



CITY OF DOVER

DOVER UTILITIES COMMISSION - MINUTES

Meeting Type: Regular Meeting
Meeting Location: 271 Mast Road, Dover, NH
Meeting Date: **Monday, August 15, 2016**
Meeting Time: **6:00 pm**

Members Present: Chairman Otis Perry, Vice Chair Jay Stephens, Mark Moeller, Bret Carmichael, Norman Allie, Dennis Munson

Members Absent:

Staff Present: Doug Steele, Deputy City Manager Community Services, Bill Boulanger, Superintendent of PW & Utilities

RECORDER FAILED TO RECORD MEETING

1. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 5:58 p.m.

2. Approval of Minutes of June 20, 2016

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

Vote: U/a

3. Abatement Requests

A. 21 Townsend Drive - Bhargav Musunuri

Applicant, Bhargav Musunuri, stated that, in November, he moved into 21 Townsend Drive. When he received his first quarterly bill, he was very surprised at how high it was. He was unaware that there was a leak. If he was on a monthly billing schedule, he would have known earlier. He has all of the reports from the home inspection and the repair bill showing that the toilet was repaired. He has never paid utility bills before. The home inspector showed him how to read the bill.

Boulanger stated that city staff completed an inspection on 2016 and found one toilet running over the overflow tube. He believes that was the cause of the high bill. According to the plumber's report, the applicant did have it repaired.

Applicant stated that he received a notice of a high bill. At that time, he switched off the valve. The day after he called the plumber.

Perry asked if the water was shut off before he moved in.

Applicant stated that it was not. There were four people living there prior to him. The final reading was completed on 11/12/2015.

Perry stated that the previous owner paid the bill, in full, on 12/19/2015.

Boulanger stated that that the leak was from the applicant's toilet. Historically, the board has not granted relief to a resident with a leaky toilet.

Stephens stated that the finance director explained that the city is not equipped to change all residents to a monthly billing cycle.



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Motion: Moeller stated that based on the unique facts he will make a motion to abate a third of the water and sewer bill for first quarter, Carmichael seconded.

Discussion: Stephens stated that based on prior policies he would vote against that motion. The city provided the water and it was used. It is unfortunate that it happened.

Perry asked if the meter had been tested.

Boulanger stated that it had not since they knew it was a leaky toilet.

Motion: Moeller made the motion to abate 50% of the bill. No second. Motion failed.

Motion: Stephens made the motion to deny the request as presented, Perry seconded.

Vote: Allie, Moeller, Carmichael oppose. Vote failed.

Boulanger stated that they can test the meter, if the board prefers.

Motion: Stephens made the motion to defer the abatement pending a meter test, Carmichael seconded.

Vote: U/a

B. 69 Grove Street - Chris Otash

Applicant stated that he is the property owner of 69 Grove Street. He had a tenant that was difficult to evict. He went to the property after the tenant had moved out. When he walked into the unit, he found that all of the faucets were running. He had received a letter in the mail regarding high usage. He has five people living in a three unit building. In the past, when he has received a high usage letter, he knows that a large bill will follow and he pays it. In this instance, due to the unusual situation, he is requesting abatement due to the amount of the bill.

Boulanger stated that since this was such an unusual circumstance, the Abatement Review Team denied the initial request because they wanted it to come before the board.

Otash stated that his tenant had some unfortunate issues. He started the eviction process 2 ½ months prior to her leaving. As a result of her leaving the faucets on, he had to replace all of the carpets, the stove, the floor and the walls causing him to spend thousands for the repairs. He is unsure of how long the water was running for.

Perry asked if he was requesting the entire amount of the bill.

Otash stated he put that amount down because he didn't know what to put. He's just looking for any relief that the board is willing to give to him.

Boulanger made a recommendation for staff to find out what the quarterly billing rate is, and subtract that amount off of request.



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Motion: Moeller made the motion to table the abatement to the next meeting, Munson seconded.

Vote: U/a

C. 140 Back River Road - Janice & William Sherman

Applicant stated that she had received a water and sewer bill for \$680.00. She is unsure of how the bill was so large. It is just herself and her husband living at the home. She had received a notice that the city needed to look at their meter. They didn't have a running toilet or broken pipes. They've done very little watering. She's puzzled as to why their bill was so high.

Boulanger stated that when staff is unsure of the reason, a meter test is done. The meter tested out at 100% which is well within the guidelines. A new meter was installed but the old meter was tested.

Perry asked if the new meter made a difference.

Mr. Sherman stated that their bills have never been this high before. Mrs. Sherman stated that there is just no explanation.

Boulanger stated that if the meter had been defective, the city would have granted the abatement.

Boulanger stated that it is possible for the meter to act up without them knowing. Staff was unable to find any explanation which is why they did the meter test.

Motion: Moeller made a motion to deny the abatement request, Stephens seconded.

Vote: U/a

4. 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, Moeller seconded.

Vote: U/a

5. New Business

A. CIP Update



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Steele gave an overview of the Capital Improvements Program.

6. Old Business

A. Water Facilities Update

Lowell Avenue Treatment Plant is scheduled to be reconstructed this year. Campbell Well and Calderwood Well are going to be combined. Leighton Way Pump Station will be replaced as well. The city will be spending approximately \$20,000,000.00 on rehabbing the wells and treatment plants.

7. User's Forum-None

Perry made a request to move User's Forum to the beginning of the agenda.

8. Areas of Concern

Carmichael stated that he would like to explore how many abatement requests are made per year. He would like to brainstorm a way to remediate a way to have the abatements processed in a more timely manner. The board owes it to the citizens to talk about it more.

Perry stated that the biggest holdup is the meter readings.

Boulanger stated that the system is behind. There's too much of a delay.

Stephens stated that he's given in on a lot of the abatements due to the lag time between the meter reading and the receiving of the bill.

Perry stated that on the other hand, the homeowner is responsible for their home.

Carmichael stated that he's learned a lot since he's been on the DUC. He knows a little more about readings than other residents may.

Steele stated that he can request C.I.P. money to change out meters older than 10 years.

Boulanger stated that Doug would have to put it into the C.I.P. and would have to hire a contractor to install the meters. The issue with the Finance department is that there are three different meter readers in use.

Perry stated that they should investigate the possibility of putting into the C.I.P. money to replace all meters in an orderly fashion. Part of the justification is that the city is losing money based on abatements and customer dissatisfaction.

9. Next Meeting Date

September 19, 2016

10. Adjourn

Motion: Moeller made the motion to adjourn at 7:07 p.m., Moeller seconded.

Vote: U/a