

WATER AND SEWER BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
December 17, 2024

In-Person: Noah Bond, Heather McElroy, Mark Vaillencourt, Bruce Webster, William Linkovich, Mandy Violette

Attending Virtually: Mike Strait, Joel Cope, Unidentified Person (Muted)

Call Meeting to Order: Heather McElroy called the meeting to order at 5:31pm.

Updates to the Agenda: Executive Session is not required.

Public Comment: William Linkovich told the Board he was new to town and wanted to see how the local government worked. He also mentioned he felt his water bill seemed high. He owns the former Kingdom Grille building with restaurant space and two apartments. He says he is being charged for four units, instead of three. Mike Strait said he is currently charged for two units in the MuniBilling system. This will be adjusted to three. The Board explained usage allowances and the billing process.

WWTF Project Update: Mike Strait told the Board that the Town has signed the ESA to rebid the wastewater treatment facility project, which came in at \$2million over anticipated. This adds an additional \$26,000 to the engineering costs, but the Town did receive a credit for \$3000 due to overbilling the previous month.

Water Treatment Project Update: Mike Strait told the Board that the Town applied for a grant for the reservoir repairs (30,000 gallon/day leak from South Reservoir). Relining the reservoir is part of the overall Water Treatment Facility project, but must be done as soon as possible to address the significant leak.

Acceptable Payment Plan: Heather McElroy spoke about the issue of overdue/delinquent accounts and the need for acceptable payment plans. She recommends that payment amounts allow customers to stay current and address delinquencies (10% of past due amount each month) so they are caught up in 12 months. Heather recommends that customers who cannot adhere to terms be shut off after a period of two or three months.

Mike Strait said that this may not be feasible for exceptionally large bills (i.e. over \$1000). Mark Vaillencourt said that customers owing more than \$1000 could approach the Board to negotiate an acceptable payment plan. Noah Bond said that MuniBilling has an auto-payment feature which could be helpful in this process. Heather said that the Board had previously been inconsistent in disconnecting delinquent customers but this needs to change.

Mark Vaillencourt made a motion to implement a system for past due accounts of up to \$1000 whereby customers are charged their current usage rate plus 1/12 of their past due amount. If timely payments are made, interest is waived. If a payment is missed, an interest rate of 1% will

be assessed going forward. If more than \$1000 is owed, the customer will go to the Water/Sewer Board to discuss their account in executive session. Seconded by Bruce Webster. All in favor; motion carried.

Bill Status Update: Mike Strait advised the Board that the revised bills have been sent out, correcting the errors made in last quarter's cycle. Noah Bond also said that he is working with H2O Innovation and MuniBilling concerning an issue with new meters. They do not appear to be pulling the correct data for both water and sewer.

The new billing cycle did have errors. Some customers are being charged for only debt service, for example. Noah is working with MuniBilling on these issues as well. The Board will be meeting with MuniBilling and Noah bi-weekly or weekly, starting in January, until this is resolved.

Budget Report: Mike Strait presented a draft version of the water budget for 2025. His projections went out five years to anticipate the large loan repayments that Town will make for water/sewer upgrades/repairs, starting in 2027. Notable expenses include \$25,000 towards Admin Support to compensate Mike and Joel Cope; single audit costs for at least the next five years as the Town goes through these large projects; Lakeshore Drive bond payment; and plant operations. The Board will continue budget discussions at future meetings.

Other Business: Noah will talk to Rodger at H2O Innovations regarding when new meters will be installed and online.

Approve Minutes of Previous Meeting: Bruce Webster moved to approve the minutes from the previous meeting. Seconded by Heather McElroy. All in favor; motion carried.

Executive Session: Not needed.

Adjourn: Mark Vaillencourt made a motion to adjourn at 7:21pm. Seconded by Bruce Webster. All in favor; motion carried.