

Town of Newton Utility Advisory Board
June 2, 2009

The special meeting of the Newton Utility Advisory Board was held on June 2, 2009 at 7:30pm at the Newton Municipal Building, 39 Trinity Street, Newton. Chairman Lawler called the meeting to order and the following members were present: Mr. Baldini, Mr. Caffrey, Mr. Vrahnos, and Mr. Lawler. Mrs. Unhoch called ahead to be excused. Mr. William Grennille, Utility Superintendent, Ms. Dawn Babcock, CFO, Mr. David B. Simmons, Jr., Mr. Paul Baldwin Water Foreman, and Mrs. Debra Millikin, Deputy Town Manager were also in attendance.

Mr. Lawler read the Open Public Meetings Act statement and then moved on to the approval of minutes from the April 21, 2009 meeting. Mr. Baldini questioned why under Old Business salaries were not mentioned in the minutes. Mr. Baldini stated that the salary issue needs to be discussed. Chairman Lawler indicated that he understands this, however, per the discussion with the town attorney this needs to go through the proper chain of command. Mr. Baldini stressed that the salary issue is not right and that the utility should not pay for Mr. Hollander's attendance on April 21st. Also Mr. Baldini stated he is not happy that 50% of the Town's website is being charged to the Utility. The Board felt the website should have been on a percentage basis, not half. There being no other issues Chairman Lawler made a motion to accept the minutes and was seconded by Mr. Baldini. The minutes were unanimously approved by an "aye" vote.

Chairman Lawler moved to New Business under request for utility customers. The first application was for Robert and Lucia McKeeby. Requesting a waiver of penalty of \$46.09. Chairman Lawler indicated that the payment was mailed, but lost in the mail. It is the first time they have been late on a payment. Chairman Lawler made a motion to approve the request of waiving the penalty and was seconded by Mr. Caffrey. Mrs. Millikin called the roll: Mr. Baldini - yes, Mr. Caffrey - yes, Mr. Vrahnos - yes, and Chairman Lawler - yes.

The next application was for Eugene Prais. Requesting waiver of penalty of \$1,130.24. Chairman Lawler stated that the payment time is the same every year and that customers should be aware of when the utility bills are due. Mr. Baldini made a motion to deny the request and was seconded by Mr. Vrahnos. Mrs. Millikin called the roll: Mr. Baldini - yes, Mr. Caffrey - yes, Mr. Vrahnos - yes, and Chairman Lawler - yes.

The final application was for Parsons Commercial Tech Group. Requesting waiver of

Town of Newton Utility Advisory Board
June 2, 2009

penalty of \$22.68. No discussion on the application Mr. Baldini made a motion to deny the request and was seconded by Mr. Caffrey. Mrs. Millikin called the roll: Mr. Baldini – yes, Mr. Caffrey – yes, Mr. Vrahnos – yes, and Chairman Lawler – yes.

Chairman Lawler moved to Old Business on the agenda. The first item was Armond and Sharon Rossi. Requesting waiver of portion of sewer bill. Chairman Lawler questioned if the repair was good. Mr. Baldwin stated yes. Mrs. Millikin questioned what the sewer penalty would be. Mr. Grennille indicated it would be for 1,000 gallons. He indicated that the leak was reflected on the next quarter bill because it was not fixed until three weeks after readings were done. Mr. Baldwin indicated that the property was empty until after the meters were read and that is when the leak was discovered. Mr. Vrahnos questioned if payments are on time. Mrs. Millikin indicated that the Rossi's were on the shut off list but are current or completed the payment plan set up. Mr. Grennille questioned if the 10% late penalty would be waived. Discussion ensued and the Board felt if the application was waiting on the Board to take action they would waive the 10% penalty. Chairman Lawler made a motion to approve the waiver of the sewer portion along with the 10% penalty and was seconded by Mr. Caffrey. Mrs. Millikin called the roll: Mr. Baldini – yes, Mr. Caffrey – yes, Mr. Vrahnos – yes, and Chairman Lawler – yes.

The next application under old business was for Edward and Joyce Barkowski. Requesting waiver of portion of sewer bill. Mr. Baldwin stated the repair was done well and is fine from the departments stand point. Mr. Caffrey made a motion to approve the request for waiving a portion of the sewer bill and the 10% penalty. The motion was seconded by Chairman Lawler. Mrs. Millikin called the roll: Mr. Baldini – yes, Mr. Caffrey – yes, Mr. Vrahnos – yes, and Chairman Lawler – yes.

Chairman Lawler moved to the next item under Old Business Water Filtration Plant Update. Mr. Grennille stated that discharge permit, which has been at NJDEP for 2 ½ years was just deemed administratively complete. The lake is at ½ inch above spillway. The water department has been working hard on leak detection and is doing well. Mrs. Millikin indicated that the percentage has gone down to 21% of unaccounted for water. Down from 35% from last year. The goal is to be at 15% by the year end. Mr. Grennille indicated that the baby eagles have been tagged. There is a male and female in the nest.

Wastewater Treatment Plant Update: Mr. Grennille stated the primary collector

Town of Newton Utility Advisory Board
June 2, 2009

hopefully will be back on line by the end of the week. Summer limits have been met to date considering only one tank online. Mr. Grenville indicated he has contacted the NJDEP hotline in case there is an issue to advise the one collector is off line. The summer help is busy painting hydrants. Chairman Lawler stated that he had a complaint about the hydrant at the Gardner Avenue well have a cone over it. Mr. Baldwin stated there is no cone there is a metal plate. Chairman Lawler stated that a hydrant is buried at 56 Sparta Avenue. Mr. Caffrey stated he thought it might be a well cap. Mr. Baldwin indicated he would inspect this. Mr. Baldini stated that he can not understand how bills are sent all across the Town and everyone uses hydrants, but not everyone pays for water and sewer.

Mr. Caffrey questioned who is responsible for grass and snow removal around the fire hydrants. Mrs. Millikin indicated that an ordinance is in the process of being put in place that will make the homeowners responsible for maintenance around the fire hydrants. Mr. Baldini questioned why the hydrants are not painted in reflective colors. Mr. Baldwin stated there are over 400 hydrants in Town and that cost is too expensive.

Chairman Lawler moved to the next item on the agenda Engineer's Report. Mr. Simmons updated the Board that he is preparing some information for NJDEP on unaccounted for water. He indicated this will allow the Town to be in a position to request an increase in allocation. Mr. Simmons stated that in 2005 in December was the peak month for unaccounted for water.

Mr. Simmons advised that he has gotten approval from Dam Safety to begin the reinforcement of the dam. Now the Town will be working on obtaining soil conservation, and Sparta Zoning Board Approval. The earliest this project would be slated to begin work would be in the summer of 2010. Mr. Simmons also indicated that the revised Stop and Shop Plans have not been received. He would follow up with Sparta's Planner David Troast.

Chairman Lawler brought up the new fire sprinkler law that may go into effect. Mrs. Millikin indicated she forwarded the information Mr. Lawler supplied to the Fire Official Joe Inga and he believes this legislation will not go through. Chairman Lawler stated he wanted everyone to be aware because this could cause some issues in the future if it were approved. Chairman Lawler also indicated that contributions to upgrades of mains needs to be remembered with future development. Developers should be made aware prior to coming in for approvals. Mrs. Millikin indicated that with the redevelopment plans

Town of Newton Utility Advisory Board
June 2, 2009

developers are advised.

Mrs. Millikin questioned the Board about canceling the June 16th Utility Board Meeting. The water sewer bills were sent on May 31st and not due till the end of June. It was unanimously approved to cancel the June 16th meeting.

Mr. Baldini questioned if a resident does not have water and sewer they should be billed for use of the hydrant. He also questioned how come the Town sweeps, paves, removes snow from the Newton Commons when they were supposed to be self sufficient. Mr. Baldini was concerned that the meters at the Newton Commons are not metered and they do not pay for the water used. Mr. Baldwin indicated that the Newton Commons is metered and that they have 4 separate meter pits. Mr. Baldini wants to know why everyone does not pay for sewer. Mr. Grenville stated that by ordinance it is established that a person can be billed for only water or sewer. Mr. Baldini stated then the ordinance needs to be changed. He feels strongly that everyone should pay for both water and sewer. He also feels the utility should be subsidizing the Town salaries. Chairman Lawler indicated that he understands Mr. Baldini's concerns, but that sprinkler systems are not going through the sewer and are not causing an additional cost to the utility. Mr. Baldini questioned who pays for improvements. Mrs. Babcock indicated the water and sewer utility. Mr. Baldini state he blamed the Town for this and felt the rates should be decreased not increased. Mr. Caffrey stated the rates were increased due to delinquencies and that it is now down to only \$165,000. Chairman Lawler stated the Board would do its best not to have the rates increase. The utility should be maintained on a yearly basis and that repairs need to be completed to the system to keep it sustainable.

There being no other business to discuss upon motion of Mr. Lawler and seconded by Mr. Vrahnos, the meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

Debra J. Millikin