

Water Board Meeting 8.9.21

Present: Jim Slawinski, Tom Cleland, Devon DeMarco, Scott Kingan, Dave Snyder, Mark Juszczak

Ended July about +\$19,000. Billing had just started trickling in. WD tracking favorably with budget.

Grant application: grant gives preference to towns that have matching dollars. Karen Tallian called to let them know that we do have some matching funds available in the form of ARP money, which should help our chances. Likely will be end of the month for decision. ARP dollars are limited though, so if we do not get the grant the town will need to assess where best to use ARP dollars.

Positions within the water board: we will stay “water board directors” until the end of the year and then reassess whether we need specific roles, i.e., president, secretary, etc.

A number of people have called about their bills being high. Mark will go out and recheck meters to make there isn't an issue and do some cursory troubleshooting. For instance, one was identified as an overactive irrigation system. People have been responding favorably to the rechecks; they understand the bill reflects actual usage. There seems to have been a number of properties getting estimated bills in the past which might account for the surprise when the actual usage is billed.

Backflow updates: test reports are in, only missing 2 or 3. Confirmed that they have been tested and are approved, Julia is just waiting from two companies. We no longer use BSI. We have all the data we needed previously without using BSI. We will send a reminder in April 2022 to everyone to remind them to have it tested.

USIC bill: Tom is working on checking in the call-in tickets. Many of the call-ins coincide with the work on route 12. Work for Dune Harbor is on our billing. Tom has requested 75 sheets of call-ins so he can validate who called in and make sure we don't pay for the route 12 project.

Julia got a notice that we were late on the EPA report. Tom is on it and it's straightened out for the time being. The water dept was also late with this report in 2019 and 2020. It needs to be published by July 1 each year.

We will submit the proposed ordinance change to the TC regarding deleting the paragraph that allows landlords to let tenants be the only ones on the water account. This paragraph makes it difficult (if not impossible) for the water dept to collect on past due accounts on rented properties since there is no way to put a lien on the property for nonpayment. There is no benefit to the town to justify keeping this on the books. The homeowner should be on the account and they can work it into their leases to make the tenant responsible for the water bill.

Fire Hydrant Flushing, inspection and any required maintenance will start this month with the goal of having all 65+ hydrants complete and inspection results documented by the end of the year.

Water rate increase: we need to have something finalized by town council sometime in September to have something in place fourth quarter in order to have revenues start coming in by January. Scott pointed out that there is also the overall budget deadline to consider.

There are some meters that are buried deep in the ground. That will be something that can be measured with the next meter reading. Estimates for replacing the deeply buried meters is about \$5,000 each for excavation. Mark estimates that about 10% of the meters are deep. This could double the estimated cost of replacing the meters. The meters that have already been replaced are mostly the ones in flatter areas which would not have this problem.

In terms of the rate increase, we need to decide how much will be adjusted to the water and how much will be adjusted to appurtenances. Jim moved to present at town council a rate increase of 50% for water and 25% for all other. The Baker Tilly report said a rate increase of 55% was necessary to get the water department's finances healthy again. Currently our capital investment account is dry, it needs to be replenished. We are aiming to present the rate increase at the next TC meeting in August.