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Town of Shaftsbury

Municipal Offices

Meeting Agenda

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Water Board

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 PM on May 4, 2026. Present were Water Board members Zoe Kearl, Naomi Miller, Mike Cichanowski, Marlene Hall, and non-voting member Art Whitman. Board member Eamon Mulligan and Water Dept. superintendent Josh Brace were absent.

2. Conflict of Interest Statement

There were no conflicts of interest with items on the agenda.

3. Minutes

There were no minutes reviewed.

4. Announcements

There were no announcements.

5. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

6. Executive Session

Ms. Kearl apologized that the executive session was not on the agenda, but an upcoming decision by the Vermont Bond Bank necessitated the session to discuss water rates. She called for a motion to enter executive session. Ms. Miller moved. Ms. Hall seconded. Motion approved 4-0-0 and the board entered executive session.

7. Decision on water rate structure and billing frequency

The board discussed, in executive session, Shaftsbury's existing Water Dept. billing and rates schedules. Ms. Kearl noted that there had been a presentation by Ashley Lucht at the previous Water Board meeting and that Ms. Lucht had been working on an updated rate system with Mr. Brace and Ms. Iken for several months. Ms. Kearl said that the Shaftsbury fixed expenses were opposite to most towns in the state which had 75% fixed. Shaftsbury pays around 76% of its budgeted expenses for North Bennington water, which has almost doubled its rates since 2024, leaving only 24% fixed. The board has taken Ms. Lucht's recommendation for changes to the billing schedule. The Town currently bills for water twice per year. Ms. Lucht suggested billing quarterly for a more stable income stream. Water bills, although

more frequent, will be a lower amount per bill for residents. Ms. Kearl asked for a motion to change Shaftsbury's water billing schedule from biannual to quarterly. Ms. Hall moved. Mr. Cichanowski seconded. Ms. Kearl asked for discussion. She noted that there would be some administrative changes that would be addressed at a later time. Hearing no further discussion, the motion was voted upon and passed 4-0-0.

Ms. Kearl then brought up the water rate structure. Ms. Lucht had provided information on 7 different types of rate structure. There was 1 that appeared to best suit a town like Shaftsbury. Ms. Kearl described it briefly: Average water use is 36,000 gallons per year. This would be the basis for the Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU). Residential connections would pay 1 base charge each that includes a bond payment. Commercial connection usage would be total gallons divided by 1 ERU, rounded to the nearest whole number. Noone has less than 1 ERU. Ms. Kearl said that this seemed the most equitable and would help bring Water Dept. expenses out of the red. A fiscal plan to address this is needed to qualify for necessary bonds to fix water infrastructure in Shaftsbury. Ms. Kearl asked for a motion to change the Shaftsbury water rate structure to the ERU based system as described by Ms. Lucht. Ms. Hall moved. Mr. Cichanowski seconded. The motion was approved 4-0-0 without further discussion. Ms. Kearl said that more detailed information will be forthcoming.

8. Other Business

There was no other business.

9. Review of Action Items

All action items rest with Ms. Iken.

10. Adjournment

Ms. Kearl called for a motion to adjourn. Ms. Hall moved. Ms. Miller seconded. Motion to adjourn approved 4-0-0.