

Water Commission Minutes
10/04/2021

Members Present in person: Jay Furr, June Heston
Members by Zoom: Bard Hill, David Sander, Fran Huntoon
Absent:

Staff Present in person: Josh Arneson, Town Manager
Staff Present by Zoom: Kathy Daub-Stearns, Admin. Assist.; Kendall Chamberlain, Water & Sewer Superintendent

Others Present in person: Heidi Bormann, Peter Bormann, the meeting was recorded for MMCTV Channel 15

Others Present by Zoom: Rod West, Peter Brown (Riverview Mobile Home Park owner), Connie Van Eeghen, Housing Committee

Called to Order: 6:00 PM

1. Welcome by David
Public Comment-

1. Peter Brown said he reached out to Christine Gadeau to see if there were state funds for the extension and he does qualify so he is looking into it
2. Connie Van Eeghen said the Housing Committee was talking about the gateway and the water expansion. She shared the committee was looking at ample and affordable housing and are wrapping up their recommendations for the downtown area. The committee she said thinks it is important to look for other possibilities and the expansion and/ or extension was important to meeting their goals.

2. Additions or Deletions to the Agenda- none

3. Items for Presentation or Discussion with those present

a. Update on Bridge St. Waterline Replacement Project: Church St. to Volunteers' Green

Josh reported:

- that there have been some scheduling delays, but the project started today
- that it will be five (5) to six (6) weeks before completion with construction taking place Monday through Friday and one way traffic except for morning traffic between 7 and 8 AM.

Discussion included:

- that Fran asked about traffic control saying that today the persons directing traffic had no signs, Josh replied, the traffic plan is for lighted signs, Kendall added they were marking the street and doing general prep work, he expected that once they begin work in the road the traffic plan would be in place

b. Consideration of approving the request to change the water meter reading procedure at 282 West Main St.

Heide Bormann reported:

- that they had transformed their duplex into four apartments and when they did they had gone to the commission about how to meter the service since there is only one meter, the recommendation they received was to meter the apartments individually and that is what they did. Since then, she has received the bill and invoiced the tenants based on the readings she takes for each unit. She said they would like to have the meters moved outside the building and have the water company read the meters instead of them reading it.

Discussion included:

- that Kendall said for other multiplex units in town some have one meter, some have multiple meters, and some multiple meters are read by the department. He said the vault records all the water and that is the issue.

- that Peter Bormann asked whose responsibility it is to read the submeters, Kendall replied, the homeowners. Peter Bormann thought the vault meter could be kept and read to reconcile against the four (4) meters. Heidi said that the church has a meter on the same pole already being read. Kendall said that if an owner has brought things up to Town standard, then the Town has taken over the billing. In this case there is a line that is not owned by the Town and that is why there are sometimes vaults and from there it is the homeowner's responsibility. This would be a large change from our existing policy. The issue was the length of the line and the amount of water than could be lost. David thought the issue was not moving the meters but the length of the line. Kendall described the landscape where the line is and felt it would not be possible to know if there was a leak. Heidi Bormann said at Richmond Terrace in 2015 the vault was removed because water was going into the vault and a pole was placed. Jay asked if we were to check the existing meter and the ones at the property, he did not see how water would just go missing. Kendall said it was not within the purview of the water company to have a private meter read by the department and make the department responsible for reconciling the meters and doing the billing. June asked if the Bormann's would have to change anything, Kendall said the vault and meter would have to be removed, backflow preventers installed and to have 4 meters. Heidi Bormann said she checks the meters every month and thought if it was a loss of water issue, keep the vault and meter and continue checking. Heidi said she pays for four (4) meters now, Kendall said she pays for four (4) units. Bard said a single account can have multiple units charged. Fran said equitable billing was not the problem, it was the private line that the department would have no control over, if the vault was left in place and we read all the meters then we set ourselves up for reading meters for everyone. Fran said that 4 units are charged for 4 users on one account. Bard said the number of units is billed for, not the number of meters. Bard said the question is who does the billing. David asked if the meters are moved outside and the go Kendall, one meter per town account. if you move the meter to the building, the vault needs to be removed at the homeowner's expense and if the vault stays, and the meters are allowed to be read by the Town, not only will others want the same treatment but if there was a leak, in this case, it would be impossible to find. Rod West asked what would happen if there was a meter that was not being paid, Kendall said when there is one meter, if one account is in arrears all accounts get shut off and is why the landlord always gets the bill. Heidi Bormann said on Baker St. she gets the bills and then she distributes them. She challenged the right to shut off all users, Bard said having one meter that the landlord who pays helps prevent a legal challenge. Heidi Bormann said she always pays the bills, and the tenant then reimburses them, it

would still be the landlords responsibility. Jay said, either way the Bormann's are checking the meters, so he did not see the difference, Heidi Bormann said it was the calculating the usage for her tenants. Josh asked Kendall if his concern was beyond the vault, having other landlords wanting the department to read their private meters too. Kendall said yes. Heidi asked that the practice of removing the meter could be changed to alleviate the concern. Kendall replied that potentially the mobile home park would be one meter and the owner responsible, if this is allowed a hundred (100) separate meters would have to be read and have a comparison done. Fran asked, if the vault reads one thing and the individual meters read something else, what would be billed. Rod West asked if it was a software issue. He asked if the Town could still use the vault meter and have the individual meters read and issue the bills from those, he wondered if reading an additional four (4) meters was really a lot more work. Bard said four (4) is not overly burdensome but the mobile home park and other developments wanting the same treatment should be taken into consideration, to Kendall's point do we want to do this as a service for landlords and the cost would be spread over all the users. David asked Kendall if Heidi Bormann called and provided the meter information and it matched the vault would that work, Kendall said one (1) meter and the Town reads the meter, if they want to have the Town read the meters then they would have to put new meters in. Heidi Bormann said keeping the vault and moving the meters outside with shutoff valves for each meter should be enough. Kendall said the vault could be removed, there should not be two (2) sets of meters. Linda Donovan asked what other towns do. Kendall said long lines, like this one, get a vault and the landlords are responsible from the vault. Kendall said the owner is responsible for the water or sewer bills and it is not like the electric bill that is the user's responsibility. Bard said the power company can shut off a single meter, with water when there is one line it's either off or on.

David asked that Kendall, Josh, and the Bormann's work on this and bring a solution back to the Commission. David and June will work with them.

c. Discussion of next steps for the Gateway Sewer Expansion Project and receipt of the 2021 State Economic & Infrastructure Development grant to partially offset costs for Phase 1

This will be brought back as no time was available.

d. Superintendent's Report

Kendall said life is good.

4. Approval of Minutes, Warrants and Purchase Orders

June moved to approve the Minutes of 9/20/2021; Jay seconded. Roll Call Vote: Fran, Bard, June, Jay, and David voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

June moved to approve the Minutes of 9/27/2021 amended as discussed; Jay seconded. Roll Call Vote: Fran, Bard, June, Jay, and David voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

Purchase Orders

Fran moved to approve the Jericho Road portion of PO 4158 as it relates to the Water Sewer Department for loan repayment in an amount not to exceed 52% of the total, \$57,471.50; Jay seconded. Roll Call Vote: Fran, Jay, Bard, June, and David voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

Warrants

Fran moved to approve the warrant as presented; Jay seconded. Roll Call Vote: Fran, Bard, June, Jay, and David voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

Josh will send warrant out by Docusign for signatures.

5. Discuss Items for Next Agenda and Adjourn

Special meeting on Tuesday, Monday holiday

Adjourn

June moved to adjourn; Fran seconded. Roll Call Vote: Fran, Bard, June, Bard, and David voted affirmatively. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 7 PM.