

REGULAR MEETING PUBLIC SERVICE COMMITTEE of November 2, 2022

Meeting of the Public Service Committee was held in the office of the DPW, 50 Manca Drive at 8:00 AM on November 2, 2022.

Members Present: Councilor James M. Walsh, Chairman; Councilor Alek Dernalowicz; Councilor George C. Tyros; Administrative Assistant Christine Harty

Attendees: Dane E. Arnold, DPW Director; Rob Oliva, City Engineer; Sophie Dorow, Conservation and Planning Agent

CALL TO ORDER

Councilor James M. Walsh called the meeting to order at 8:00 am.

OPEN MEETING RECORDING

ANNOUNCEMENT – any person may make a video or audio recording of an open session of a meeting, or may transmit the meeting through any medium, subject to reasonable requirements of the chair as to the number, placement and operation of equipment used so as not to interfere with the conduct of the meeting. Any person intending to make such recording shall notify the chair forthwith. All documents referenced or used during the meeting must be submitted in duplicate to Secretary of the Committee, pursuant to the Open Meeting and Public Records Law. All documents shall become part of the official record of the meeting.

ABATEMENTS WATER/SEWER

24 Kraft Street: Michelle Cormier, Property Manager is present to represent property for appeal of water/sewer bill. Property had high water usage for billing period of February 2022. Property units were inspected by a plumber, findings were of two toilets needing repair to flappers. Water Dept. inspected property on 2/14/22 at request of property, no issues found, meter working properly. Subsequent meter readings found property use had gone back down to normal. Requesting adjustment to bill, no explanation for excessive use.

Councilor Walsh, excessive bill is not due to anything on the City's end. Would be in favor of abating a portion, half of the difference of the usages 82,20cf and 42,600cf, in the monetary value of the water/sewer charges.

Motion made by Councilor Alek Dernalowicz, second by Councilor George Tyros to allow abatement of half the difference of the usages 82,20cf and 42,600cf, in the monetary value of the water/sewer charges, all in favor, motion passes.

141-143 West Broadway: David Williams, owner of property, present to state case for water/sewer appeal. Received high usage bill for billing period August 2022, after inspection of property one leak was found indoors in basement, leaking out of side of sewer drain and onto basement floor, leak did not cause excessive usage as did the two found outdoors on irrigation line.

Councilor Walsh, finds no basis for further credit to account. Leaks outside on irrigation system were provided credit on adjustment for second meter at time of billing. Suggests providing 1 year for payment of August billing.

Motion made by Councilor Alek Dernalowicz, second by Councilor George Tyros to allow payment plan on charges under appeal (with no accruing interest) over a four billing periods, with the provision all subsequent quarterly billings remain up-to-date, current in payment status, all in favor, motion passes.

900 West Street: Rachel Robert, Executive Secretary to Mayor present representing City in appeal of bill in question for meter located at Wildwood Cemetery. Had received excessively high bill for billing period of September 2022. Contacted Water Dept. billing office immediately to inquire on high use. Water Department went to location of water meter, found leak, system was shut off immediately on 9/15/22. Requesting adjustment to bill.

Dane, water has been shut off for season, repairs will be made in the spring prior to turning system back on.

Councilor Walsh, suggests abating charges to reflect the billing as the average of the four previous periods. Abate all but \$74.33 in charges.

Councilor Tyros inquires on cause of leak, Dane states old water line. Enterprise account for water/sewer to absorb abated charges for leak in system.

Motion made by Councilor George Tyros, second by Councilor Alek Dernalowicz to allow abatement of all but \$74.30 in charges for September 2022 billing, all in favor, motion passes.

29 Union Square: David Kymalainen, representing owner of property, present to state case for water/sewer appeal. Received postcard in mail in September regarding high use detected for the upcoming October 2022 billing. Contacted water billing office immediately. Had plumber at location twice, no findings. Water Dept. was requested to inspect property, on 10/6/22 no issues were found, meter working properly.

Councilor Walsh, finds no basis credit to account. Suggests providing 1 year for payment of October billing.

Motion made by Councilor George Tyros, second by Councilor Alek Dernalowicz to allow payment plan on charges under appeal (with no accruing interest) over a four billing periods, with the provision all subsequent quarterly billings remain up-to-date, current in payment status, all in favor, motion passes.

38 Main Street: Anne LeBlanc, owner of property, present to appeal November 2022 billing for property 38 Main Street, billing for apartments & John's Sport Shop. Received notice of high usage on October 12th from water billing office. Notice was of home property, 177 Summer Street, addition of water system explained increase. At time of conversation Jessica St. John of the billing office also noted high use detected for meter at location of 38 Main Street. Contacted plumber immediately and found leaking toilet in an apartment. Recognizes use of water at this location but appealing for some relief of charges.

Dane, November billing is in the amount of \$4,749.50.

Councilor Walsh & Councilor Tyros suggest providing relief of sewer charges. Walsh states ½ credit on the sewer portion, the difference in consumption of the current bill in appeal and average consumption of account.

Motion made by Councilor Alek Dernalowicz, second by Councilor George Tyros to allow abatement on sewer charges of half the difference of high bill in appeal and average usage of account, all in favor, motion passes.

Last customer to appeal is running late, Committee briefly moves on with PSC agenda awaiting arrival.

20 Bertha Avenue: Stephanie Muniz, owner of property, present to state case for water/sewer appeal. Received high water bill for billing period October 2022, after inspection of property found toilet on property running. Found both toilets at property to be dated, replaced both. Requesting relief of water bill charges, states average billing runs around \$250.00 per quarter.

Councilor Walsh, suggests providing half credit of current billing amount \$726.00 and average of 250.00.

Councilor Dernalowicz requests allowing the customer to pay charges over two billings periods

Motion made by Councilor George Tyros, second by Councilor Alek Dernalowicz to allow abatement on ½ the difference in charges of the current billing in appeal, \$726.00 and the average billing charges of \$250.00. Abatement in the amount of \$238.00 provided, allowing customer the time of two billing periods, no interest accrual for payment, all in favor, motion passes.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

Motion to accept the minutes of the meeting dated August 25, September 15 & October 13, 2022, as written. Motion made to accept minutes by Councilor George C. Tyros, second by Councilor Alek Dernalowicz, all in favor motion carries.

REPORTS FROM DEPARTMENT HEADS

Dane Arnold:

Currently in Robillard – Douglas area preparing for paving. Few concrete ramps left. Also preparing sidewalks for paving on Draper and Foss. Hoping to wrap up before snow falls. Focus is on driveways, ramps. Also placing loom and seem behind berms. Crestwood is complete. Unable to get to walk on Lawrence (previously discussed).

In process of televising sewer lines in City. Found a collapsed section in the line on Dyer St., will need to excavate and reline.

(Briefly interrupted for arrival of homeowner for Water/Sewer appeal of 20 Bertha Avenue)

Pump station out in sludge landfill area with forced main. Pumps are no longer working well. Board of Health are responsible for pump for solid waste. Sewer department was going to replace leachate pump station. Departments will bid together.

Crystal Lake transmission line waiting to hear on funding, application for design is in.

Currently down in crew at DPW, pursuing hiring.

Have taken old building at Crystal Lake down, looking into a plot property there for the idea of columbarium for cremated remains.

Rob Oliva:

New fitness court completed at High School by tennis courts to be completed soon, interesting. Static exercise stations, modernized, ex. QR codes available to download with exercise instructions to follow.

City purchased outdoor skating rink. Plan is to install at Jackson Park on the basketball courts. Once cold weather sets in DPW will install. Hoping lights out at Pleasant St. Park could be used for the outdoor skating.

Sludge landfill project currently with Conservation Commission. Contract with Tighe and Bond for peer review. Review was completed, received comments, they are minor and will be addressed. Next step would be action by Commission and final comment letter drafted by Tighe and Bond. Number of steps to come.

Sophie Dorow:

Much of Rob Oliva's overview of Sludge Landfill covers the department update. Next Conservation Committee meeting is on November 14th, unsure if project will be ready for a vote at that time.

Notice of Intent was filed for the Culvert at Keyes Road Project.

FINANCE COMMITTEE REQUESTS

- a. Request from Department of Public Works for \$80,000.00 transfer from Available City Funds to the Vehicle Fuel line item. Request due to increasing fuel costs projected over course of fiscal year
- b. Request from Department of Public Works for \$5,000.00 transfer from Available City Funds to the Energy and Utilities line item. Request due to forecasted 60% increase cost in electricity and natural gas costs.
- c. Request from Department of Public Works for change in title of the GIS Coordinator to GIS Coordinator and DPW Assistant. Increase will be result of additional duties placed on position following the elimination of Senior Civil Engineer position back on July 1, 2022. Removal of Senior Civil Engineer position eliminated salary of \$75,000.00. Increase in salary of requested updated title to GIS Coordinator is \$20,000.00. The additional salary increase will be paid out of Water and Sewer Enterprise Accounts, not affecting the City's budget.

REPORTS AND REQUESTS FROM COUNCILORS

Councilor Alek Dernalowicz: Inquires of Partridge Street repairs. Dane, can be patched but really beyond repair. Can place on list highlighted and present to Mayor in spring for paving.

Also inquiring on removal of City trees located at 43 Whitney Street. Trees were too be taken down. Dane, bucket truck was down, also placed on Department list in order of necessity. Will inquire on time frame for removal.

Councilor George C. Tyros: No requests today.

Councilor James Walsh: No requests today.

Motion to adjourn, Motion made by Councilor Alek Dernalowicz, second by Councilor George Tyros to Adjourn the meeting at 9:17 am. Roll Call vote: Councilor Alek Dernalowicz yes, Councilor George C. Tyros yes, Councilor James Walsh yes. Motion Passes.

Next meeting scheduled as needed.

All documents submitted at this meeting are stored in the office of the DPW, 50 Manca Drive, for any review.

Respectfully submitted:

Christine M. Harty, Administrative Assistant