

LINCOLN AD HOC WATER COMMITTEE

APPROVED

MEETING MINUTES

JANUARY 17, 2019 – 3:30PM

LINCOLN TOWN HALL - 148 MAIN STREET, LINCOLN, NH

Select Board Present: OJ Robinson and Tamra Ham.

Staff Present: Town Manager Burbank, Fire Chief Ron Beard, Public Works Director Nate Hadaway, and Water Plant Operator David Beaudin.

Ad Hoc Members Present: Mark Ehrman, John Hettinger, Dennis Ducharme, Joe Conn, and Rick Kelley.

Also Present: Chris Curran, and Budget Committee members Jack Daly and Cindy Lloyd .

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Robinson called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

The approval of the meeting minutes from the previous meeting was postponed until the next scheduled meeting.

II. GRANITE STATE RURAL WATER

OJ Robinson introduced Scott Klein of Granite State Rural Water Association (GSRW) and explained to him how the Ad Hoc Water Committee came about. OJ summarized some of the concerns of the committee (domestic water issues; distribution, fire flow, etc.) and explained that the town had installed water meters back in 1989. Those meters are now obsolete.

Dave Beaudin passed out a history of the discussions that have been held over the years regarding water metering and billing for water. The town has discussed charging for water for the past 20 years to no avail.

Scott Klein explained that GSRW is a non-profit organization that provides assistance to communities. GSRW will assist with all aspects of water and wastewater including technical, managerial, operational, project planning and financial assistance. Mr. Klein explained different rate structures used throughout the State. He noted that Lincoln has the most unusual funding mechanism in the State where the cost of water is included as a portion of the general tax fund

Mark Erhman stated that the town needs to consider the political aspects of charging for water. Does the town want to charge the long-time residents the same as second homeowners and businesses? He believes this could be a disincentive for young families to move here and senior residents from staying here. He added that it would be helpful to have demographic information when making determinations throughout this process. Residents that are at the bottom level of the economic chain should not be penalized. Discussion followed. Mr. Klein stated that he would recommend collecting water usage data for a year or so as a guide prior to setting a rate structure. Even so, a rate structure is something that has to be analyzed and fine-tuned for years to follow.

Mr. Klein stated that the average middle of the road single family household uses 120 gallons per day per connection. Jack Daly commented that a majority of residents he has spoken with are not in favor of installing meters when they hear the cost of such to be 1.5 million dollars. He recommends a conservation campaign by educating the townspeople on conservation techniques. He recommended an initial flat fee of \$100 per year for water use. He added that this money could be used to plan for the

immediate future (5-10 years out) for water and wastewater. Waivers of the annual fee for elderly and low-income families could be offered. The commercial users would obviously be charged differently.

Mr. Klein doesn't really recommend a flat fee because it is not just water usage that needs to be considered but the wear and tear on the system. Some companies could put a lot of wear and tear on the system more so than the single-family home. Discussion followed. Some agreed that it would not be prudent to charge a mobile home and a multi-million-dollar home the same rate. Also, some of the mansions in town use much less water than the full-time residences. John Hettinger added that another challenge is that there are many more visitors using water in town than full time residents, thus, the town must be careful how they bill for water. All agreed that metering would be an extremely useful tool for planning, not to mention it would prompt water conservation.

Nate Hadaway stated that a good example of water/sewer billing would be the monthly bill he paid for water while living in Concord for ten years. He received a monthly bill of \$25-30 for water/sewer. The bill never changed over the course of 10 years. He felt this was an affordable amount. Scott stated that this is a "normal" amount for a water bill and that the average annual water bill in the State of NH is \$450-\$550. The country's affordability model for water utilities is 1% of a median household income on an annual basis.

Rick Kelley pointed out that while reviewing the numbers that David provided, water usage went up 30% in every category over a two-year period which is quite substantial.

Town Manager Burbank stated that if we are going to meter water, we need to charge for water no matter what rate structure is adopted. Money is conservation. A discussion regarding options for rate structures ensued.

OJ stated that he has been pondering whether water meters (as opposed to other options: building a tank, fixing pipes, additional water sources, etc.) should be the first priority in spending 1.5 million dollars. He has come full circle in his belief that water metering is in fact the best priority for investing town funds as it will aid the town in conservation as well as reduce sewer usage. Moving forward in this direction should give the town more for the money.

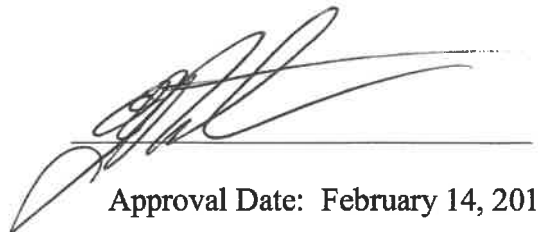
III. UPCOMING MEETING

The next meeting will be held on January 31st at 3:30pm.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:38 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Brook Rose



Approval Date: February 14, 2019

January 17, 2019
Ad Hoc Water Committee
Please PRINT Legibly

Chris Currah

(Print Name)

JOHN HETTINGER

SCOTT CLONG (GSRWA)

Joseph Connor

(Sign Name)

Joe Connor

SCG

Joe Connor

