



Town of Winchester  
1 Richmond Road Winchester, NH 03470

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**Minutes of the  
Board of Selectmen Meeting**  
Wednesday  
May 8, 2019

**Board members present:** Roberta Heinonen, Ben Kilanski, Jack Marsh, Herbert Stephens & Gloria Leustek. Also, present Margaret Sharra, Dale Gray, Captain Ford and Rick Meleski.

**First order of business: Public Hearing**

Selectmen Heinonen states that the board has 2 public hearing tonight. The 1<sup>st</sup> is for the purpose of reviewing the water rate study created by Tata & Howard & discuss increasing the water rates. Selectman Kilanski makes a motion to open the public hearing. Selectman Stephens seconds the motion. The motion carries 5-0. Jenna Rzasa-Tata & Howard present the rate study and an overview of our current rates and water system. Based on 2017 there are 1101 service connections, total water billed is 9.5mg, billed amount of \$180,140 and the total water expenses are \$278,356. The American Water Works Association stated that water suppliers must provide adequate water service to its customers as well as receive sufficient revenue to provide for operation, maintenance, system upgrades & maintenance of the supplier's financial integrity. This year the voters voted to make improvements thought USDA Funding a new water tank, booster pump station and water main on Richmond Rd. The fund received totaled \$3.325M which \$2.609M was a loan, \$.703M was a grant & the town would contribute \$13,000. The total operating expenses are \$281,568 plus the USDA annual debt service-\$128,230 total \$409,798. The water revenues need to be \$409,798 to be able to pay back the debt. The existing water rates are \$1.70 per 100 cubic ft and \$30.00 base rate. With the proposed rates it would be a 4 tier system-per 100 cubic ft: 0-5000 @ \$3.00, 5001-12,000 @ \$3.35, 12,001-20,000 @ \$4.00 and 20,001 & greater @ \$4.60. Quarterly base rate fee would be \$50.00. With the new rate the projected revenues would be \$433,788. The non-rate revenue fees would also be increased; turn on turn off, regular hourly rate, after hour rate, final reads & hydrant meter. Compared to other surrounding communities Winchester rates are well below. The impact to the water users based on a year would be 20% of the users would see an increase of \$100 or less (\$0.27 per day), 66%-increase between \$100 & \$200 (\$0.55 per day), 10%-increase between \$200-\$300 (\$0.82 per day) and 4%-increase over \$300. Chester Lapointe asked if we were committed to this and if there were any other options. I know it's a modest increase, but we are also seeing an increase in our taxes. Selectman Heinonen stated that we hired Tata & Howard to do the rate study because we knew that we aren't receiving enough money to upgrade the system. When we apply for grants and other funding we are turned down because our rates are too low. With the new debt that was voted on we will have to make the payments. Chester asked if we have to accept the grant. Selectman Heinonen said if we don't we can't do the upgrades. It is a much needed upgrade. We have spent many years planning for this. Rick stated that we have looked at every avenue. Tata & Howard, who we hired to do the research, states that the household median income we should be using 1.5% of our income to be paying for water. We are not even close. DES will only give us 10% funding because our median income is low. Selectman Heinonen said the last thing we want is to raise water rates, but it has been 12 years and we have tried other avenues. Jenna added that we can apply & receive more grants because the rates are more appropriate. Bill McGrath asked what the rate was and for how long on the loan. Rick stated that it was a 30 year loan @2.75%. Bill stated that the quarterly rate is \$30 and the proposed is \$50. Bill asked what

the project consisted of. Rick stated that there would be a new water line on Richmond Rd., booster station on Elm St & a new water tank. Bill asked was this something we voted on. Rick stated yes. Selectman Kilanski asked if the project revenue is with the increase to the rates & non-rate fees. Jenna said that it is only with the increase to the water rates. Selectman Kilanski asked Rick if he know what is generated by the turn on & turn offs fees? Rick said it's hard because that number changes. It will not be that impactful. Ken Cole asked how do you define a user. Jenna said that a user is a 1 service connection. Ken can there be more than one meter. Rick stated that Winchester does not submeter. We go by what the assessing department show for how many units. Selectman Marsh how does the service connections offset the bottom line. Rick stated that there aren't very many and that number changes. Jenna said a \$2000. Selectman Marsh asked compared to the other towns, Winchester just under \$300 average water bill and most are between \$450 & \$750, you assumed the usage is around 72,000 gallons. What is Winchester usage. Jenna said 45,000. The State of NH used 72,000 as an average across the state. We could add a column using 45,000. This was apple to apples comparison. Selectman Leustek asked what a typical 2 family home average usage is. Rick stated 1600, more if there are kids. The majority of the residents will be in the 0-5000 range. Brandon Day said that the proposal is going to a gradual fee scale. Does the scale cover both residential and commercial? Jenna stated yes. Brandon does that compare to Keene or Brattleboro which have industry. Rick unfortunately we don't have enough industry. It will be based on water usage. Brandon asked with the upgrades this will help with the future Business Park. Rick stated that yes, this why we started in this area 1<sup>st</sup>. Even though this area was identified years ago to be upgraded. Brandon asked Rick what is our oldest waterline? Rick stated 1909. In 2 weeks, we will be presenting the assets management assessment that we have done. This will show all the info on valves, water lines services etc. It will show where the needs are for improvements. Rick gave a timeline of the project, 50% of the design is done for the new water line and will go out to bid in July. Water tank & booster station will go out to bid late fall and start next spring. Selectman Kilanski makes a motion to close the public hearing. Selectman Leustek seconds the motion. The motion carries 5-0. Selectman Marsh stated he was in favor of the non-rate fees, but the increase to the residential rate going from \$1.70 to \$3.00. It's a big jump. I understand why. Selectman Heinonen said in order to fund this project we have to. We knew this was going to have to happen. There were many discussions over the years and what the impact could be to the users. This is what will need to fund the project but also help with receiving more grants. If you look the project cost and the debit service, we need water revenues to be at \$410,000. 10 years ago when we did the sewer project the board at that time lowered the water rates to help with the increase in the sewer rates. The citizens voted on allowing this project to move forward, so we have to increase the rates. Not one of us here want to do this but to make it feasible we have too. Selectman Kilanski asked Rick how will this effect the sewer rates? Rick stated no increase to sewer. Jenna added that looked at several scenarios and figuration but still a deficit. Selectman Marsh said looking at the revenue side we made a policy change on unpaid bills I am wondering how this will affect this. If you are going off \$278,000 and are expecting, we are going to get that in fees and we only get \$200,000 because of the lack of payment. With the new policy we can anticipate that it will decrease the unpaid bills. So, wouldn't that offset the revenue side? Selectman Heinonen said it would be revenue but its not going to be continuous. Rick stated that these numbers come from the warrants and has nothing to do with what is uncollected. Selectman Heinonen made a motion to increase the water rates per Tata & Howards study. Selectman Kilanski second the motion for discussion. As much as I don't want to increase the water rates, I did say at deliberative session that this project would not be from taxation but through water users. Selectman Heinonen said none of us like it but it was voted on by the citizens. Selectman Marsh said we are pushing for our industrial park and we want to be friendly to perspective buyers. Is there any way we can look at increasing the commercial non-rates? Rick stated that it won't make that big of a difference. There is not enough. Jenna stated it would only be \$8,000. Selectman Heinonen stated that this is the fairest way across the board. Selectman Marsh said that the voters did vote but it is unfair because its voted on town wide and many are not users. Selectman Heinonen said it is the same as people not wanting to pay for the school because they have no kids. We are a town as a whole. The motion carries 4-1.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> hearing is for the purpose of accepting a donation of 2.8 acres of land on Old Spofford Rd. for road improvement. Selectman Kilanski makes a motion to open the public hearing. Selectman Leustek seconds the motion. The motion carries 5-0. Margaret Sharra said the board agreed to hold a hearing on accepting the 2.8

acres of land on Old Spofford Rd for road improvements. This road has been discussed over the last 40 years. With the donation of land, the town could widen the road 12 ft, fix the drainage & the poor visibility. Selectman Kilanski asked if the Planning Board had any conditions. Margaret stated that PB approved the subdivision subject to: no building permits for 5 years or until the section of road is expanded an additional 12ft in width and the information is given to the BOS so a public hearing can be scheduled to accept this property. Selectman Marsh said its nice of the Waldschmidt's to donate this land, but it was a concern of the PB back in the 70's and again in the last 15 years, my concern is that the stretch of road there is only maybe a total of  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile that is able to pass 2 vehicles. Never mind a fire truck. I love the idea of getting the property, but the concern is the extra development there but the biggest is the school buses running up and down the hill. Fire trucks, Ambulance and School Bus. Margaret stated that is a substandard class 5 road that needs improvement. The town has an obligation to repair and maintain the roads. The Waldschmidt have already invested money by clearing the land they are donating to the town. There are millions of dollars of homes that are on the road. Selectman Marsh asked what the frontage was. Dale stated 600ft. Mike Doherty stated that its available now and its free. Selectman Kilanski makes a motion to close the public hearing. Selectman Leustek seconds the motion. The motion carries 5-0. Selectman Kilanski makes a motion to accept the land donation. Selectman Stephens seconds the motion. The motion carries 5-0.

### **Second order of business: Minutes & New Business**

The board reviews the minutes of 5-1-19 for approval. Selectman Kilanski makes a motion to approve the minutes. Selectman Stephens seconds the motion. The motion carries 5-0.

The town received the decision from the Superior Court on the Kulick's case. The Judge stated that based on the review of the plans submitted and the record provied by the town, the court finds the decision to approve the plan was appropriate, lawful and amply support by the information in the record. The appeal is denied, and the petition is dismissed. Selectman Heinonen did add that the plaintiff has 10 days to file a motion to reconsider or 30 days to file an appeal at the NH Supreme court.

The board received a letter from the Water/Sewer Department on charging per Dwelling Unit & In-law apartments. Currently our rules and regulations charge a quarterly base fee \$30 for water & \$50 for sewer per dwelling unit. The units are determined by the Assessing Dept. The Water/Sewer Department has identified a few structures that they believe are multi-family that are not being billed accordingly: 161 Ashuelot St, 129 Elm St, 7 Piney Woods & 10 Back Ashuelot Rd. Plus 90 Richmond Rd & 101 Ashuelot St, who were informed by the previous inspector they would not be billed because they were in-law apartments. The Zoning Ordinance does not state that. Rick is asking the board to change the billing for these accounts for the quarter 3 billing cycle. Selectman Kilanski makes a motion to approve the changes to these accounts. Selectman Leustek seconds the motion. The motion carries 5-0.

Water & Sewer Warrant for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Q billing was received in the amount of \$98,982.43 for sewer & \$74,134.08 for water. Selectman Kilanski makes a motion to approve warrant. Selectman Stephens seconds the motion. The motion passes 5-0

Rick stated that there be a newsletter in this billing explaining the rate changes. Also have it posted in the paper.

May 22<sup>nd</sup> @6:30 there will be a work session on the Asset Management that was done on the water/sewer.

An Intent to cut was submitted by Lakeville Shore-map 3 lot 32 and Christopher John-map 5 lot 46.

Oath of Office was submitted for the HDC-Denis Murphy & Vale Cole. Selectman Kilanski makes a motion to approve. Selectman Leustek seconds the motion. The motion carries 5-0.

The board signed 2 letters of support for grant funding. 1. SWRPC grant application to staff a position that would focus on community & economic development planning. 2. WEDC grant application for economic & infrastructure development to the Stone Mt Business Park.

**The board reviews and approves the following financial documents:**

Selectman Kilanski makes a motion to approve the Ambulance billing to Diluzio in the amount of \$14,052.18. Selectman Leustek seconds the motion. The motion carries 5-0.

Selectman Kilanski made a motion to approve the Primex contract for 3 years with worker' comp. Selectman Stephens seconds the motion. The motion carries 5-0.

Selectman Kilanski made a motion to approve the water capital reserve withdrawal in the amount of \$500 paid to Tata & Howard. Selectman Stephens seconds the motion. The motion carries 5-0.

Selectman Kilanski made a motion to approve the updated job description "Police Administrative Assistant". Selectman Stephens seconds the motion. The motion carries 5-0.

**Third order of business Board comment:**

Selectman Kilanski let the board know that the engineered plans for the Ashuelot Fire Station should be done Monday/Tuesday next week.

Selectman Kilanski let Mike Coope know he has a meeting with the church to get a code.

Selectman Kilanski stated that the Budget Committee met at 6pm tonight and appointed Tiffany Melanson as the new budget member and Brandon Day as the minute taker. 1<sup>st</sup> meeting will be October 8<sup>th</sup> at 6pm.

Selectman Kilanski stated that this weekend's Community Day/Town Wide Clean-up Day, 5k race, Local Food Fest went beautifully.

Selectman Leustek added that the Town Clean-up had 105 bags of trash returned plus 98 from Plumb Pak's clean-up day. Selectman Leustek asked the board if we would have a meeting on the 29<sup>th</sup>, the 5<sup>th</sup> Wednesday? Selectman Kilanski would like to wait until the week before to see if there is anything that would need to be taken care of.

Selectman Stephens stated that the Flagger training went well, and everyone passed.

Selectman Heinonen let the board know they had a Beach Committee meeting and had decided not to open the snack shack due to not making any profit. The board agreed not to open it.

**Fourth order of business Public comment:**

Paul Morehouse Sr stated that he was approached by a resident asking him to look at putting a hand rail on the stairs going up to the stage. The board will ask Henri to add a railing.

Mike Coope Thanked Selectman Kilanski for getting the code. Mike then asked Rick if he had any objection to him seeding the area near the fire hydrant that was repaired on Michigan St. Rick stated that it was on his list to do but would not mind if he wanted to take care of it. The Board thanked Mike. Mike let the board know the Trustees are meeting.

Captain Ford thanked Selectman Kilanski for the update on the plan for the Ashuelot Fire Station. Also, asked where we were with the SOG & Job descriptions. Karey stated that she reached out to 2 towns that were given to her. The one town has an ambulance service they hired and the second has not gotten back to her yet.

**Fifth order of business: Nonpublic under RSA 91-A:3II (a)(b)(c)(d)(e)**

N/A

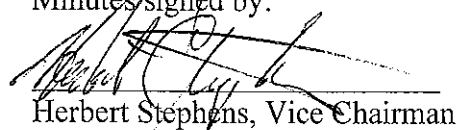
**Sixth order of business: Adjournment**

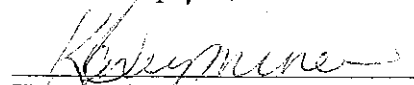
Selectman Heinonen makes a motion to adjourn at 8:50pm. Selectman Kilanski seconds the motion. The motion carries 5-0.

Minutes respectfully submitted:

Karey Miner, Administrator

Minutes signed by:

  
Herbert Stephens, Vice Chairman

  
Karey Miner, Administrator