



WATER DIVISION

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John M. Driscoll, *General Manager*

**Water Commissioners' Meeting
March 4, 2015**

Members present were: Gregg Edwards, Chris Stewart

Employees present were: John Driscoll, Ron Davan

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Dana.

The agenda was approved on a motion by Gregg, seconded by Chris, 2-0 in favor.

The January 14, 2015 minutes were approved on a motion by Gregg, seconded by Chris, 2-0 in favor.

New Business:

The Manager updated the Board on the status of securing the USDA Loan funds necessary to re-paint or re-build the Johnson Avenue Water Storage Tank. Tighe & Bond had submitted a sizeable data request to the Manager and the Superintendent in order to complete the Water Plant's application to the USDA, and a determination still needed to be made as to which option was more cost-efficient. Tighe & Bond was hoping to secure these funds before the end of FY2015.

The Manager had gotten an updated version of Tighe & Bond's quotation to bring the Water Plant's SCADA system up to date. It was now over 10 years old and the Manager and Superintendent both had a number of concerns. The original consultant for all problems related to the SCADA system was Pioneer Controls who had moved out of the state several years ago. This had forced the Water Plant to go to Lavolette Controls instead, which had been smooth thus far but many more problems with the original system could still present themselves. Further, the master computer at the office for the SCADA was making a lot of noise, which, in the Manager's opinion necessitated its replacement with a new unit compatible with every other computer in the office. The remote terminal units at the various water well sites and stations were approaching or had reached the end of their useful life as short-lived capital assets and a lot of them no longer were supported by their manufacturer.

The Board felt that...

Old Business:

The Manager had requested of Odyssey Advisors (formerly Primoris Benefit Advisors) to perform an updated actuarial study for the Water Plant's 5 employees and 1 retiree. He anticipated completion of this updated study by Odyssey Advisors by mid-2015.

The Manager had given the Board copies of the two documents that he had provided the Town for the publication of their FY2014 Annual Town Report book. These documents were the FY2014 Water Report and the FY14 Water Financial Statements

The Superintendent gave the Board a quick review of the many service line breaks/leaks and water line breaks/leaks that the Water Plant had to contend with in February 2015 due to the extremely cold conditions experienced. The Manager stated that there had been much overtime necessary, some of it on weekends, to pay out in the month of February 2015 to restore water service to customers in an acceptable amount of time. The Superintendent stated that there would be many places to go to in the spring to make repairs to lawns and roadways.

The Manager planned to make some changes to the methodology used currently by the Water Secretary to collect water bill payments from the Water Plant's roughly 2,200 customers. The Manager had analyzed a group of water customers representing nearly 20% of all of them who routinely, for various reasons, paid their water bills late. It is clearly stated on every water bill that the water bill payment is due in full 30 days after the bill date shown. The Manager stated that roughly 400 water customers are paying their total water balance due in the 31-60 or 61-90 day timeframe. He had also learned that the Water Secretary would often call customers to "remind" them to pay their water bill at some point within the 31-90 day timeframe. The Manager thought this to be a ridiculous waste of employee resources given that these water customers were adults, not children.

The Manager stated that the water customers' first notice of a water bill due was the bill itself. If the bill was not paid by day 46 then the billing system generated a termination letter (second notice) that would be mailed out to the water customer at some point before day 60. If this second notice was also ignored by the water customer then, at the Water plant's earliest convenience, that water customer's service would be terminated, only to be re-connected for a \$50 fee during normal operations hours. This would not happen till another water termination notice (third) was attached to the front door of the premises to have its water shut off. These phone calls being made by the Water Secretary were essentially fourth notifications to the water customer and were unnecessary.

The Manager stated to the Board that there would likely be more customers with water shut off in the next quarter than previously. This was the only way to lessen the peaks and valleys in the cash flow experienced regularly; the Water Plant only billed 4 times per year as opposed to the Light Plant which billed 36 times per year. There were no

objections by the Board as far as making less phone calls or shutting more customers' water service off in order to obtain payment of water bills.

Excessive use of the backhoe by the Water Plant due to the numerous problems experienced in February 2015 generated a repair bill for \$2,645 to Nitco. The Superintendent told the Board that a linkage had broken and needed to be repaired immediately in order to have continued use of the department's only backhoe.

The Manager said that the hydrant shoveling schedule was way behind what it usually is due to the excessive amount of February 2015 snow. With only 3 personnel in the field all day long it will take weeks to re-shovel out the roughly 450 hydrants in the system.

There being no other Open Session business to discuss, on a motion by Chris, seconded by Gregg, 2-0 in favor the Water Commissioners' Meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

John M. Driscoll



General Manager