

**SOUTH BERWICK SEWER DISTRICT
180 MAIN STREET
SOUTH BERWICK, ME 03908**

**MINUTES OF MEETING
AUGUST 7, 2006**

ROLL CALL: Al Roberge, George Gray, Mark Forsyth, Richard Dionne, Dennis Fontaine, Bonnie Bishop (Office Manager)

CALL TO ORDER: Mr. Roberge called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

MINUTES OF MEETING:

Mr. Fontaine inquired about the decision regarding the golf course. It was explained to him by the other trustees who were present at the previous meeting. Mr. Gray motioned to accept the minutes of the previous meeting as written. Motion seconded by Mr. Forsyth. Motion passed unanimously (Mr. Fontaine abstained as he was not present at that meeting).

PUBLIC AUDIENCE: none

COMMUNICATIONS

1. Ms. Bishop informed the trustees that the district has received another check from FEMA in the amount of \$4,000, bringing the total amount received to \$23,000.
2. Letter from J. Russell Tarason to trustees with backup correspondence

Mr. Dionne noted that the date on the attached letter from Kathy Waters that Mr. Tarason had cited at the previous meeting was from back in 2000, adding that things have changed between then and now. Mr. Roberge stated that the district had been unable to charge for the third unit at 77 Norton Street when it was first discovered because of the lawsuit between Mr. Tarason and the Town, and the Main Street project was just started this year. Mr. Fontaine questioned if the trustees had planned to bill Mr. Tarason for the third unit at Norton Street. Mr. Dionne stated that they had not planned on billing for it until after the suit was settled with the Town. Mr. Tarason eventually lost the suit, then reapplied for the third unit and now has permission to have it. The trustees discussed the sewer history regarding 77 Norton Street. It was then noted that the 2004 letter from Mr. Harmon that Mr. Tarason included in his correspondence to the trustees clearly stated there would be a charge for the connection on Main Street. Mr. Dionne noted that the difference between the two properties is that the property on Main Street was already

connected to sewer when it was purchased and improved upon, and the property on Norton Street was not. After some further discussion, Mr. Gray suggested having Mr. Harmon look into whether or not the policy regarding connection charges changed between 2000 and now, as the trustees believe it has, and then write to Mr. Tarason explaining why he would still need to be charged the connection fees that he is disputing.

3. Mr. Dionne brought up a question as to why the Mobile Station is charged for 2 debt services. That led to a discussion regarding how consumption factors into how debt service is configured for different types of businesses. Mr. Fontaine stated it is his belief that the debt service is configured on consumption, but what is going down the drain is also factored in. He referenced a study the district had done previously, noting that the whole packet was given to Kathy, who was the Office Manager at the time. He added that it was a three ring binder with the study and the notes inside. After a brief discussion it was decided to see if Mr. Harmon might have the packet. Mr. Gray suggested the trustees look at it again and perhaps post it on a website.

4. SBSB to Steve and Tina Lincoln re: assessment

Ms. Bishop asked a question regarding the interest rates applied to sewer assessments. She stated that when an assessed property owner takes out a loan with the district, it is at 4.5%, and if not the owner is charged the interest rate equal to the tax bill, which this year is 7.75%, noting that the district changes their rates in January based upon what the town did on July 1. The Lincolns were billed for the assessment with a due date of August 31. To this date they have paid \$1,000. Her question is whether the balance should be charged interest at a rate of 4.5% or 7.75%. Mr. Fontaine stated that they should be charged the town rate (7.75%) on the balance. After some discussion it was agreed that up to the point that the assessment is due, the rate should be 4.5%. If the assessment is not paid within the thirty days given and no mortgage is taken out then the property owner should be billed at the town rate from that point forward. It was also decided to inform the Lincolns of this in writing. The trustees then discussed late mortgage payments and what recourse the district has to collect its money. Mr. Gray suggested that perhaps the trustees should discuss the issue with their attorney regarding future mortgages.

5. Letters from MMA regarding Workers Compensation Fund and Employees Health Trust

Mr. Fontaine asked if any motions were needed on either of these items of correspondence. Mr. Dionne answered in the negative, stating that they are just informational items. Ms. Bishop added that the health plan is still the same plan, there have just been some deductible changes.

6. SBSB to Maine State Retirement System re: employee participation

Ms. Bishop explained that a new employee was hired on a 90 day probationary period and was offered both health and retirement after the probationary period was over. It was

discovered at that time that there is no probationary period for the retirement plan, which should have been offered from the date of hire. The employee was given the choice to join or not join. He declined to join the retirement plan at this time with the intent of joining on his one year anniversary date. He has also signed a document to that effect.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Mr. Roberge asked when the sign at the treatment plant was going to be cleaned up. Mr. Fontaine stated he thought that was a done deal. The issue will be looked into.
2. Mr. Gray asked where the district stood on software. Mr. Fontaine and Mr. Forsyth stated that they signed the contract with Continental. Mr. Dionne asked if they had figured out what the bills would look like. Ms. Bishop stated that there are two ways the district could go. One option would be to mail a postcard-type bill (she showed the trustees the Berwick bill as an example), which would cost only \$.24 per card to mail out. The only drawback is that some people don't like that their information is readable by anyone, even though that information is public information. The other option is to stick with a paper bill where the bottom third could be torn off and returned. This would require the use of envelopes and mean higher postage (\$.39 per bill for those going out of town, \$.37.1 for those mailed within town). Mr. Roberge noted that the water district tried going with the postcard format in the past and received a lot of complaints. Ms. Bishop stated that the savings in postage alone would be \$600 per year. After some discussion, it was decided to try the postcard format, and revisit the issue if the district receives a lot of complaints. Mr. Gray also suggested mailing a letter prior to the district members explaining the format change ahead of time. It was also suggested that the district put a posting on the website and possibly take out an ad in the Weekly Sentinel as well. Mr. Fontaine asked Ms. Bishop to see if Continental will set up a dummy of the full page bill format just in case the postcards do not work out.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Mr. Fontaine informed the trustees that he is now the chairman of the Economic Development Committee. Mike Lassel is the Vice Chair. He stated that all the committee is dealing with right now is the proposed Industrial Park off Route 236.
2. Mr. Dionne broached the idea of perhaps changing the district meeting date as it seems that the meetings have to be moved quite frequently due to holidays. Mr. Roberge asked if it would affect the paying of the bills. Mr. Dionne noted it would only affect them the first month the change would be in effect. After some discussion, Mr. Gray noted that there will likely always be problems and postponements either way. Mr. Fontaine pointed out that it does appear there would be fewer conflicts with holidays if the meeting date was moved to the third Monday of the month instead of the third. Mr. Dionne asked the trustees to think about it, and it was decided to come back to the issue at the next meeting.

3. The Economic Development Committee is trying to set up workshops with the Sewer District, Water District, Town Council, and possibly Planning Board to see what these various groups are looking for in the process of trying to improve the town. They then will also be trying to meet with the downtown business people with these same groups, followed by a similar meeting with those who have home based businesses in town. Mr. Gray noted that the commitment the Town Council made regarding regular workshops with the Water and Sewer Districts seems to have been dropped.

OPERATIONS

1. Generator/pump discussion

The trustees decided to table discussion on the generator and pump until next month's meeting as neither Mr. Clough nor Mr. Harmon were present.

OTHER: none

PAYING OF THE BILLS

Mr. Fontaine made a motion to pay the bills. Motion seconded by Mr. Forsyth. A discussion then ensued regarding a bill from Mick Construction. Following the discussion regarding that and a couple other bills, Mr. Forsyth motioned to amend his original motion to pay the bills after reviews of those bills that are in question in the amount of \$460,293.27, with the stipulation that Mr. Dionne review the bills with Mr. Clough. Motion seconded by Mr. Dionne. Motion passed unanimously. Mr. Gray then pointed out the increase in the gas surcharge on the bill from Bit 'O Green, questioning whether Bit 'O Green could increase the surcharge from the original proposal. After looking at it carefully it did appear that they could. After some discussion it was decided that perhaps the district should solicit new bids for next year. Mr. Gray also inquired about the charge on the credit card to Horizon Solution. Mr. Dionne added that he was curious about that charge as well. Ms. Bishop replied that Mr. Clough called to make her aware of the charge and stated that the amount should be charged to the sludge account. The trustees then unanimously voted to pass the original motion by Mr. Fontaine as amended.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Dionne motioned to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by Mr. Fontaine. Motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:51 p.m.