

Town of Newton Utility Advisory Board
December 20, 2011

The regular meeting of the Newton Utility Advisory Board was held on December 20, 2011, at 7:30 p.m. at the Newton Municipal Building, 39 Trinity Street, Newton. Chairman Lawler called the meeting to order and the following members were present: Ms. Unhoch, Mr. Pham, Mr. Vrahnos and Chairman Lawler. Mr. Paul Baldwin, Water & Sewer Supervisor, Mrs. Jacki Shackleton, Utility Collector and Mr. David B. Simmons, Jr. were also in attendance. Mrs. Debra Millikin was excused.

Chairman Lawler read the Open Public Meetings Act statement and then moved to approval of the minutes from the October 18, 2011 meeting. Mr. Lawler made a motion to accept and was seconded by Ms. Unhoch. The minutes were unanimously approved by an "aye" vote.

Chairman Lawler moved to the first order of New Business under request for utility customers. The first application on the agenda was for Mr. Tucci who requested waiver of delinquent penalty for the third quarter because he claims to have been told that the bill was due October 31, 2011. Customer further claims not to have received reminder extending the due date. Mr. Lawler explained that he knows Mr. Tucci personally and abstained from voting. Mr. Vrahnos motioned to hold the customer liable for the delinquent penalty, as the board cannot be held responsible for inconsistencies of the U.S. Postal service. The motion was seconded by Mr. Pham and unanimously denied by an "aye" vote.

The second issue on the agenda was for Patrick McKernan who requested credit for sewer fees for the third quarter bill because he filled his pool and used an underground sprinkler system throughout the summer. The customer further requested waiver of the delinquent penalty due to the large amount of the bill. Mr. Baldwin explained that there is no way to know exactly how much water was used for both the pool and the sprinkler system, and after a brief discussion Mr. Lawler made a motion to deny the request. Ms. Unhoch seconded the motion and it was unanimously denied by an "aye" vote.

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The third issue of New Business on the agenda was that of Thierry Darche who requested a waiver of the third quarter delinquent penalty because he did not receive the third quarter bill or the notice extending the due date. The customer claimed that he was not aware that there was a bill due until receiving the delinquent notice. Mr. Simmons stated that the inconsistencies of the Post Office are a growing cause for application to the Utility Advisory Board. Ms. Unhoch stated that she has not received bills in the past, but still has been responsible for paying. Mr. Pham clarified as to whether Mr. Darche had received the extension notice. Mr. Vrahnos motioned to deny the appeal and Mr. Lawler seconded. It was unanimously denied by an "aye" vote.

The fourth issue on the agenda was for Anthony Crego whose meter had been stuck for nine quarters. The customer is requesting some assistance in handling the large bill. Mr. Baldwin stated that numerous letters had been sent to the customer before he actually called to schedule the meter change. Mr. Pham suggested that credit be given for minimum bills while the meter was stuck, as this has been standard procedure with other customers. Mr. Baldwin stated that the credit would be for nine quarters, totaling \$675. Mr. Lawler requested a report of 2008 usage for the account be brought to the next meeting, in order to establish consistency of usage, but made a motion to grant credit for minimum payment while the meter was stuck. Mr. Pham seconded, and it was unanimously approved with an "aye" vote.

There being no more new business, Mr. Baldwin stated that both the water filtration plant and sewer plant are running fine. Mr. Lawler inquired as to whether there were any issues with the recent storms. Mr. Baldwin replied that for the first time in 28 years, the manholes were over five million. He further stated that they were running six to seven million a day. Mr. Lawler said that nothing could really be done about it.

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Mr. Simmons stated that he had a few updates for the Board. He produced as-builts for the Morris Lake plans and explained construction details. Mr. Simmons showed perspectives of the armiflex and said that they could handle up to 34 inches of flooding in 24 hours. Anything more would be a disaster. Mr. Simmons showed photographs of the stages of construction sent to the D.E.P. and pointed out that the end product was a grass covering. He concluded by saying that it was all done in accordance with the D.E.P.

Mr. Simmons went on to report that when Kin Properties or Dollar General, submitted as-builts, there were sanitary sewer lines visible for which easements were unable to be located. Mr. Simmons pointed out the various drains in the vicinity. Mr. Lawler inquired as to how big they were and Mr. Simmons replied that they were 22 inches. He further stated that when the Acme Market was built, they piped the stream. There was no easement and it is not our pipe. There appears to only be one easement in existence for that area.

Mr. Simmons recently received final maps and is sending them to Kin Properties so that the Town can obtain an easement. Mr. Simmons concluded that the area is cleaned up as far as easements are concerned.

Mr. Simmons went on to explain that the water allocation permits are almost finished and the dam reports have been sent. He explained that Mr. Baldwin and the crew tested the hydrants on Merriam Avenue and the red percentage went from 60% down to 7%. All Castle Ridge hydrants are now in the green.

There being no other business to discuss, upon motion of Chairman Lawler and seconded by Ms. Unhoch, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

Jacki Shackleton