

North Haverhill Water & Light District

Minutes of the March 16, 2021 meeting.

- * The meeting was called to order at 5:39 PM at the North Haverhill fire station.

- * Those present: Dennis Fournier, Cheryl Marchetti, Rich Clifford, Pam Kinder, John Page, Bob Fagnant, Cara Kimball and Althea Page.

- * Others: None.

- * Reviewed minutes of the February 16,, 2021 budget hearing and monthly meetings. Rich made a motion to accept the minutes, which Dennis seconded, and the commissioners approved.

- * Appearances: None.

- * Bookkeeping – Cara
 - ** Cara said she has been working really hard to clean up the customer accounts. The commissioners looked at the customer balance sheet as Cara explained what she had done to make things right for customers. There have been a lot of property transfers that we didn't know about. The former bookkeeper did not go into Rapid Read to swap accounts, which resulted in incorrect billings and, in some cases, double billing. In some cases, there were no final water meter reads when property did transfer. She wanted to know if the commissioners were still using the rule of sending out letters when overdue bills reach \$500 and was assured that was supposed to be happening.

Cara contacted Erik's Autobody who thought they were paying the town for water when, in reality, he was paying the town a \$25,000 fee for hooking up to the sewer line. He had not been billed the \$800 hookup fee or for any water usage. Cara talked to him and said he seemed to be OK with paying us his bill of \$1,372.40, which includes the hookup fee.

The Robert Fadden house was taken by the town for back taxes and it might have already been sold but Cara will send the overdue bill to the town.

August 2018 was the last payment we received from Sherry Fullerton. She thinks she has a water flow problem so that will have to be researched.

Susan Hastings is contesting her water flow. Bob received a letter from her so he gave her contact information to Cara. Rich told Cara to send her a bill for all of the base fees. Bob will install a new radio at her house and we can start billing from that point.

Cara has researched all of the invoices for Preston Hatch and has billed him.

Floraine Place is the woman who gave Rich a check for \$800. Rich gave it to John who took it to a meeting and gave it to Sandi Pierce. It was never seen again. It never cleared the bank. Right now she owes \$889.65. Cara played the voicemail she received from her where she said she has never received any water bills. There is no one living at the house and Bob shut the water off last March. She has requested that Cara send her an itemized statement of all billings and payments. Bob thought there may have been a renter living there at some point and the bills might have gone to the renter. Cara said that the computer shows the bills going to her. She should not be billed for the June – September time period. The commissioners also said they would not charge her the water on/off fees or the \$30 check cancellation fee.

The commissioners decided to forgive two quarters for Chris and Sam Norcross and just charge them one base fee of \$95.40.

The Marcus Smith account stands at \$2,124.17. It's a vacant trailer and the water is shut off. Cara was pretty sure she had put a lien on that property a long time ago.

Laura Wilson keeps sending in checks for bills she doesn't owe. Cara wanted to know if anyone knew her to tell her to stop sending money. She currently has a credit of \$1,518.58.

Cara noted that there is a \$5000 bank deposit for water rents with no accounts ever having been credited.

Sandi Pierce submitted an invoice for services rendered in the amount of \$1,242.00. Cara said she has already spent 77 hours trying to straighten out the mess that Mrs. Pierce left. That alone will cost the water department in excess of \$3000. Cheryl suggested we wait until Cara gets everything balanced and then decide what to do about Sandi's bill.

Rob Longo has suggested that we give up doing the billing and let him do it. He will handle everything except for receipt of payments. The cost per quarter would be \$1044 for 290 customers and \$1080 for 300 customers. That computes to \$3.60 per bill. It would be a one-year contract. The bookkeeper would have to provide him with information on any property transfers. Althea will have to download the meter readings into the computer after Bob reads the meters. All information would still be available to us in the computer. The commissioners thought it was a great idea. Cara would like to wait until next quarter because she is very knowledgeable with the system and can do it quickly. Pam thought we should ask Rob for a multi-year contract.

** The commissioners reviewed and signed the monthly manifest.

** Cara is almost done with the 2020 actual expenditures/receipts and will enter them in the DRA portal.

** Pam said she emailed Sandi and asked her if an audit was really being done but received no reply. Cara said she would call the three professional auditing firms that she knows and ask them if we have an audit in process. Rich commented that it's important that we know that all accounts balance. Pam seemed pretty sure that everything is OK. We need to find out if Sandi has a precinct credit card in her possession. This whole situation is a BIG problem. Very poor accounting practices have been used with no receipts to back up expenditures.

Another problem that surfaced was that buildings with sprinkler systems were not billed and Cara asked if she should bill them now. The commissioners decided to have her bill and see what happens.

** Cara suggested getting a cell phone for the precinct so there would be a dedicated number that customers could call with questions or problems. She'll do some research.

** Pam assumes that Sandi still has all of the files for 2012 – 2015 and we need them Rich said he would contact her.

** Pam and Bob will take care of filling out the USDA forms.

Water department – Bob Fagnant

** Bob said that he has six radios to replace plus he has the water meter for Hatchland.

Other –

There was no further discussion and Rich made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:18 PM. Dennis seconded the motion and the commissioners approved it. The next meeting will be on April 20, 2021 at 5:30 PM at the North Haverhill fire station. (Would you like to meet at the Methodist church if I can get the OK? Brighter, warmer, bathrooms.)

Respectfully submitted,
John. E. Page, Clerk