

**Minutes**  
**NVC Utilities Committee Meeting**  
**November 5, 2004**

Meeting convened in the Community Hall at 2:30 p.m.

Present: David Crofoot (chmn), Bill Cressey, by conference call: Judy Metcalf and Jim Coughlin; Dick McElhaney, Karen Hoedtke; Bill Paige and Toni Mailloux in the audience.

Minutes of the October 1, 2004 meeting were approved. Copy of minutes to be sent to Dan Webster.

**1. New Superintendent:**

Dick McElhaney was introduced. He is fully licensed for wastewater treatment; experienced in water treatment and will take the licensing exam in April.

**2. Superintendent's Contract:**

Proposed contract (based on check-list from DEP, John Fancy's contract) reviewed. It was recommended that Dick should report to the Utilities Chairman and, through him, to the Board of Overseers. All agreed.

The details of the proposed contract were discussed paragraph by paragraph and adjusted as was felt appropriate by the trustees of the Department and Dick McElhaney.

In Para. 4 (the amount the Superintendent was able to spend without prior authorization) \$2,000 was agreed to be a reasonable figure.

Para. 16: PUC and DEP require two operators. Dick qualified that to mean the designated operator to be licensed, the back-up need not be. The wording to be that "NVC shall provide a back-up operator." Dick recommended that Fernie Barton be designated as back-up operator on the water side to be compensated by the NVC Utilities.

Bill Cressey asked if the contract would be between Dick and NVC. Yes. The Utilities Department will present the modified contract to the Overseers for approval at the next meeting.

Rate of pay is \$40 per hour. The number of hours will be between 8 and 12 per week. The Superintendent will be paid as an independent contractor, without benefits. He will present billing every two weeks, payable within 15 days. The term of the contract is two years with a 60-day notice required for termination except "for cause."

TO DO: A standing warrant so Dick can be paid within 15 days of billing (i.e., bi-weekly). David Crofoot will prepare the final contract for signature by the Overseers' meeting.

**3. Superintendent's Report:**

The new flow recorder cost \$1,600; Dick recommended that if the damaged recorder could be repaired for half that cost, that it would be worthwhile to repair it as a backup.

Stevens will pull pumps at South Shore station for inspection, check electrical connections, impellers and ensure that everything is functioning properly: Cost: \$600.

Five manholes in Kelly Cove subdivision have been sealed to eliminate outside water from flowing into sewer line. This work paid for by Kelly Cove Association. Effects on I & I have not yet been fully assessed. But peaking factor of 3:1 indicates acceptable levels of I & I.

DEP recommends we anchor a buoy off the end of the sewer outfall warning of its location and warning against mooring/anchoring/swimming there. Buoy cost \$150. McElhaney will order the buoy. Drexel will set the buoy seasonally. Diver will mark the outfall end when he inspects the pipe in the spring. Coughlin suggested that we could set up a secondary mooring below the surface and hook-on each spring.

DEP expressed concern about the wastewater treatment space as a "confined space" with possible toxic exposure to operator. Dick recommends installing a louvered exhaust fan and lighting with switch which would automatically turn on both. He has asked Peter Simpson for a quote. Bill Paige suggested that Stevens Electric be asked for a quote as well.

McElhaney noted that under our new license, Fernie Barton will have increased duties related to increased testing. He recommended a raise in pay to go with increased duties to reimburse this and encourage employee retention.

Financials:

Will have copies of the financial statements at the Overseers' meeting. Crofoot concerned that the wastewater total income year-to-date is only at 58% despite being 5/6 of the way through the year. There are still about 50 accounts out from September billing.

#### **4. Karen - Office**

Billing in September to 299 accounts. November 3rd Shut-Off Notices were sent to 22 year-round accounts. 29 seasonal accounts received a letter indicating that payment was requested by December 1st. Seasonal accounts obviously cannot be shut off in the winter. Overdue accounts will not be turned on in the spring without payment in full plus pre-payment of two terms ahead.

Lien process reviewed. This is applicable only to sewer accounts. The process is unwieldy, time consuming, and complex and will only be used for substantial sums.

Phase III Warrant:

Woodard & Curran bills approved to be paid with money transferred from wastewater account to Phase III account. Warrant prepared for overseers' meeting.

#### **5. AquaMaine Contract:**

AquaMaine proposed a contract to cover our water operations with their water licenses, until such time as our Superintendent receives a Maine water operator's license, for \$450 per month. Rick Knowlton indicated that if this fee exaggerated the amount of time required, he would be willing to discuss an adjustment downward. After discussion, the contract will be presented to the Overseers for approval.

## **6. Budget for 2005:**

Dick's proposed budgets for water and wastewater utilities (copies attached) discussed. (Bill commented favorably on the appearance and thoroughness of Dick's preparation.) In both cases, the budgets are very tight. The water budget will likely be \$10-15,000 in the red requiring it to be subsidized by the Village General Fund. Either Village subsidy or a water rate increase will be necessary in years to come due to the increase in debt payments. An increase in water rates might be in the range of a \$50 increase to the base rate of \$380. Such a rate increase would need to be presented to the PUC, then to the Village in public meetings next summer, and could not take effect until the 2006 budget cycle.

David recommended that proposed budgets should be reviewed by Malcolm Horton with a final proposed budget presented to the Overseers at the December meeting.

## **7. DEP**

December deadline to report to DEP our search for funding. January 1 deadline to start design of a replacement wastewater treatment plant. We have had no official feedback yet from DEP yet on the Phase II facilities report. Unofficially, there is some discomfort at DEP that the report suggests a staged approach to secondary treatment. They would like a direct move to secondary treatment.

Crofoot discussed the problems we face with John Glowa and Karen Hefler of DEP. It is difficult to do design work when there is no agreement about how much money may be available. At the present time, there is no grant money available from DEP. Rural Development will provide a combination of grant with loan monies. We have no room to support more debt payment without a rate increase. When rates reach 2% of mean income (\$547 per customer here) the DEP will consider grant monies. With a limited user base of 234 customers, we can never generate enough money in user fees to support a mechanical plant with full-time operator, nor can we take on any significant amount of indebtedness. Our current rate of \$405 per customer barely supports our current operating and non-operating costs.

We need a face-to-face meeting with DEP to discuss our Phase II facilities study, to discuss the availability of funding and, hopefully, to adjust the timetable of the consent decree to delay final design until grant money is available.

Judy Metcalf will work with Bill Ferdinand of Eaton, Peabody to set up a meeting with the DEP for December 3rd hoping to bring together our engineer, Jim Fitch, Dennis Merrill, John Glowa, and Steve McLaughlin of DEP and, perhaps, Lew Sirois of Rural Development.

Meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m. due to power outage.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen L. Hoedtke