

**Joint Meeting of the Water & Sewer Commission
And the Electric Utility Commission
Meeting Minutes, August 7, 2023**

Roll Call: Steve Fitzhugh, Dennis Donahue, Charlie Morse, John Stevens (absent).
Others present: Town Manager Jeff Schulz, Utility Superintendent Jim Russo, Martha Mahan.

The meeting started at 6:30 PM.

Minutes from Previous Meeting

Motion by Charlie Morse, second by Steve Fitzhugh, to approve the minutes of the June 5, 2023, meeting. **The motion was approved 3-0.**

Meeting of Water and Sewer Commission

Martha Mahan, MJM Properties: Freight Yard Way Request to Upgrade Waterline

Jeff Schulz stated that Martha Mahan submitted a letter to the Select Board seeking funds for the replacement of the six-inch water line on Freight Yard Way.

Martha Mahan met with the Select Board to discuss the request and the Board is now again referring the request to the Utility Commission based on an interpretation that the Water Department owns the water line.

Jeff noted that CV properties granted the Village of Northfield easements for the installation, maintenance, upkeep and repair of water, sewer, and electric utilities on the property. The existing water line on the property is located within the easement, is six inches in diameter and is 990 feet in length. Based upon the age of the water line there is no actual document stating that the Water Department or Village officially accepted ownership of the line. However, it is very likely that the Water Department installed the line when the overall water system was built in the 1900s. In addition, based on conversations with former Utility Superintendent, Pat Demasi and current Utility Superintendent, Jim Russo past Utility Superintendents generally considered the line as being owned by the Water Department. Further, Jim Russo noted that during his 25 years with the Town, the Water Department has changed a valve on the system and flush the hydrants annually to ensure no back flow of bacteria into the water system. Based on the above, and by default, my thought is that the Water Department owns the line. Attorney Mick Leddy agrees that the Water Department owns the line.

Next, Martha Mahan thanked the Select Board and the Manager for acknowledging/ accepting ownership of the water line, and that she doesn't have anything to add other than answering questions.

Next, Charlie Morse stated that there is no need to upgrade the current water line to provide firefighting protection to serve the existing uses on this property because there is adequate water service on Wall Street. Charlie added the Water Department should replace the water line with a larger line to accommodate future uses and use ARPA funds to pay for the replacement.

Next, Dennis Donahue stated that the Utility or the Town should consider funding the request if there are current or solid future development plans on the property that would generate additional revenue for the Water Utility.

Steve Fitzhugh asked how far the waterline extends on the property and if it goes to the property line? Jim Russo noted that the line is about 1000 feet in length. Steve asked if the old line would be removed after the new line installed. Jim Russo stated that the old line would be left in place and capped. Martha Mahan suggested moving the water line to the other side of the carwash building. Dennis Donahue asked if the line water was relocated whether would there be a need to extinguish the old water line easement.

Next, Steve Fitzhugh stated that there three easements on the property including easements for sewer and electric. Martha Mahan stated that the sewer line is a Town line and that they connected a new sewer line into the Town line. Also, they put in new electric poles and some underground electric.

Steve Fitzhugh added that the electric poles in the floodplain on the adjoining Town need to be relocated out of the flood plain, and Northfield Electric wants to relocate the poles within its electric easement on Martha's property. Martha stated that before considering the relocation of the poles on to their property they will need to see a proposed plan.

Charlie Morse added that all involved should get together and discuss the relocation of the poles. Steve added that he will work with GMP and a consultant VHB to develop a pole relocation plan and will provide it to Murtha.

Dennis Donahue noted that a development plan should be prepared prior to the Water Department investing in the upgrade of line, and a determination of where the new water line should be located.

goes added that the Utility Commission does not currently have the funds in a CIP to fund the project. However, if future development plans on the property where to generate a reasonable amount of revenue, the Utility Commission stated that it may want to bond for the project.

Electric Commission

Project Update

Steve Fitzhugh gave an update on the following projects.

VPPSA

1. mid-July: Board met with VELCO regarding their collection of utility data. VELCO was asked about their long-term plan for using the data.
2. Strategic plan: Four major themes: Technology (including cyber); Centralization of service offerings; VPPSA workforce organization to support member needs; grant management
3. Mystic contract: NED YTD power cost variance = \$78,838; YTD Mystic variance = \$96,024; NED YTD net variance (w/o Mystic) = -\$17, 185.
4. VPPSA Staff is tracking the following with the DPS:
 - i. Changes to Rule 5.100 on net metering
 - ii. Changes to Rule 5.400 on CPG (Title 30, Section 248)
 - iii. Clean Heat Standard
 - iv. Changes to Rule 5.500 on Interconnection Procedures and Energy Storage

NED

5. AMI: have signed contract from Aclara; finalizing grant from the DPS; anticipate PO placed with Aclara in 1 - 2 months
6. Subtransmission realignment: need easement from MJM
7. Terry Hill / Turkey Hill: awaiting outage data from GMP to assess economics of the upgrade projects and construction options
8. Capacitor banks: working on scope of work with GMP
9. Battery Storage: Delorean working on obtaining their CPG
10. Surveillance: awaiting schedule for VELCO fiber deployment
11. Bridge project: need schedule for East St paving for coordination.

Motion by Charlie Morse, second by Dennis Donahue to adjourn the Joint Meeting of the Electric and the Water/Sewer Commission. **Motion passed 3-0.**

Jeff Schulz, Town Manager