However, the nonresidential water revenues, which includes Norwich, are down 10 percent. Fortunately, the single-family residential usage is up 6% and mostly offsets the nonresidential losses. The water expenditures are generally on track with no areas of concern. The total sewer revenues are on track for the period; however, the nonresidential revenues are down 8 percent. Similar to water, the single-family sewer revenues are up and are mostly offsetting the loss of nonresidential losses. Sewer Department expenditures are also generally on track for the period with no areas of concern.

Sewer Ordinance

Jeff stated that the sewer ordinance was added to the agenda for discussion due to a recent issue regarding the responsibility for the repair and maintenance of a homeowner's sewer service line within the Town right of way. Jeff added that there was much discussion of this issue during the ordinance adoption process in 2017 and it was agreed that the homeowner would be responsible for the repair and maintenance of a sewer service line from the home to the Town's sewer main – versus from the home to the property line or other demarcation point on the property. Steve stated that he had received a call from a resident on South Main Street regarding a sewer service line issue and that the resident was suggesting that the Town is responsible for the line repair because the Town's sidewalk project damaged the line. Jeff noted that the Town viewed a video of the homeowner's service line and dug/inspected the line finding that the line in the area of the sidewalk is not damaged. Jeff added that the homeowner is still of opinion that the sewer issue is the responsibility of the Town and that the line issue could be in the street. Jeff informed the homeowner that per the current ordinance that the line issue is her responsibility.

Steve stated that the expense to repair a sewer line in the street, particularly Main Street, could be beyond the means of the average homeowner and that Town rarely has a sewer line failure in the street. Also, the Water/Sewer Department has the resources and experience to repair utility lines in the street. Accordingly, Steve recommends that the sewer ordinance be amended such that in Section 6.32 the term sewer be change to house connection. That change will limit the homeowner's maintenance responsibility for a sewer service line to within their property. The Commissioners were in agreement with the recommended change and asked that Jeff provide a copy of the amended sewer ordinance for the Commission's review at the next meeting.

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

Jeff Schulz, Town Manager