

Allan Kent
Chairman



Dean D'Alessandro
Kevin Rudden

TOWN OF MENDON WATER COMMISSION

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DEP Public Water Supply (PWS) ID #217900

mendonma.gov/water

Meeting Date: 1/12/17

Meeting Location: Old Taft Library

18 Main St, Mendon, MA

Minutes Approved: 2/23/2017

Members Present: Allan Kent, Dean D'Alessandro, Kevin Rudden

Water Clerk: Dan Byer

Others: none

The meeting was called to order at 7pm.

Dean made a motion to approve the minutes of 8/3/16, 8/24/16, and 11/30/16. Kevin seconded and all approved.

The commission discussed the water meter upgrades. Dan explained he can send the letter to only those with the old meters. Kevin send out a draft letter. All agree the replacements need to be done ASAP. Dan will send the letters out.

Dan explained some upgrades that are needed to the Public Water Supplies in Town. Tim Watson notified us the DEP will be performing a Sanitary Survey and we need to make some repairs to be in compliance. We need to install special well caps on the wells at the Town Hall, Senior Center, and Park. These caps include an air vent. The Town Hall well just needs the vent but the Senior Center and Park need the complete cap. The estimate is \$750-1,000. Dean explained they recently had to do the same upgrade at the Housing Authority. Kevin says we need to do this to ensure compliance. Allan asked about funding. Dan said we have \$5,000 in the maintenance account.

The commission discussed the contract with the certified water operator. Kevin explained he will contact Tim to ensure we have an updated copy. Allan said he met with Kim and she would like to meet with us to discuss options. Allan also suggests we look into outsourcing management of our system. He has spoken with a company that may be an option. Kevin and Allan both have had conversations with Bellingham and they may be interested in working with us as well. Dean said he has concerns that Tim may be subbing out our work. These

management companies would handle all the work for us. The commission agreed we need to explore options before making any decisions.

Dan discussed issues with the KVS billing software. He is going to need to set up training in order to create the bills. He is concerned that we are not utilizing all the available features in the system. Dan has done some research and determined that we are stuck with KVS for now as the Collector's office needs it to collect the bills. The cost for the training will be \$150 an hour with an estimate of 4-8 hours, totaling around \$1,200. He met with Kim and she suggested the Water Commission pay for the training out of our maintenance acct. Kevin is concerned that we need to train more than one person in case we lose our clerk again. Dan explained that the new accountant, Lisa would also participate in the training. Previously Linda Hawkes was familiar with the utility billing program.

Kevin made a motion to approve the training not to exceed 8 hours, Dean seconded, and all approved.

The commission discussed delegating the authority to sign water bills and vouchers. Dan explained that there is a strict schedule and it would be better and faster if one person could sign the bills. Kevin explained the new Municipal Modernization Law allows a board or committee to designate one person to sign vouchers as long as they are reviewed at the next meeting. The commissioners discuss and feel this is not needed at this time. They agree that at least 2 of them should be around to sign whatever is needed.

The commission discussed the 2016 annual report. Dan has emailed out a draft and included some financial numbers. Kevin will review and email his edits ASAP.

The commission discussed the past due bill from Hopedale. Dan explained they have received an opinion from Town Counsel explaining that we do have to pay interest on the past due payments. Unfortunately, we did not ask for interest at the November Town Meeting and the interest that has accrued on the past due bills requires another town meeting vote. Right now, Hopedale is using our current payments to pay off the past due balances. This means we will be unable to pay off the past due principal without another town meeting vote. The commission discussed and agreed we should send a letter to the Hopedale Water Commission requesting they apply the \$28K payment to the past due principal first. This will enable us to pay off the remaining interest with our future payments. Dean says we should avoid another town meeting as it will cause bad PR for the commission and all agreed.

The commission discussed the proposed car wash/repair facility at 21 Cape Rd. Dan explained that he spoke with Tim Watson. They are aware they have to install a well for the car wash and have connected the auto facility to the Town Water. Kevin has spoken with Tim Aicardi and there was some confusion as to what was going on. They have not yet pulled a permit for the well. Tim W. will monitor them to ensure a well is installed.

The commission discussed connection fees for commercial. We do not have one since we generally don't have new commercial connections. Kevin explained there will be another request from Braza for their property on 140 and we should have something in place. Dean asked about what the fee would be and would it be fair across multiple commercial uses like a

restaurant vs a store. Dan suggests basing the fee off the DEP Title V Flow Rate. The commission agreed to place this discussion on the next meeting agenda.

The commission discussed Allan's Long Range plan. All agree it is good and ready to be distributed.

Kevin made a motion to approve the Water Commission's 5 year plan, Dean seconded and all approved.

Allan asked Dan to send it out to the Fincom, Planning Board, and Board of Selectmen.

The commission discussed several billing issues.

5 Parker Rd. – Dan explained his meter failed and was replaced. There was a billing error and he was then overbilled. Dan is recommending the commission abate the \$75 in late fees, 13¢ in interest, and \$57.06 in water charges

2 Dudley Rd – The customer contacted the commission because she was concerned she was being overbilled. Tim W. inspected and determined there were no leaks. A review of her account history showed her water usage was consistent with past history. The commission had told her we would waive late fees and interest while we investigated. Due to the departure of the previous water clerk, there was no follow up. Dan recommends the commission abate the \$75 in late fees and \$4.30 in interest. The customer has paid the water bill in full.

16 Dudley, 30 Cape, 62 Cape – All three of these customers complained they did not receive late notices. They paid their bills late and did not know because late notices were never sent out. Dan explained that payments made using online systems can be delayed up to a week or more. Normally we have sent out late notices 15 days past due informing customers. Because of the departure of the clerk, these notices were not sent. Dan recommends waiving the \$50 admin fees for these 3 customers. In addition, 30 Cape still needs to pay. The commission agreed to set a new due date of 1/31.

Kevin made a motion to approve the following abatements:

5 Parker: \$25 Late Fee, \$50 Admin Fee, \$5.06 Water, 13¢ interest

2 Dudley: \$25 Late Fee, \$50 Admin Fee, \$4.30 interest

16 Dudley, 30 Cape, 62 Cape: \$50 Admin Fee.

Dean seconded and all approved.

Dan discussed the issue with 3 Joseph Rd. There was a billing mistake and the bill was sent to the previous owner. They had requested a final reading in October, paid it and moved. However, the water bill for the new resident was forwarded to them and they paid it as well.

Dan suggests we refund her the money and send a bill to the new resident with a 30-day due date. Kevin agreed and said we legally owe them their money back. Dan also suggested they vote to abate the late fees and interest assuming the new resident pays within 30 days.

Kevin made a motion to refund the previous resident's payment and re-issue the bill to the new owner. Dean seconded and all approved.

Dan discussed an issue with the late notices. Current policy says we send out late notices when bills are 15 days past due. However, depending on the workload in the Treasurer/Collector's office, they are not always able to process all payments by the due date. This results in late notices being sent out with minimal notice. Dan suggests we change the time period to 30 days. The commission discussed and agreed to send out late notices with a 15-day due date from the date the notice is mailed. This will allow us flexibility to wait for the treasurer's office to process all payments.

The commission discussed the next steps to contact other towns to discuss water service. Dean thinks in the past things were not handled in a diplomatic manner and we need to tread lightly. The commission discussed our options with Milford, Bellingham, and Northbridge. Kevin suggests we put this topic on the next agenda for further discussion.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30.