

approved 6/13/22



Town of Carver

North Carver Water District Commission

Posted in accordance with the Provisions of M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 20B

Meeting minutes for May 9, 2022, The North Carver Water District Commissioners met, today, at the Carver Town Hall, Meeting Room # 3, 108 Main Street, Carver, Massachusetts.

Attendees: Kevin Tracey, Chairman; Stephen P. Romano, Commissioner; Mike Palimeri, Commissioner

Absent:

Also present: Greg Lizotte, SWSS

Meeting called to order at 5:31 PM, by Mr. Tracey

Mr. Tracey – I will turn the meeting over to Mr. Romano to begin the reorganization.

Reorganization:

*Motion to nominate Kevin Tracey as the Chairman of the NCWD: Mr. Palimeri
Second: Mr. Romano
Approved: Unanimous (3-0)*

Mr. Romano – Meeting is now turned back over to the Chairman, Kevin Tracey

Rte. 44 Development, Urban Renewal Plan:

Mr. Tracey – Nothing new. The zoning changes were passed at Town Meeting. From here it goes to Planning. We will hopefully get an end user soon.

Service Connections on Santana Way:

Mr. Tracey – The Assistant to the Treasurer Collector sent me an email regarding serial Numbers to some of the service connections being made. Do you have anything? Mr. Lizotte – I don't have anything on that. Mr. Tracey – We will be doing a billing soon. Please reach out

to the Assistant to Treasurer Collector and get the information to her. I am told that the Plumbing Inspector did indicate that he has been doing inspections on Santana Way. I am not convinced that all the properties have been connected to the Water system but I am seeing that some properties have been connected. We need to follow through to make sure that our billings go out correctly.

Discussion:

- Montello Street - Mr. Tracey – It is progressing. I am not sure what the timeline is but I think they will want it done by the end of the summer.

Water Operator Report:

Mr. Tracey – Anything new? Mr. Lizotte – Everything is running as it should. We did start up the bulk water fill station. Mr. Tracey – I did pass the information for the passcode to the parties that will be using the fill station; I assume they will be starting soon, or already have started.

Bills Payable:

*Motion to pay the bills in Batch #1, in the amount of \$1,944.29: Mr. Romano
Second: Mr. Palimeri*

Discussion: Mr. Romano - There is a Copeland and Page bill, why are we getting this? Mr. Tracey – We needed to get clarification and they helped us with the language for the Hillwood agreement. Mr. Romano – It is for \$1100; that's a lot of money. Mr. Tracey – This is our part in getting this agreement completed. Mr. Palimeri – Is this bill part of a larger bill? Mr. Tracey – Yes, I am sure it is. Mr. Romano – It took 6 hours for them to do our part? Mr. Tracey – It bounced back and forth; it takes time. Mr. Romano – The solar panels are not here either. Mr. Tracey – The Verizon bill is there as well. Mr. Romano – It is two months.

Approved: Unanimous (3-0)

*Motion to pay the bills in Batch #2, in the amount of \$6,000.00: Mr. Romano
Second: Mr. Palimeri*

Discussion:

Approved: Unanimous (3-0)

Other Discussion:

Mr. Romano - I have watched other Boards (Planning Board, Selectboard) meet and just before the end of their meeting, they have Board Member notes. Can we start something like that? This gives us an opportunity to discuss things that may not be on the agenda. These can be suggestions for future agenda's, etc. Mr. Palimeri – I was going to ask to have something put on for the next meeting. Mr. Tracey – We can do that. We will make it a regular thing.

Minutes: April 11, 2022:

*Motion to approve the minutes of April 11, 2022, as written: Mr. Romano
Second: Mr. Palimeri*

Discussion:

Approved: Unanimous (3-0)

Correspondence:

- Mr. Tracey – Free Cash – In general, there is a misunderstanding on how the mechanisms within the NCWD operate, specifically District Improvement Financing. In 2010, The Town adopted 40Q which is a revenue share mechanism. It was the kind of thing that the former Director of Finance understood. They were always able to explain it to those necessary. The current Finance Director up until a conversation with her at the end of the first Town Meeting night, she came to me and said she finally figured out what this is (The Department of Revenue Report). That was the piece of the puzzle that she hadn't seen. This was a verbal conversation. Based on the numbers that were in the Town Meeting Warrant, clearly, they do not understand. The Finance Comm/Selectboard/Finance Director Took the Dif revenue money from our budget and put it into free cash. I didn't agree with it at the time. Mr. Romano – As soon as they stuck it in there, they couldn't take it out. They should have shared before they moved forward. We still look like we aren't making any money. Mr. Tracey – You get to the point of Town Meeting, there is only so much you can do. Once the warrant is posted you can't really change it. Mr. Romano – They could have said more on the floor of the Town Meeting. We asked that our revenue not be tampered with and that we get credit for our revenue. Mr. Tracey – I will continue the conversation with Finance Director and the Finance Committee. I will see if I can get everyone on the same page.
- Mr. Tracey – The latest expense report; Electric is still higher due to the lack of Eversource credits. I attached the proposal for the membranes. I will put it on the agenda for next meeting. Mr. Tracey – Yes, we will have to continue conversations about this. Mr. Palimeri – This was an expense we should have known we had coming up. This could be Hillwood's. This shouldn't have been a big ask. I really caution how we do business in the future, with future projects. Mr. Tracey – We have known this expense was coming and we had money tucked away. Mr. Palimeri – We could've kept it there.

- Marion Drive fill station has been opened.
- FM Generator is still looking for payment. I advised them that it would not be coming.
- I will still pursue, with the Director of Finance, an audit by the Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services, specifically geared toward looking for revenue that hasn't been getting to the NCWD the way that it should. I do have an attorney available if needed.
- We have been reupped for our liability insurance, next year. That invoice will come sometime in June/July. Payment will be due by the end of July.

Public Hearing:

Mr. Palimeri recused himself at 6:00PM and left the meeting.

Mr. Tracey – Read into record -

Legal Notice

In accordance with the provisions of MGL Chapter 41, section 69B, the North Carver Water District Board of Water Commissioner will hold a public hearing on May 9, 2022 at 6:00 PM in the Carver Town Hall, Meeting Room 4.

To discuss a 2.5% increase to the Water Rate Schedule.

Changes to the Water Rates will be effective on July 1, 2022

Any persons interested and wishing to be heard should appear at the time and place designated. A copy of the proposed changes is on file at the Carver Town Hall Office of Planning, Environment and Permitting and may be reviewed during normal business hours.

Mary Dormer, 162 Plymouth Street – On behalf of Carver's Concerned Citizens.

With inflation, we would like to ask you to forgo this increase this year. Costs have gone up. 2.5% is a lot. There is only a small amount of people on the Town's water. I was at Town Meeting but may have missed this night; I believe that Alan Germaine said that you have \$750K in surplus. Mr. Romano – We have \$500K. We have two accounts. One account is created by people who pay their betterment. Sometimes the new buyer of a home wants to pay that betterment in full. That note goes sometimes for 29 years. We must take any money paid early and keep it for 29 years without touching it. There is another emergency fund to pay for updating the membranes. These will cost \$200K +. Ms. Dormer – Do you have to ask for 2.5%? Is there any wiggle room? Mr. Romano – Under MGL, you can raise the 2.5% every year. We haven't raised it since April 2019. We have forgone 7.5% of increases in those years. Ms. Dormer – You can't go back? Mr. Romano – Yes, you can. The same thing happens with your taxes. The DOR will allow that. They are under the levy limit right now. Mr. Tracey – Mr. Romano has a fiduciary background and knows this subject. Ms. Dormer – I

understand that you are separate from the Town. Within the next year, you will have more people added to the District. Maybe we could put it off for a year. Mr. Tracey – We have about 65 clients right now. We are trying to get away from the Town being responsible for the District well-being. The Hillwood project will help put us there. All the things that Hillwood has promised the Town falls through if they don't get their permitting. There are many unknowns and we need to be fiscally responsible to the District.

Mr. Romano – Can you explain how the actual bill comes out? Mr. Tracey – The minimum charge for a ¾" connection, includes 1,000 gallons. Anytime anyone does any work for the NCWD, it is the District's responsibility for that expense. The Town Hall staff that does things for the District all do things for the District, that we must reimburse the Town for. Those expenses are passed onto the customer. Mary Dormer – I understand, but 1,000 gallons is not a lot. Mr. Romano – The commercial locations are using a lot of water, with a larger connection and pay much more. Twenty-six cents over 3 months for a residential property is not a lot. Ms. Dormer – It is a burden on a small number of homes.

Mr. Swain, 6 Lakenham Drive –

Last quarter, my water has been shut off about 5 times for various reasons. A lot of times, it is brown. I have been told to call the police station. Mr. Tracey – If the Town Hall is open you contact Dave Siedentopf who will contact the Water Operator. Off hours, police station who will reach out to Mr. Siedentopf. Mr. Swain – When I have no water, I have to go out and purchase water and you still have to pay the water bill. The water destroys appliances and could cause a house fire if your boiler goes dry. Mr. Tracey – The water hasn't gone down since last fall. Mr. Lizotte – We haven't had an issue since late fall/early winter. The brown water can be from losing pressure but usually settles out quickly. Mr. Swain – We have had issues at least 4 times since last fall. Mr. Lizotte – We get calls from Dave Siedentopf when there is a Town wide issue or a customer issue. The brown water could be from losing pressure. When we restore it, it will stir up the pipes and should settle rather quickly. Mr. Swain – I call the Town Hall and they have no clue about it. I have called the Water solutions people. We have had at least four issues since last fall. Mr. Lizotte – we get calls from Dave when there is a town wide issue or with no water or resident complaints. We did receive a call from a resident with no water. That was his own home and an issue with his faucet. The issue in the fall/early winter was caused by the Verizon lines being down and an issue with the battery pack that broke. Those have all been rectified. If it would be helpful, we can give you our emergency line so that you can get to them directly. Even if it is not affecting the whole town, we will handle it. We are down there every day. Mr. Swain – I've called the Town for reimbursement for like a blown water heater, etc. Mr. Tracey – That's not allowed and is all very clear in the R&R. Mr. Swain – I have no water pressure. Mr. Tracey – The standpipe will help that. Mr. Swain – Can we update my connection to ¾"? Mr. Lizotte – We can, but I am not sure that will help. We are putting out 60 PSI right now. The water tower will help down the road. Mr. Swain – I'm only getting about 35 PSI; is that because I am uphill? Mr. Lizotte – Yes, you will lose pressure with elevation. Mr. Swain – I use under the minimum but will still get hit with the higher bill. Ms. Dormer – How big is the water tower going to be? Mr. Tracey – The height is to be determined. It will have 125K gallons in it. We are hoping to turn that over every couple of days. In addition to that, the fire suppression will be about 750K. Mr. Swain – If the water tower goes through, the fire hydrants will be usable? Mr. Tracey – Yes. Mr. Swain –

What about pressure? Mr. Lizotte – I am unable to give you that information, it will depend on elevation. Mr. Swain – Shouldn't everyone get the same water pressure? Mr. Tracey – Ideally, but elevation does impact it. The engineers will do all the vetting on this. I trust that they will give us the right number. Mr. Romano – What was the water pressure before we put the two tanks in? Mr. Tracey – I would guess it was about the same as we have now. It was pump fed and we are still pump fed.

Ms. Dormer –

Where will the tower get the water? Mr. Tracey – From the District. Mr. Romano – We did a pump test for 5 days. We had it up to 92K per day, without issue. The plant can handle 250K but the DEP will only allow us 100K per day. That is due to the fact we are only using 30K. If they fill the standpipe, it will take probably 7 days. The standpipe should solve a lot of the pressure problems and the fire department will be able to use the hydrants. Ms. Dormer – I am assuming the end user will also use the water. Mr. Tracey – The Developer has asked for 41K per day. That will change, probably less, depending on the end user. Mr. Swain – Will the DEP allow more than the 100K? Mr. Romano – Yes, we would have to be using more than 70K and then ask for permission. Ms. Dormer – Will the new user make us a large district? Mr. Tracey – No, we would still be considered small.

Mr. Duggan, Meadow Street –

The new tenant, can they put in their own well? Mr. Tracey – No that would violate MEPA approval process. Massachusetts had an environmental impact. If they were to try to sink their own well, they would have to designate a space that they couldn't develop anything. They would need a 1600' radius around the well that couldn't be developed. That would limit the scope of what they could develop, so they won't do that. Mr. Romano – That land is a cleaned up 21E. That was polluted land. The government came in and cleaned it up. A private well would probably not be allowed in there.

Mr. Romano – When we raised the rate in 2019, it had been 3 years before that. Every three years, we have only raised it by 2.5%. Our costs have gone up as well, propane, chemicals, etc. The solar panels help us with electric. I really think that we are 10% behind and our expenses are up as well. This has been a burden to the Town and wasn't originally supposed to be. When I came into the picture, we were asking, at Town Meeting, for \$300K per year just to pay our debt. We have it down to \$46K and I have only been on the commission for 9 years. I want us to be independent. I would love to be able to go to next year's Town Meeting and tell them that we don't need anything. Ms. Dormer – I would like to see that as well but it is a burden. The NCWD has someone to help with their bills; the residents don't. There is elderly that don't have that. There is low-income housing that has gone in over there. People are struggling. Maybe if the eligible elderly customary rate doesn't go up? Mr. Romano – What if we delay it a year and next year it is an increase of 5% because it didn't work? Ms. Dormer – Maybe the economy will be better next year and more people will be on it and spread out the increase. Mr. Swain – The Town of Carver poisoned the water, why doesn't the burden become everyone's in Town. The whole town got money for it. Mr. Romano – All the taxpayers paid for digging up and lining North Carver. Ms. Dormer – That isn't lined. Mr. Tracey – They capped it. Mr. Swain – The rest of the Town can use their wells with no charge. Mr. Romano – Wells are not free either.

I just paid a lot of money to pay for a new water purification system because I have a well, \$50 salt every month, the electricity to run it all. Ms. Dormer – We are paying taxes for property that we can't sell because of the water. Mr. Romano – I have heard so many times that people feel they shouldn't pay for the water and that their wells didn't cost them anything. That isn't the case. All the houses where I live have water systems in their house. It is expensive to maintain and run. Mr. Swain – If I have to water my lawn, it will cost a fortune. If I had a well it wouldn't cost me anything. Mr. Duggan – What percentage in the district are considered elderly and eligible for special rate. Mr. Tracey – probably about 5-6%. Residents are about 21%. By in large, the people we do business are commercial. Mr. Swain – Can we increase commercial rate more? Mr. Tracey – We cannot do a split rate. Mr. Duggan – If the elderly didn't have an increase where it is such a small group can we eliminate that? Mr. Tracey – The percentages of the increase are tied to each other. Ms. Dormer – If you are not agreeable to forgoing the increase, can we leave the elderly rate the same this year? Mr. Romano – I think that would require another meeting to discuss and another public hearing. We already discussed all of this and made decisions based on that discussion and then advertised the hearing. If we change any of this, we have to start at the beginning. Mr. Duggan – The rate for the elderly is .16 cents extra per thousand gallons? Mr. Tracey – Yes. Mr. Romano – We are talking 15 cents over three months. Mr. Swain – If it's so little, why raise it? Mr. Tracey – We don't have to go back to square one, we can continue the Public Hearing. Mr. Duggan – It would be interesting to know the number of elderly in the District. Mr. Duggan - If we could help them, it would show some appreciation. Mr. Tracey – Let's look into the number of elderly that would be affected. Mr. Romano – We can look into whether we can legally change and remove the increase for elderly rate.

*Motion to continue the Public Hearing to the June 13 meeting at 5:30 PM: Mr. Romano
Second: Mr. Tracey
Approved: 2-0-1, Mr. Palimeri*

Next Meeting:

*Motion to hold our next meeting on June 13, 2022 at 5:30 PM: Mr. Romano
Second: Mr. Palimeri
Approved: Unanimous (3-0)*

Meeting adjourned:

*Motion to adjourn was made at 7:20 PM: Mr. Romano
Second: Mr. Palimeri
Approved: Unanimous (3-0)*