

MINUTES OF PUBLIC WORKS & ENVIRONMENT  
COMMITTEE MEETING  
EXECUTIVE CONFERENCE ROOM

December 5, 2016 – 6:15 P.M.

Committee Members Present:                      Councilor Dale Sprague, Chair  
   Councilor David Witham  
   Councilor Denis Messier  
   Councilor Jennifer G. Soldati

Staff Present:                                        Bob Belmore, City Manager  
   Scott Smith, Finance Director  
   Mike Bobinsky, Dir. of PW & Util.  
   Trish Harris, City Clerk

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*Chairman Sprague called the meeting to order at 6:14pm.*

APPROVE PAST MEETING MINUTES

Councilor Messier, Seconded by Councilor Witham, made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 26, 2016 meeting. The motion passed, 4-0.

SEWER ORDINANCE – CHANGE OF USE

When formulating the ordinance, staff incorporated what the finance committee utilized when the finance committee abated the other 3 usages, Lydia house of hope and the two others. The plan is to use the state as necessary and the spreadsheet, and to authorize the finance committee to offer abatements. There is usually a time constraint, and going before full council is not always convenient.

Councilor Witham said when it gets to finance, it stills does slow down the process. The language allows City Staff to calculate the rate. The only time it will come to Finance is when they seek abatement.

Councilor Messier said he would like to see it go through professionals, an engineer firm, but he reviewed the fee process. It makes sense.

Councilor Witham said we have had 3 abatement requests, one after the other. This is the first time we have had an abatement request. These were 3 unique projects, but it forced us to look at the ordinance.

***Councilor Witham, seconded by Councilor Messier, made a motion to endorse the proposed change to the sewer ordinance. The motion passed unanimously.***

#### SEWER/WATER UTILITY RATES

City Manager Belmore said he shared with the Finance Committee the water and sewer rates of Dover, Rochester and Portsmouth.

Finance Director Smith explained the charts which reflect the current rate, projected out based on what is on the capital improvements program.

After meeting with Finance, they expressed a concern that as we project out, in a few years we don't want to look at huge increases, but would rather incremental increases.

Councilor Messier said he agrees with the incremental increases. He doesn't like the parenthesis (negative balances on the spreadsheet). We need to look at the rates every few years, and as we do a road, we need to do complete streets.

Councilor Sprague said it looks like PWE and Finance Committees are in agreement with the smaller incremental increases.

Councilor Soldati asked what the average fluctuation has been. Finance Director Smith said it has been up and down; it is related to weather, dry summers lead to more consumption.

No action needed; just an update.

#### LOWER GREAT FALLS HYDROELECTRIC DAM FERC LICENSE

City Manager Belmore asked if any more information was needed and where the committee would like staff to go with this. They are looking for a letter from the City to authorize them to move forward in regards to licensing.

***Councilor Messier, seconded by Councilor Witham, made motion to authorize the City Manager to draft a letter authorizing Somersworth Hydro Company, Inc. to move forward with licensing, similar to the letter sent by Rollinsford. The motion passed unanimously, 4-0.***

#### MISCELLANEOUS

Councilor Messier said he had 3 things.

Lampry Regional Coop, amount of money for closure is the same.

Blackwater Road Pump Station, what is the timeline. Director Bobinsky replied that it is in final review with DES.

Wright Pierce, on the wastewater plant; Lindsey is a good person for that project. We are doing well.

ADJOURNMENT

*Councilor Witham, seconded by Councilor Messier, made a motion to adjourn. The motion passed, 3-0, and the meeting was adjourned at 6:33 pm.*

Respectfully submitted,

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Trish Harris, City Clerk