Exeter Water & Sewer Advisory Committee

DRAFT Meeting Minutes

January 14, 2015

1. **Call Meeting to Order**

Chairman Bob Kelly called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm in the Nowak Room of the Exeter Town Offices building. Other members present were Vice Chair Gene Lambert, David Michelsen, Jim Tanis and John Gilbert.

In addition, several members of town staffs were in attendance including Board of Selectmen members Julie Gilman, Don Clement, Dan Chartrand, and Anne Surnam; Town Manager Russ Dean; DPW Director Jennifer Perry; W/S Managing Engineer Mike Jeffers; Economic Development Director Darren Winham. Stratham representatives in attendance included Dave Canada, John Boisvert, and Town Administrator Paul Deschaine.

Mr. Kelly noted that he will be shuffling the posted agenda to accommodate out of town and specialty guests who were in attendance for specific items.

2. **Presentation on potential Portsmouth wastewater disposal option – Underwood Engineers**

Keith Pratt, President of Underwood Engineers in Portsmouth, gave a Power Point presentation on a potential wastewater disposal option to rebuilding our own facility on Newfields Road. The presentation described the technical and financial aspects of building a pipeline from a re-constituted Exeter headworks facility to the Pease Tradeport and the Wastewater Treatment Facility on that property. The plan included details of reworking our facility into a simpler headworks and pumping operation with no discharge to the Squamscott River. Instead, Stratham flows would be received at our facility and pumped to Portsmouth where treatment and discharge to the Piscataqua River would be conducted.

Discussion ensued among Committee members and attending staff with Underwood staff.

ACTION ITEM: It was agreed that the WSAC will develop a spreadsheet comparing costs and issues associated with this option with the Exeter Facilities Plan points presented by Wright Pierce Engineers at the December meeting. This summary will be discussed at a future Board of Selectmen meeting, probably within the next month or so.

3. **Presentation on Infiltration and Inflow (I/I) program update – Underwood Engineers**

Keith Pratt, President of Underwood Engineers in Portsmouth, gave a Power Point presentation on the recent efforts of the town and Underwood towards investigating the sources of and removing I/I from the town's wastewater collection system. Descriptions of locations, costs to remove, and estimated gallonage removed were presented.

After reviewing the specific project successes, the WSAC agreed that the current strategy of conducting specific site investigations, such as smoke testing and flow metering, based on historical problem areas would result in less expensive, more focused repairs to the system as opposed to wholesale pipeline replacements for entire neighborhoods. After a few years of cleaning up the problem areas, pipeline replacements can be revisited.

To this end, at Selectman Chartrand's request, the WSAC agreed to add $90,000 to the Sewer budget to seed a newly created "I/I program" line item.

4. Other Business

a. Epping Road TIF

Darren Winham, the town's Economic Development Director, gave an update to the WSAC on a proposed Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district proposed for along the Epping Road industrial corridor. The specific discussion items related to the utility proposals associated with implementing the TIF. Mr. Winham described a $6.8M water and sewer utility improvement program to extend utilities to Route 101 and beyond to accommodate commercial and industrial development in the associated zones in this area. A letter report by Hoyle Tanner Engineers of Manchester was distributed that described the technical details of the utility expansion.

The TIF would be set up such that the utility projects would not be implemented unless there was C/I development to pay for them. Therefore, no debt would be incurred without a known payback source. Mr. Winham described a potential taxable land area in the TIF of over $135M versus a breakeven for the water and sewer projects of only $23M of development.

Details of the TIF will be presented at the Saturday, January 31 town deliberative session.

b. Water Usage proposal from Stratham

Mr. Kelly had distributed a copy of a proposal from Stratham regarding the water portion of a utility sharing agreement being discussed. Mr. Kelly also distributed a draft Program Points from the Town of Exeter's perspective. Mr. Deschaine of Stratham indicated that they wanted to have an agreement in place before their town meeting in March.

ACTION ITEM: The WSAC and BOS will be reviewing the program points and getting back to Stratham representatives in the next few weeks.

5. Old Business

a. 2015 Budget

The final 2015 budget was noted to be on the town's website. All of the general items discussed at the November 2014 meeting were approved. Additional CIP items including some maintenance vehicles and equipment were added at a later Budget Committee

meeting. Reference was made to the additional $90,000 previously discussed to be added to the town's I/I investigations budget. The budget will be discussed at the January 31 deliberative session at the High School auditorium.

b. Rates Review

Mr. Gilbert and Ms. Perry developed a draft Request for Qualifications for a comprehensive rate and impact fee study to be conducted next year. It is anticipated that a consultant would be selected by our March meeting and new rates would be instituted sometime this summer. Mr. Kelly observed that we may still have to have an interim rate adjustment in Q1 2015 because the sewer account is showing negative monthly balances since July. Reference was made to earlier rate analyses that recommended an annual increase of 1-2% to cover general expense and project needs. This as opposed to larger increases every few years. Mr. Kelly reiterated that the WSAC had not recommended a rate increase in over two years.

6. <u>Review and approve draft Minutes of November 12, 2014 meeting</u>

The minutes for the November meeting had not been posted for review. They will be reviewed at the next meeting in March.

7. <u>Water/Sewer Bill Abatement Requests and/or discussions with customers</u>

Originally three abatement requests were presented to the WSAC via email for review. Due to the extensive agenda including presentations from out of town guests, it was agreed that the abatement requests would be tabled until the March meeting.

8. <u>Regular Business</u>

a. Projects Update: Mike Jeffers, W/S Managing Engineer

Mr. Jeffers reported that the Groundwater Treatment Plant (GWTP) construction appeared to be on schedule. Concrete footings had been poured, some superstructure framing installed and some site work being conducted. Depending on winter weather, it was anticipated that some equipment may be installed over the next few weeks.

ACTION ITEM: Mr. Jeffers will notify our consultants on this project, Weston and Sampson, to attend the March WSAC meeting to show pictures and discuss the construction schedule.

b. Financial Reports

December 2014 financial reports were previously distributed to the committee via email from Laura Hill of the Finance Department. General discussion ensued on specific aspects of the report. Note was made that the fund balances appear in good shape and projected revenues for 2014 are on track with budgeted expenses.

After the town votes on the 2015 budget, a revised revenues and expenses summary will be presented.

9. Committee Calendar

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 11, 2015 at 6:30 pm in the Nowak Room at the Town Offices. The preliminary agenda will include abatement requests, Rate Study consultants review, Weston and Sampson presentation on GWTP construction progress, and a discussion of the wastewater disposal and cost options between updating our WWTF versus piping to Portsmouth.

Mr. Kelly adjourned the meeting at 8:40 pm.

Respectively submitted,

Robert Kelly
Recording Secretary pro tem