



CITY OF DOVER

DOVER UTILITIES COMMISSION - MINUTES

Meeting Type: Regular Meeting
Meeting Location: 271 Mast Road, Dover, NH
Meeting Date: **December 19, 2022**
Meeting Time: **6:00 pm**

Members Present: Chairman Bret Carmichael, Vice Chairman Jay Stephens, Bill Davis, Mark Moeller, Dennis Munson

Excused Members Absent: Otis Perry

Staff Present: Michael Nadeau, Utilities Superintendent, Michael Banester, Utilities Foreman, Amelia DeGrace, Asst. City Engineer, Dave Fredrickson, Deputy Community Service Director, Nancy Usbelger, Recording Secretary

Resident: Mike Canino

1. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m.

2. User's Forum - None

3. Approval of Minutes of October 17, 2022

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

Discussion: Typo on page 3, D should be "could not find".

Areas of Concern divide them to A & B in the future.

Vote: U/a

Moeller joined at 6:07

4. Abatement Requests

A. 5 Lowell Avenue – John Mitchell

Motion: Stephens made a motion to deny request, Munson seconded.

Discussion:

Stephens Stated this was the second chance to appear. He asked if this was one of our new galaxy remote meters?

Nadeau answered yes.

Stephens stated he is still in favor of denying the request.

Vote: U/a

B. 61 Crown Point Drive – Carol Chellman

Discussion: Stephens stated it looks like they have asked for a number of abatements over time. He responded to some of the written comments from the owner blaming the water department for the problems they have been having. Stephens stated it's not our fault or the responsibility of the water department, we just provide a service and we try very hard to help residents find out what's going on.

Motion: Stephens made the motion to deny, Munson Seconded.

Vote: U/a



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C. 55 Cielo Drive – Mike Canino

Canino asked if lien had been done, not happy that it appears on his bill when it hasn't been discussed yet.

Nadeau explained that no lien would have probably been issued because it is in the abatement process and it can take several months.

Carmichael also stated because of where it is in the process it would not be considered as past due.

Canino stated that the problem is a bill he received in 2020, which was \$1572.00. If you look at the months of June and September he's never had a bill over \$350.00 except for the first year in 2017 when he put his new lawn in. He never knew about having a form to fill out for an abatement. He did pay a reasonable amount of \$1048.99 and checked what they told him to check in his house for drips and any leaks. He has never been even close to having a bill that high. He also stated that he had shut off his time clock for his meter during the water ban. Always has paid his bills. He also stated he was never told there was a time limit to file an abatement. He has made several notes on all his bills that he has paid in the past stating he is waiting to hear from someone in regards to the why his bills are so high.

Carmichael stated the city has a process and adding a note on the bill isn't the process.

Stephens stated when it went to the review committee, they denied it because it was over 180 days. He did ask if it was one of the galaxy meters.

Nadeau stated it was not a galaxy meter and that he was transferred to a new Galaxy meter in February of 2021.

Stephens explained about the new meters and how they record how much water you use almost every five minutes. Unfortunately, Mr. Canino had an old meter during that time. That has not stopped people from getting high bills, but at least we can look at it and show them that in fact it did happen. We wouldn't have even tested that old meter when it was changed out because they were unaware of any problems at that time. Not sure what caused it to be so high if everything was running through the meter.

Moeller went over the abatement process. He did say it sounded like Canino tried to do the right thing by writing on his bills, even though it wasn't using the abatement form. The rules that we are governed by are posted on our city website as well as he'd like to think the staff would be reminding people about the 180-day abatement process. The problem tonight is it's hard to go back and try to figure out what happened when it's been two years.

Canino stated he would have certainly done that if he had known.



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Motion: Carmichael made the motion to deny based on the evidence, Moeller Seconded.

Vote: U/a

Motion to Amend: Stephens made a motion to amend the previous motion, he would like to see any interest credited since it accrued, Moeller seconded.

Vote: U/a

Discussion:

D. 28-30 Second Street – Anji Reddy – he will be on the next agenda in January

5. Reports

A. Abatement Review Team Report

There was no report to review from last month.

B. Utilities Report

The report was reviewed and discussed by Staff.

C. Finance Report

The report was reviewed and discussed by Staff.

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

Vote: U/a

6. New Business - None

Carmichael stated that he feels the city does a great job at informing people about the abatement process. He understands that there is a lot of information on our City Website and it would be helpful when receiving any type of city bill/invoice that a link be documented on the back to make it easier for people to pay and or find questions about their bill and the process of how to file any objections.

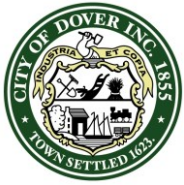
Amelia responded that we will reach out to water sewer billing to maybe see what we can do to help make the process easier to understand.

Carmichael suggested he would like to see the following on the utility bills if you have an objection with any bill this is the process within 180 days.

7. Old Business

A. Stormwater Utility Update

DeGrace stated the Governor Council approved 1000 grant on November 23rd, posted for a consultant assistant. We will be getting bid proposals this Wednesday, December 21st. Hoping to get 2 or 3 good qualification packages and selecting before Christmas, then submit to council by January 11th. The DUC will need to review and make recommendations that will go before the City Council. The consultant will help with the outreach campaign and hopefully everything will get started in January.



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B. EyeOnWater status update

Fredrickson has been working with Stiles which is our manufacture Rep with Badger Meter. What he found is Styles can't really speak for badger so we have to use Badger on what we're looking for using Styles as the go between. Dealing with big companies takes time. They sent us an example for a master agreement for a cellular system, but we're looking for a radio system.

Stephens stated all we want is the data that we already are getting we want to be able to see online.

Dave stated it has to deal with how the info gets to our computer at city hall

Nadeau we have to engage with a ten-year contract that we have with Badger Meter and part of that is the Eye on Water accessibility. We have to go after having a master agreement to maintain our meters and radio reads. We have to have a major agreement with badger. The time line could be a significant length of time on putting the final agreement together.

DeGrace we really took a deeper dive since our last meeting. We got together with IT and Stiles and brought to the table what our concerns were. We want a guarantee that we will be supported through a certain time with all the software & hardware and our communications equipment and other factors.

Stephens stated the galaxy meters sold us a bill of goods. We are now finding out we can't do with what we were told we could do with this set up. Why it's not implemented yet and all these people come in with questions and we can't explain what we thought we could to residents with this product.

Carmichael stated he feels people should be able to know what's going on. We need to do better or change how we do business as a city.

DeGrace agreed and everybody wants the same thing. We are trying to push it forward and make the revisions to the agreement as quickly as possible.

Dave stated that during the transition the company switched to cellular base. It is the direction that the industry is going. We all know how fast technology changes and it is going to be some money over the years.

Nadeau stated the industry has gone to cellular when we bought into radio. We have an iron curtain built around dover. Instead of going to a cloud it goes to a main frame at city hall. Movement of data was a fear of being hacked. They are offering a newer version of what we have in place.

Carmichael asked how can we get info to residents asap in regards to excessive water usage? What is the process for notifying people?



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Nadeau explained they will send a leak letter or put a door knocker out letting them know they are using a lot of water. We don't search houses for leaks. We do our best to help residents find the leak.

Carmichael stated we need a chain of events as far as when residence are notified. This is when we have contacted you on this date, on your bill etc.

Moeller suggested maybe getting an email address as well to send info to residents and property owners.

C. Explanation of fees for online utility billing payments

DeGrace explained one piece is that we are using two different credit card processing companies. The lower price items go through a different system than our utilities, property tax and miscellaneous. Miscellaneous and property tax both have the 2.5% fee of your entire bill, however those items are estimated to be much larger bills than the utility bills. The flat fee for smaller bills like utility bills. Trying to get one vender for municipality for credit card processing. She will recommend the wording change from convenience fee to credit card processing fee. She will also check on the fees for echeck as well.

8. Areas of Concern

9. Next Meeting Date

January 16, 2023

10. Adjournment

Motion: Munson made the motion to adjourn at 7:38, Stephen seconded.

Vote: U/a