



**CITY OF DOVER**

## DOVER UTILITIES COMMISSION - MINUTES

Meeting Type: Regular Meeting  
Meeting Location: 271 Mast Road, Dover, NH  
Meeting Date: **October 17, 2022**  
Meeting Time: **6:00 pm**

**Members Present:** Chairman Bret Carmichael, Vice Chairman Jay Stephens, Bob Berry, Otis Perry, Bill Davis

**Unexcused Members Absent:** Dennis Munson, Mark Moeller

**Unexcused Alternate Members Absent:** Gregory Bird

**Staff Present:** Michael Nadeau, Utilities Superintendent, Michael Banester, Utilities Foreman, Bill Purpura, Inventory Coordinator, Amelia DeGrace, Asst. City Engineer, Nancy Usbelger, Recording Secretary

### 1. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m.

### 2. User's Forum - None

### 3. Approval of Minutes of September 19, 2022

**Motion:** Perry made the motion to approve the minutes, Stephens seconded.

**Discussion:**

**Vote:** U/a

### 4. Abatement Requests

#### A. 1-3 Mechanic Street

Zachary Corbett explained he owns a four-unit residential apartment building, which he lives in one of the units. From Dec. 11<sup>th</sup> till around Dec. 16<sup>th</sup> about 16 units of usage was used which is an absorbent amount. He shared that he had back surgery, so he was home and didn't leave the building. There were no leaks or running toilets. He did have plumbers over to investigate as well as the City who installed a new meter. His biggest concern is what about the next bill? Nothing has been found as a problem. His usage for four years has been the same, but now there is a gap.

Nadeau stated he printed up the entire invoice by hour. On Jan. 18<sup>th</sup> starting at 3:00 pm till Jan. 23<sup>rd</sup> till 1 pm it was averaging 300 gal per hr. Within the short time span we sent meter guys out to look for the leak but by that time the leak had already stopped. Couldn't find out where the leak was coming from or what the source was.

Carmichael asked how is that possible?

Nadeau stated it was like 300 gallons an hour for a short time span which is about a little more than a toilet leaking. Its like 5 gallons a minute. We were going off of what went through the meter other than that we have no idea why there was such high usage.

Corbett asked if the meter could be faulty.

Nadeau stated it's a brand-new badger meter. It's been reading perfectly before and after.

Corbett stated he was told by the City originally that this new meter would alert them if there was some sort of leak or issue that looked to be out of the ordinary of water and sewer usage. He just can understand where the 300 gallons of water was coming from, that is a lot of water?



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Stephens said he can sympathize to the situation however, there was a sudden start and sudden end to the water usage. The water went in and don't know where it came out.

**Motion:** Stephens made the motion to deny, Perry Seconded.

**Discussion:**

**Vote:** 3/2

Perry stated we have relied on quarterly reading, even though this seems very unusual, the only thing he can think of is a toilet was running and nobody realized it.

Corbett asked if we could do the math out on that, because he is a tradesman not a plumber but does have knowledgeable about the system. This was Dover's sales pitch was he would have been alerted if there was a leak. He is frustrated with how the billing and system works.

Perry stated that the only thing he can think of is there was a toilet running. He letting him know we are trying to make it work with new technology.

Reddy stated that he doesn't think Corbett is alone. That the bills are 70 times higher. He understands what the board is saying but there is no statistical proof why it is happening. He feels the board should take a vote.

Berry stated that we usually just listen and let one resident requesting for an abatement to speak at time. The meeting is getting out of hand. He didn't have enough time to review the information.

Corbett stated that he was interrupted. And wants to know if this is a recording that he can get.

Carmichael stated yes, it is being recorded. He stated that he was inclined to give some relief and the reason is we have some accountability to provide.

Otis confirmed he would get half of what is to be abated.

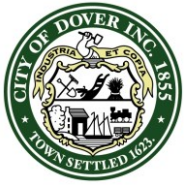
**Motion:** Carmichael made the motion to amend the first motion and grant \$350 which is half the amount of what was request, Berry seconded.

**Vote:** 3/2

Corbett stated that his biggest fear is waking up to another one of these bills. He doesn't know where the water came in and where the water went, nobody does. How will I know it won't happen again?

Carmichael stated he does not have an answer and asked if Nadeau could offer any comments on the issue?

Nadeau stated the public is waiting on IT and Badger Meter to get it up and running.



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**B. 5 Lowell Avenue – John Mitchell**

Not present, refer to next meeting.

**Motion:** Perry made a motion to refer it to the next meeting, Carmichael seconded.

**Vote:** U/a

**C. 61 Crown Point Drive – Carol Chellman**

Not present, refer to next meeting

**Motion:** Perry made a motion to refer it to the next meeting, Carmichael seconded.

**Vote:** U/a

**D. 28-30 Second Street – Anji Reddy**

Reddy stated he had a new meter installed on and around May 6, 2021. He owns an apartment building for about 10 years and the reading came out about 680 units consumption. He sent their plumber and they could find anything. It was a shock. Nadeau came in this past September and observed there was some dripping from the pipe. He brought the plumber back and Nadeau showed him, and then he fixed it. Average 30 gallons now.

Perry questions Reddy that after Nadeau came and found the leak is that when the bill started to go down? He questioned Nadeau if the old meter tested faulty.

Nadeau said they tested the old meter and it tested fine.

Perry asked if they tested the new meter?

Nadeau stated they did not test the new meter.

Purpura stated that the new meters are factory tested.

Perry stated that maybe we should test the new meters ourselves as well because something like this doesn't make sense.

Nadeau explained they can't test the new meters, they have to be sent back to the factory to be tested again.

Perry feels that he should be granted a sewer abatement, but not sure how to figure that out. He needs more information before we can decision.

Nadeau stated he had a leak since February and the new meter was installed in June of 2021.

Reddy stated that's when the readings started to spike. The old meter was reading less than the new meter.



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Nadeau said the readings started to go up and down all of a sudden and that's what prompted the City to go out and check for a leak. The utility meters crew have been to the address several time as well as Purpura out of concern to try to figure out where the leak was coming from. He doesn't want any resident to use as much water as they have or rack up such a high bill as they have. He is abating two quarters of bills because it's been going on for quite a while. In July 2021 they were using 32,000 gallons a month, August 35,000 gallons, September 37,000 gallons, October 40,000 gallons, November 36,000, December 26,000 all during the time of the utility crew trying to figure out where the leak was going. The usage in January 2022 was 37,000 gallons, February 78,000 gallons, March 88,000, April 90,000, May 123,000 gallons, June 134,000 gallons, July 144,000 gallons, August 57,000 gallons. So, from February to July there was an incredibly high usage. Could see the flow through the meter, couldn't see what had happened but tried to see what was going on there.

Carmichael commented given the volume of water that was used would like to see some type of line item.

Stephens stated how can we adjust the billing. There is 1 bill from 2019 with reasonable charges. But under total due it is 34,000. How did the bill get that big before someone could figure it out?

Reddy called Beth from billing, and a flag was raised saying this bill is very high. Nothing happened. Charges got accumulated. Paid every month plus interest.

Stephens thinks the interest charges should be abated but the other charges we don't know where the water went.

Berry agreed that the interest should be taken care of because it is ridiculous.

Perry once an appeal is submitted interest charges should be waived so they wouldn't be part of the appeal. He's not ready to decide tonight, he feels the new meter needs to be tested, maybe why the readings could be so high. due to a faulty new meter.

Stephens agrees that it should be tested.

Nadeau stated the way that the meter reads the low flow and high flow, we can't test that.

Perry asked can we acquire equipment to do that?

Purpura stated we can but it is very expensive. He also said we could send the meter out to have it tested and put a another new one in temporarily.

**Motion:** Otis made a motion to refer the abatement till the next meeting pending the test of the meter and a review of the billing to take off the interest, Stephens seconded.

**Vote:** U/a



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### 5. Reports

#### A. Abatement Review Team Report

The report was reviewed and discussed by Staff.

#### B. Utilities Report

The report was reviewed and discussed by Staff.

#### C. Finance Report

The report was reviewed and discussed by Staff.

**Motion:** Carmichael made the motion to approve the reports, Stephens seconded.

**Vote:** U/a

### 6. New Business - None

### 7. Old Business

#### A. Source Water Protection Plan Summary

DeGrace stated she was briefed by Gretchen Young and there is no update. The next report should be an annual report which will be in June. There is no concern of about compliance.

### 8. Areas of Concern

Stephens stated he is still concerned about the eye on water program.

DeGrace said she would reach out to the IT director and let her know about the monetary issue.

Nadeau will reach out to the Public Works Director and the Director of IT.

Stephens stated it has been a couple years this has been going on. How come we still pay more for water and sewer payments online than other online city payments.

Berry is concerned about people who pay bills online and municipalities charge a fee, almost double or triple the other fees to pay water and sewer fees online. Doesn't make sense. Why is it so high?

Carmichael wants to know why it's not less expensive to pay online than in person.

### 9. Next Meeting Date

December 19, 2022

### 10. Adjournment

**Motion:** Perry made the motion to adjourn at 7:26, Berry seconded.

**Vote:** U/a