



## TOWN OF HOPEDALE

78 Hopedale Street - P.O. Box 7  
Hopedale, Massachusetts 01747

Tel: 508-634-2203 ext. 212  
Fax: 508-634-2200

Board of Water & Sewer  
Commissioners

James Morin, Chair  
Robert Burns  
Christine Burke

### Hopedale Board of Water & Sewer Commissioners Minutes of March 13, 2014

The Hopedale Board of Water & Sewer Commissioners met on March 13, 2014 in the Draper Room of the Town Hall. Members present were Chairperson Morin, Commissioner Burke and Commissioner Burns.

Chairperson Morin made a motion to open the meeting at 7:00PM.

#### **Consent Items**

Minutes of the January 9<sup>th</sup> meeting – Commissioner Burke made a motion to approve the minutes of January 9<sup>th</sup> seconded by Commissioner Burns and made unanimous by Chairperson Morin.

#### **Appointments**

- A. Solar Energy Discussion – Kurt Penney from IRC, Industrial Roofing Companies, came before the Board to discuss the offset of energy costs through the installation of onsite solar panels. He stated they are addressing security concerns along with looks. Mr. Penney explained the town could go with a fixed long term rate or \$.08 for 20 years or a lesser rate with an ongoing escalator, \$.06 with a 2% escalator per year.

Mr. Penney stated the panels would be installed by a 3<sup>rd</sup> party panel company and they would be in charge of maintaining the panels. If the system breaks down, the panel company would pay the repair costs. Mr. Penney stated his company is working with Solar City, a PPA provider. Solar City will receive the Federal Tax credits and they get to depreciate the equipment over 5 ½ years. Tim asked Mr. Penney where the \$.05 that was previously spoken about went and he stated that things have changed. Mr. Penney stated that we are now talking \$.06 with a 2% escalator where before we were talking about \$.05 with a 3% escalator. Tim asked Mr. Penney why we would not just hire his company to put on the panels and forego the third party company. Mr. Penney stated we would not get the tax credits. There are many risks to doing ourselves.

The Board and Mr. Penney discussed the possible location of panels. Commissioner Burns stated he would like to see it include the Water Department. Tim asked if the excess would be sold to National Grid. Mr. Penney stated it could be sold to the Water Department. Mr. Penney stated if we locked in at \$.08/kwh versus \$.16/kwh for 1.2M kWh it would save the Town \$90,000 per year. Currently we spend approximately \$127,000 annually on electricity between water and wastewater.

The Board asked what happens to the panels after the 20 years. Mr. Penney stated we can have the panels removed and taken away, we can purchase them at fair market value or we can negotiate to continue to purchase power. The panels are warranted for 25 years with an estimated life of 40 years. If the PPA provider goes out of business it becomes owned by someone else. Commissioner Burns asked what occurs if panels become obsolete shortly after installation (within 5 to 10 years) to which Mr. Penney replied that the owner of the panels can always change panels as an upgrade.

Tim stated that he is still interested in looking into canopy solar panels. Commissioner Burns would like them to look into doing enough to cover both departments. Commissioner Burke asked what would be our preliminary engineering costs. Mr. Penney stated zero. To cover both departments Mr. Penney stated they would need 5 acres.

### **New Business**

- A. **Internship Program** – Tim informed the Board that he is looking into getting 2 High School Interns, one for the Water Department and one for the Sewer Department. These individuals would be on site for about 1 ½ hours per day and they would be taught lab work, water quality, chemistry, etc. Candidates will be sent over sometime in June for interviews.
- B. **Weston & Sampson update** – The engineering firm has been on site, met with the operators and toured the facility. They will continue to work with the operators and provide recommendations in order to comply with the new EPA permit.
- C. **Mill Street wells** – Three new wells have been installed at the Mill Street well-field. One pumping 40 gallons/minute, one 60 gallons/minute and the other about 105 gallons/minute. The next step is to contact DEP to see how we can tie these wells into the system.

### **Old Business**

- A. **Sewer Budget** – The Board was informed that this budget is level funded. Finance Committee recommended 2% salary increase since negotiations are still ongoing. Ken Webb from the Sewer Department stated that overtime did not increase since they seem to have over budgeted this fiscal year. Tim and Ken went over budget numbers and Tim stated that our current sewer rate is \$4.97/100

cubic feet and he is recommending an increase to \$5.99/100 cubic feet. He stated a \$5.49/100 cubic feet increase would cover this budget but \$5.99 should create an additional \$70,000 need to increase retained earnings. Tim stated that some local communities are still higher than the \$5.99/100 cubic feet. Commissioner Burns asked if we could do anything like giving users coupons for things like installing low flow toilets. Tim stated some towns do that but we cannot afford to do this. Ken informed the Board that the new permit is taking a lot of time and at least a 3 man staff is needed. Commissioner Burns asked if there was any way to contract with Vinny for a per diem. Tim stated that Vinny is definitely willing to do that.

**B. Water Budget** – Tim stated that the Water Department has a working budget of \$617,883.358. Tim stated that the current rates do cover our budget. Tim informed the Board that he will get a breakdown of assessments for them. He also stated that the Water and Wastewater Departments were to meet with Finance on March 25<sup>th</sup> in the Draper Room.

**Correspondence – None**

Other topics not reasonable anticipated by chairman within 48 hours – none

Chairperson Morin made a motion at 9:03 to adjourn and go into executive session to discuss pending litigation not to reconvene seconded by Commissioner Burns and made unanimous by Commissioner Burke.

Board was polled, Commissioner Burke – yes, Commissioner Burns – yes, Chairperson Morin - yes.

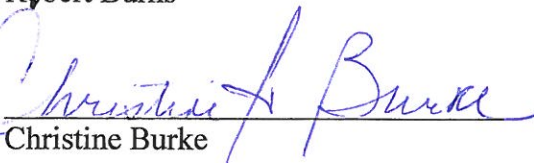
I attest to the best of my knowledge that this is a true and accurate recording of the minutes of March 13, 2014.



James Morin – Chairperson



Robert Burns



Christine Burke