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# Town of Shaftsbury

Municipal Offices at Cole Hall

## Meeting Minutes

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### Town of Shaftsbury Water Board Meeting

**Date of Meeting:** Monday, June 2, 2025 at 5:00 PM, in person at Cole Hall and remotely via Zoom.

1. Call to Order:

The meeting came to order at 5:00 PM. Present were board members Naomi Miller (Chair), Zoe Contros Kearn (Vice-Chair), Tony Krulikowski, Brad Peacock, and Town Administrator Paula Iken.

2. Conflict of Interest Statement:

No one expressed a conflict of interest with any item on the agenda.

3. Minutes

The minutes from the May 19<sup>th</sup> Water Board meeting were reviewed. Ms. Miller asked for a motion to accept. Mr. Krulikowski moved; Mr. Peacock seconded. Minutes were accepted without discussion 4-0-0.

4. Announcements

No announcements

5. Public Comments:

Corinne Levine, who lives on Rt. 7A in Shaftsbury spoke at length about issues with chlorine levels in the water at her house. Water Superintendent Joshua Brace tested the chlorine level in her water. The result was 0.84 ppm. Mr. Brace told her that this was an acceptable level. She said it is not acceptable. She is buying bottled water for personal use, for pets and for plants, and she will not pay her water bill until something is done. Ms. Miller said that she had not heard of this problem since she has been on the Water Board and thanked Ms. Levine for bringing it up. Ms. Levine noted that she has medical issues that she feels are affected by the chlorine level. She said that Mr. Brace had been very professional, but she would like something done about the chlorine level. Ms. Contros Kearn and Ms. Miller said that the board would contact the North Bennington water department, investigate the situation, and get back to Ms. Levine.

6. Discussion of the handling of delinquent water bills

Ms. Iken and Ms. Contros Kearn met with Atty. Merrill Bent to discuss legalities of collecting delinquent water bills. The Vermont statute states that you may have the delinquent tax collector do this, not that you must. Ms. Bent was adamant that the town should use the delinquent tax collector, which is much the same process used for collection of delinquent taxes. Mr. Brace could not attend the meeting but sent some guidance from the State that included the process of collecting on water bills including procedures for shutoff. Ms. Dexter noted that with taxes the penalty increases with time, with delinquent water bills there is a one-time penalty. She continued that the Delinquent Tax Collector would need to be paid for the time involved in the process and the town would need to find a way to do that. She suggested changes to penalties similar to penalties on taxes. Keeping the same billing structure that we have now would result in less of the total water collections coming to the town. The bills must be collected for the

town to pay North Bennington for water. Water shutoff, or possibly a tax sale of a house, are not good solutions. The board further discussed penalties and payment plans, mailing costs, and use of hangers. Ms. Dexter said that hangers were ineffective, expensive, and tended to anger residents. Ms. Miller commented that the rest of the town's taxpayers were carrying the burden of delinquent water bills. Ms. Miller asked how the board wanted to proceed. Mr. Peacock said he would like to go into executive session to get more information on the process, the penalty, and implementation. Ms. Dexter brought up hiring a collection agency. Mr. Krulikowski said that people would be upset. There was further discussion on lists of residents with delinquent water bills. The board agreed that it is a weighty decision with much to consider. Ms. Dexter concluded with the statement that even if all the water bills were collected, the town would still be in debt to North Bennington. No action was taken.

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7. Other business

Ms. Iken presented a letter of protest to the North Bennington Water Dept. to be sent with the current water bill. Ms. Miller read the letter aloud then asked for a motion to sign and send the letter. Mr. Krulikowski moved; Mr. Peacock seconded. The motion passed 4-0-0.

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8. Review of Action Items

Ms. Contros Kearn will investigate resources for residents having difficulty paying water bills.  
Mr. Peacock will look into the chlorine issue.  
Ms. Iken will contact Josh Brace about the chlorine issue.

9. Executive Session

The board entered executive session to discuss legal matters.

10. Adjournment

Ms. Miller asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Krulikowski moved; Mr. Peacock seconded. Motion passed 4-0-0 and the water board adjourned.