



Water and Sewer Advisory Committee June 9, 2022 Meeting Minutes – DRAFT

The Water and Sewer Advisory Committee held its regular monthly meeting at BCTV, 10 Meetinghouse Road, Bedford, NH on Thursday, June 9, 2022.

Attendees: Richard Moore (resident), Mike Sills (Resident), Jerome Spooner (Environmental Coordinator), Danielle Evansic (resident), Becky Hebert (Planning Director), Bill Duschatko (Town Council), Scott Bourcier (resident), Phil Greazzo (Town Councilor – alternate).

1. **Call to Order and Roll Call**

The meeting was called to order at 7:47am by acting chairperson Environmental Coordinator Jerome Spooner.

2. **Approval of Minutes – May 12, 2022 Meeting**

Mr. Spooner made a motion to approve the minutes from the last meeting on May 12, 2022. The decision was made to accept two minor changes identified by Mr. Moore and to move forward with approving the minutes as amended. Mr. Spooner made a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Sills. Minutes were approved.

3. **Vote Committee Chair**

Mr. Spooner explains that he found there were no bylaws for the committee. There was discussion about how the committee was formed in 2002. Original members included the Town Manager, Director of Public Works, Environmental Coordinator, Planning Department, and two residents. Currently there are four residents, a Town Council Member, a Town Council Alternate, Environmental Coordinator, and Planning Director. Mr. Spooner proposed that the committee creates bylaws or have a motion to appoint a Chair that is a nonemployee of the Town.

Mr. Sills asked what the bylaws would say.

Mr. Spooner responded that the committee can write up the bylaws and there are other committees that have bylaws they can use as well.

Mr. Sills responded that there should be no bylaws and the Chairman should manage the committee.

Mr. Spooner responded that he does not think the Chairperson should be a Town employee and that it should be a Bedford resident.

Mr. Moore explained that there are advantages to having a Town employee as the Chair because the person would be more in tune with all of the issues as they arise and could then bring it to the committee. Mr. Moore also explained that he does not think the committee needs bylaws because they are an advisory committee.

Mr. Duschatko asked if they are technically a sub committee of the Town Council.

Mr. Spooner responded yes.

Mr. Duschatko responded that they do not need bylaws.

Mr. Spooner continued by asking if any of the members agree or disagree with having a Town employee as a Chairman.

Mr. Duschatko responded that a Town employee should be the Chairman because it is technical and the other members of the Committee would not know a lot of the updated information like Mr. Spooner would.

Mr. Spooner asked if any of the resident would want to volunteer.

Ms. Hebert explained that there are advantages and disadvantages to having Town Staff be serving in the Chair position. Thinking back to the discussion regarding the extension of the sewer district around the BVI, it is helpful having a Bedford resident leading that discussion and have staff serve more as a support role from a technical standpoint. Other Land Use Boards who are permit granting have bylaws but staff have a clear role. An advantage to having a Bedford resident would be that residency holds a lot of weight with other citizens in Town and may be an advantage to the Council and the Committee if staff have a more technical advisory role.

Mr. Greazzo asked if Mr. Spooner would still be on the Committee.

Mr. Spooner responded yes, just not as a Chairman role. Mr. Spooner would still help the chairman prepare the meetings and get the documents needed but would be more of a support to the Chair and Committee.

Mr. Greazzo asked if any of the four residents would like to be Chair.

Mr. Moore explains that he agrees with Ms. Hebert, if there is a discussion that is more sensitive that a Town employee should not be leading he understands that. Mr. Moore also explains that he would be willing to do it but he would want a lot of input in terms of agenda items.

Ms. Herbert responds that if Mr. Moore took on the role as Chair of the Committee his role would be to sit at the head of the horseshoe and lead the meetings but Mr. Spooner's would still distribute documents to the Committee and be the point person for communication from the Department of Public Works.

Mr. Spooner responded that Ms. Hebert is correct. Before Paul Arnold stepped down Mr. Spooner would have discussion with him prior to the meeting to lead him in setting up the agenda and how to proceed during the meeting and send him the supporting documents as well.

Mr. Spooner asked Mr. Moore if he will take on the role.

Mr. Moore responded yes, starting next meeting.

Mr. Greazzo nominated Mr. Moore as Chair of the Water and Sewer Advisory Committee. Mr. Sills seconded the motion. All approved.

4. **Sewer Rate Discussion (Pennichuck & Flat Rate)**

Mr. Spooner started the discussion about the flat rate fees from Pennichuck Water Works. During the last meeting the Committee voted for Option 4 with a discussion to see if the Town can disband the flat rate fee from Pennichuck. Mr. Spooner explains that he and Ms. Mulrooney from the Finance Department spoke with Pennichuck about how they charge their fees. Every house in the Greenfield Parkway area (250 houses) is metered and Pennichuck can send the Town the spreadsheet to show the flow for each house but the problem is when residents have irrigation. 80-85% of the house in Greenfield Parkway have irrigation. Mr. Spooner explains that the problem with that is that Pennichuck does not supply deduct meters and they will not read them. That would mean that the Town would have to hire someone to read the meters for all of the houses or they can keep the flat rate. Another option is a volumetric reading in the summer time. In the fourth quarter of the last year and the first quarter of the following year the Town can take those readings and prorate the readings for the second and third quarter.

Mr. Sills asked if residents have meters.

Mr. Spooner responded yes, the Town charges volumetric through Manchester Water Works. All individual houses are metered. Pennichuck will not read the deducts meters if the house has irrigation. Mr. Spooner recommends staying with the flat rate.

Mr. Sills responds that it could be treated like a pump station, it is just another piece of infrastructure in the Town's sewer system.

Mr. Spooner asked if anyone has any other questions.

Mr. Moore responded if the Town had the actual volume that each house uses and we know the rate that Manchester charges, is there a delivery fee tacked onto it.

Mr. Spooner explained that Pennichuck reads the meters not the Town of Merrimack, Pennichuck is a separate entity.

Mr. Moore responded that they are estimating how much sewer waste is sent to the treatment plant based on how much water is used at each house and there is a certain charge per volume that the treatment plant charges and that is what is being passed on to the rest of the Bedford residents. Mr. Moore asked if Merrimack charges anything.

Mr. Spooner responded that Merrimack charges the Town of Bedford a flat rate fee. Bedford pays Merrimack and Manchester separately based on the flow going to each of the treatment plants.

Mr. Moore asked if Merrimack has their own treatment facility.

Mr. Spooner responded yes, all of the waste from Greenfield Parkway flows to the Pearson Road pump station which then flows to Merrimack's treatment plant. Merrimack charges Bedford a flat rate fee plus a percentage of the cost for upgrades to their treatment plant and 90% of the cost for maintenance to the Pearson Road pump station.

Ms. Evansic asked if they are having this discussion because there is perceived inequity with the flat rate vs. the people who are metered.

Mr. Spooner responded Mr. Moore was saying can the Town charge everyone volumetric and get rid of the flat rate fee. Mr. Spooner explains that Pennichuck doesn't read the deduct meters which is a problem because when residents irrigate their lawn they cannot be charged for that.

Ms. Evansic responded that she prefers option 3, when the 4th and 1st quarter and prorate it because it seems more equitable than a flat rate fee.

Ms. Herbert asked if there are other residential homes that have irrigation that are currently not benefiting from the deduct meter.

Mr. Spooner responded no, residents with a deduct meter are serviced by Manchester Water Works. Manchester reads the meters and sends the Town a printout quarterly the we read.

Mr. Sills responded that sewer used to be charged a percentage of the water reading and asked why the reading from watering the lawn is subtracted.

Mr. Spooner explained that the water used to water the lawn does not go into the sewer system and residents should not be charged for that.

Mr. Sills stated that not all of the water being used inside a home is sent into the sewer system and that concept is already factored into the bills now when the 8-9% is taken out of the water bill to charge the sewer bill.

Mr. Spooner explained that most deduct meters are hooked to the outside spicket. When water is being used from the outside spicket the usage is taken off the main meter charge.

Mr. Duschatko responded that the committee should look at the spreadsheets over the past year and see what the consumptions are, he does not think he will see a huge consumption change.

Mr. Sill asked if someone has to read both meters and if the deduct meter is connected to the outside faucet.

Mr. Spooner responded yes, most are.

Mr. Sill briefly discussed the idea to not take out all of the deduct meters for residential users.

Ms. Evansic asked if they provide quarterly date of individual uses of their water meters.

Mr. Spooner responded yes, Manchester does.

Ms. Evansic asked if Mr. Spooner can run an analysis to see how much the users water increases in the summer to see if it is an issue. The committee is having a debate to go flat rate or metered and irrigation being a big issue but they do not know how big of an issue it actually is.

Mr. Spooner responded that the flat rate only effects the residents on Greenfield Parkway because Pennicuck does not read deduct meters. Mr. Spooner explains he cannot run an analysis of the houses in Geenfield Parkway because none of the users have a deduct meter, only Manchester users do.

Mr. Duschatko responded to forget about the deduct meter and to just look at the growth the summer time to the winter for Pennichuck users.

Mr. Sills asked if the Town still has a large fee for new connections including apartment buildings.

Mr. Spooner responded yes, any new connection is charged an accessibility fee.

Mr. Spooner continued by explaining that he will run the reports for next meeting.

Ms. Hebert asked if Mr. Spooner could also compare what the flat rate is to a standard house in Greenfield Farms to see if they are being charged equitably.

5. **Sewer Map – Existing & Future Sewer Connections**

Mr. Spooner started the discussion to show the existing and future sewer areas. Mr. Spooner briefly went through the map to show the existing sewer that flow to Manchester and Merrimack and then also showed the future sewer locations.

The future plan is to add sewer to the Donald Street/Boynton street areas, Route 101, and Sandy Pond Parkway/Sebbins Pond area. There are dry lines in on Route 101 from Wallace towards Merrimack.

Ms. Hebert asked if the map can be updated to show more recent sewer hookups including: the Bedford Village Shops, the Assisted Living Facility on Old Bedford Road, and the future Bow Lane apartment.

Mr. Spooner responded yes, those will be added. The priority for the Town is Sebbins Pond and Sandy Pond Parkway because the pond is over the total daily maximum limit for phosphorus and it is on the state's impaired water quality list for PH. Currently, the Town is looking a few different options on how to run sewer through the area with Hoyle, Tanner & Associates.

Mr. Trainque explains that an application was submitted for a federal congressionally directed spending request that went through senator Shahan's office and a preapplication was submitted to NHDES for the Clean Water State Revolving Fund Loan.

Ms. Evansic asked if the area shown on the map is established based on the water shed that is draining into Sebbins Pond or how the Town would lay the sewer pipes and who would be affected.

Mr. Trainque responded that is it primarily based on typography.

Ms. Evansic asked the sewer connection area could expand based on how the Town is planning to lay out the pipes.

Mr. Trainque responded possibly.

Mr. Moore asked if the purpose of the green around Sebbins Pond is to protect the pond and the purpose of the green around Route 101 is because it may be developed commercially.

Mr. Spooner responded yes.

Mr. Moore asked if they can explain the purpose of the green area near Boynton Street.

Mr. Spooner explained that there is some existing sewer on Constance street and Palomino Lane and there is a chance of residents wanting to connect or a commercial developer wanting to expand the area. These are possible future flows, it was looked at to see what could be connected.

Ms. Hebert asked if Market Basket is on sewer.

Mr. Spooner responded yes, there is a lot of stuff that needs to be shaded.

Mr. Greazzo asked how the Market Basket is connected because they are so far away from a serviced area.

Mr. Trainque responded that they have their own pump station and 5,000ft force main that goes to Route 101.

Ms. Hebert asked if Memorial School is connected.

Mr. Spooner responded no, but they can be.

Mr. Duschatko asked if the green areas can be cut back so it no longer covers areas like the power lines and cemetery and becomes more focused on areas that I would actually be used.

Ms. Evansic responded that it may also be useful to add a different color for priority areas.

Mr. Spooner continued to show the Committee different areas on the map and locations of the pump stations.

Mr. Sills asked if residents that are not connected to sewer are charged a fee for sewer.

Mr. Spooner responded no, only the users are charged.

5. **Set Next Meeting Date**

Mr. Spooner set the date to July 14, 2022 at 7:45am.

Mr. Duschatko asked if the Committee will discuss the pending water line proposals. Mr. Duschatko also asked Mr. Foote (Director of Public Works) if there is anything the Committee should be aware of regarding proposed water extensions.

Mr. Foote responded that municipal water will be extended from Bell Hill Road down to the primary facility where Harvest Market used to be located because of a PFAS issue and it will also go to Wallace Road for a future connection along Route 101. The Town applied for a grant and we should be receiving funds for that project late this year or next year.

Mr. Foote also responded to the discussion regarding the flat rate fee for Pennichuck users. He said if the Committee is discussing equity the Town should be charging for the amount of water that is being purchased and let the owner pay the cost for the deduct meter and any transaction costs the Town may have to get there if they want to have irrigation. Mr. Foote also said that the Committee needs to consider the number of people living in each household.

Mr. Evansic asked if there are maps for the water system and if the Committee can look at them during the next meeting.

Mr. Spooner responded yes, there are maps for both Manchester and Pennichuck.

Mr. Sills stated that Mr. Spooner and the Department of Public Works have been very aggressive about acquiring grant money.

Mr. Sills made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:36am. Mr. Duschatko second the motion.