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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, August 18, 2025, at 6:45 PM, in person at Cole Hall and remotely via Zoom.

1. Call to Order:

The meeting came to order at 6:45 PM. Present were board members Zoe Kearl, Naomi Miller, Tony Krulikowski, Brad Peacock, non-voting member Art Whitman, 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

Minutes from the July 21st meeting were reviewed. Ms. Kearl called for a motion to approve the minutes without amendment. Mr. Krulikowski moved; Mr. Peacock seconded. Minutes were approved 4-0-0.

4. Announcements

Ms. Iken announced that Town bookkeeper Tiffany Mays, prior to vacation, prepared pink invoices to go out to all the residents with a delinquent water balance. They were put in the mail the first week in August. One resident with a very slight balance received his bill certified mail. A total of \$7,374.46 has been collected.

5. Public Comments:

There were no public comments.

6. Initial discussion of timeline for temporary increase of water allocation

Ms. Kearl said that during last Wednesday's meeting with the North Bennington Water Board a lot of data was provided- historical figures dating for 11 years about many things. The water boards then discussed the issue of how much Shaftsbury is being billed by North Bennington, versus how much Shaftsbury is billing out, and the significant discrepancy between those two numbers. To have the correct water allocation for Shaftsbury- its requested increase in allocation, the North Bennington Water Board would like to understand the discrepancy. They offered to help try to figure out what is causing the discrepancy. During this process they've offered a temporary increase of water allocation to the amount requested by the Shaftsbury Water Board. Mr. Goodrich, Chair of the North Bennington Water Board, asked that the Shaftsbury Water Board consider how long it will take to get to where the amount of water Shaftsbury is paying for is in line with what is billed out. Ms. Kearl noted that the Shaftsbury Water Board will be figuring this out and that Water Dept. Superintendent Josh Brace should be a part of this conversation.

Mr. Whitman brought up an experiment that he did with a water meter that showed that not all water flow is being measured by older meters. This can add up to a significant amount over a year. There was further discussion of the timeframe. Pipes and inaccurate meters need to be replaced. Ultrasound meters are more accurate and last longer. Mr. Peacock noted that Shaftsbury has a plan for water that it's been working on for a long time. The Town is taking steps with the water department and working on

delinquent water bills. Ms. Iken said that the Town, through Josh Brace and herself, is also working with a consultant, Ashley Luft of Quantitative Ventures, at no cost to the Town. Ms. Iken continued that Ms. Luft is gathering information and working on a multifaceted plan to figure out the discrepancy, said that the Town must be able to defend any decision it makes, and that people think they're paying for water when in reality they're paying for a service. The service needs to keep water flowing. Ms. Luft also said that you must make very clear what the Town's ideas of equitability are, because when we're dealing with a natural resource like water, the Town must deal with equality. Some people do use more water than others; some people only live here part-time. Ms. Luft said that the Town water rates need to go up because they're not even meeting the amount that the Town pays to North Bennington, and that gap needs to be closed. Ms. Iken said that the goal was for the water department to be self-sustaining.

7. Other Business

There was no other business.

8. Review of Action Items

Ms. Kearl will draft a description of the timeline for figuring out the discrepancy, including the nature of the temporariness of the revised allocation. This draft will be sent for legal review before sending to Mr. Goodrich within the week.

Ms. Iken will contact Ms. Luft to see how quickly a lead test person can come out. This will influence the timeline.

Ms. Iken will also ask Ms. Luft about the issue of heavy chlorine odor in some Town water, noting that residents are refusing to pay for this water because they can't drink it.

9. Adjournment

Ms. Kearl asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Krulikowski moved; Mr. Peacock seconded. The motion passed 4-0-0.