

MINUTES OF THE ROWLEY FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING  
JULY 14, 2015  
MEETING HELD AT TOWN HALL

MEMBERS PRESENT: Larry White: Chairman, Sharon Emery: Vice Chairman, Janet Bridges, Peter Censullo, Paul Jalbert, Dennis Roy, Jami Snow.

PRESENT: Bob Merry: Chairman, Selectmen, Dave Petersen: Selectman

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman White called the meeting to order at 7:14 p.m.

2. DISCUSS MEMOS RELATING TO THE WATER DEPARTMENT Chairman White described some of the background; specifically the unpaid water bills. At the Water Dept meeting of March 31, 192 late notices were mailed, April 6 would be the second notice mailing, April 17 would be the last day to pay, and April 20 would be the shutoff date. At the April 21 meeting, there were 28 shut-offs; however, one customer, who has 9 accounts, refused to pay the interest stating that his accountant could not differentiate the accounts under the new Pennichuck system. Mr. White gave an example of the old system accounts under the Rowley Water Dept which had a 3-digit account number, and the Pennichuck system which had the same 3 digits only preceded by "711000" indicating that there was a correlation of accounts. The Pennichuck bills also have the meter number on it. The Water Board tabled any action pending this person's appearance before the Board and the Superintendent was directed NOT to turn off his water.

At the May 19<sup>th</sup> meeting agenda, the person was scheduled "to discuss disputing interest charges due to his non-payment". During the Citizens' Query, Mr. White stated that this agenda item was against the shut-off policy, that it may set a bad precedent, that the Board may not have the authority to waive interest charges, and possible ethics conflict in not shutting off this customer's water when 28 others were shut off. It was also stated that the superintendent was directed to turn on the Cemetery water and to meet with Pennichuck about the customer's bills and come up with penalties and interest so that the Water Dept can offer a rebate. This was the background for Chairman White's first memo. Mr. White read the first memo (A COPY OF WHICH IS ATTACHED).

At the June 2 Water meeting, it was reported that the cemetery leaks cost \$4,000 (4 service leaks and 6 faucet leaks). The cemetery is considered a private service line and not a water main. Around June 2, Mr. White sent to the Selectmen another memo (A COPY OF WHICH IS ATTACHED). The interest charges can only be abated by the Treasurer/Collector of Taxes and not the Water Board. Mr. Jalbert asked if the Treasurer has made a decision on modifying the interest and Mr. White said that the Treasurer can decide on \$15.00 worth of interest but the amount that the customer disputed is around \$1,400. Mr. White said that any payment that is made is first credited toward the interest and any leftover is credited toward the unpaid balance. Mr. Roy had some concerns and was reluctant about the Selectmen assuming control over the Water Department, because the Water Department answers to the rate payers, and that the language was a little too strong concerning the takeover and possible police involvement. Other actions proposed could include recall and that the Finance Committee should not tell the Selectmen to take over the Water Department. Mr. White discussed the frustrations with the Water Department. Mr. Roy talked about the Selectmen making sure that the payroll is met and bills are paid in a timely manner.

Mr. White discussed that FY15 is "water under the bridge" and that there is the opportunity to look at FY16. Mr. Censullo talked about recall but it was pointed out that the process is long and involved,

and Mr. White talked about a more responsive Water Board and that the Board reports to the town.

The next subject was the Water Department Budget balance memo from Sue Bailey. Mr. Petersen talked about the Water Dept surplus and that, although there is talk of the Supervisor overspending, that these rumors are untrue and that the budget is well under; and that MaryBeth should be commended for her work in controlling the budget. Ms. Snow added that the results show what a sterling job she has done.

### 3. REVIEW AND DISCUSS OPEN MEETING LAW PACKET AND EEO, DISCRIMINATION AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

Chairman White discussed that these forms had been distributed several meetings ago and that, although there is no requirement to sign these forms, that to show solidarity with the rest of the town, that it is encouraged to sign these. Mr. Merry added that as an appointed person, you are considered an employee as well as paid employees are under the state ethics law. Signing is voluntary.

### 4. CEMETERY TASK FORCE UPDATE

Mr. White turned this over to Mr. Roy who is on the Committee and he told about the progress and read a letter (A COPY OF WHICH IS ATTACHED). They will send out a questionnaire to other similar-sized town concerning what they are doing. This is in regards to the Open Meeting law and possibly other recommendations. They will meet every two weeks. The cemetery commissioners salary may have to be a stipend. Mr. Censullo indicated that the department is small and that, in order to meet the Open Meeting Law requirements, that a laborer or other person may have to be hired, and that Commissioners may not be able to be laborers. This may apply to the Shellfish Dept. As well. Mr. White pointed out that it may be difficult to fill additional vacancies, that town-wide there are about 9 open positions and that there is difficulty in filling these.

### 5. DISCUSS UPCOMING MEETING SCHEDULE

Ms. Snow and Mr. Censullo have agreed to continue to serve on the FinCom but will need to be sworn in before the next meeting. Mr. Censullo indicated that he has already been sworn in and Ms. Emery said that the terms end tomorrow. The next meeting may have the Water Dept who were supposed to be at this meeting and what is the Board doing for oversight for FY16. Chairman White then jumped to item 7 concerning the Water Dept budget.

Mr. White discussed that the Water Dept. budget deficit was \$584,000; their revenue budget \$2,102,000, and their actual was \$1,884,000 for a revenue shortage of \$130,000.

There was a discussion of the next meeting was set at September 15 at 7:15; in an emergency a sooner meeting may be held.

### 6. MINUTES

Minutes of March 3, 2015. Mr. Roy asked if item 8 should have a dollar amount for the Veterans' Benefits and this would be added to the minutes. Ms. Emery made the motion to approve the minutes, Mr. Jalbert seconded the motion. No further discussion, the motion was accepted 7-0.

Minutes of March 10, 2015. Mr. Roy asked that his comment on Item 4 that he asked Chief Broderick if there he foresaw any FY15 shortfall and Chief Broderick indicated no, be added. Also Item L, instead of "courses for training and credit" that "insurance credits received from MAYA for training sessions attended by town employees. Chairman White would review the minutes and re-submit. Ms. Emery made the motion to table the minutes, Mr. Roy seconded the motion, the tabling was approved 7-0.

Minutes of March 17, 2015. Mr. Roy had a question on Item 3 and was the FY13 item correct. Mr.. White said that this was correct cut because it was contracted out which is why it was so high. Ms. Snow made the motion to approve the minutes, Ms. Bridges seconded the motion. No further discussion, the motion was accepted 7-0.

Minutes of June 2, 2015. Mr. Roy said that in number 3 the word "transfer" should be substituted for "budget". This is also true in sub-item B. Mr. Jalbert made the motion to approve the minutes, Mr. Roy seconded the motion. No further discussion, the motion was accepted 5-0 with Ms. Bridges and Ms. Snow abstaining. .

Minutes of June 23, 2015. . Mr. Roy made the motion to approve the minutes, Ms. Snow seconded the motion. No further discussion, the motion was accepted 6-0 with Ms. Bridges abstaining due to her absence.

The status of Ms. Cantrell was mentioned and that, despite her illness, that the position of secretary was still available should she decide to return.

**7. APPOINTMENT WITH WATER BOARD CHAIRMAN TIMOTHY TOOMEY**

Mr. Toomey gave advance notice that he would be unable to attend due to a Water Board Meeting.

**8. ADJOURN**

Ms. Emery made the motion to adjourn, Ms. Snow seconded the motion. No further discussion, the motion was accepted 7-0 at 8:37pm.

**SUBMITTED BY:**

Lawrence D. White

Chairman, Finance Committee