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Town of Shaftsbury

Municipal Offices

Meeting Minutes

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Water Board

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 PM on Monday, October 5, 2026, at the Shaftsbury Municipal Offices. Present were Water Board members Zoe Kearl, Mike Cichanowski, Marlene Hall, non-voting member Art Whitman, Water Dept. Superintendent Josh Brace, Town Administrator Carlyn Mickle, and Town Treasurer Melanie Dexter.

2. Conflict of Interest Statement

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

3. Minutes

Minutes from the September 21, 2026, meeting were reviewed. Ms. Kearl asked for a motion to accept. Ms. Hall moved. Mr. Cichanowski seconded. The minutes were accepted 3-0-0.

4. Announcements: Water Rate

Ms. Kearl said that water rates would be discussed in the response to the North Bennington Water Board and after the executive session.

5. Public Comments

Shaftsbury resident Pete Levin said after many disputes with the Water Board regarding overcharges, he had filed suit with the Superior Court. The Town's attorney, Merrill Bent, was told by the judge that Mr. Levin didn't have a case. Mr. Levin was not informed directly. Ms. Kearl said that she would investigate the matter and respond to Mr. Levin's concerns.

Shaftsbury resident Gail Morin asked who raised the water rate to \$19.50. Ms. Kearl corrected her, noting the rate was raised by the North Bennington Water Board to \$8.50. Ms. Kearl said that many years ago the water rights were given to North Bennington through a deed of gift by the owner, not by the Town. Shaftsbury is a water customer and has no say over the rate but is disputing the raise.

6. North Bennington Water Board Response Letter

Ms. Kearl read the letter sent to the North Bennington Water Board via email on September 28, 2026. This letter is posted on the Town of Shaftsbury municipal website. Ms. Kearl noted that the people who pay for water rate increases have the right to know what costs caused the increase. The Town has not yet received a response and is already in the next billing period. Water bills need to be sent out. Ms. Kearl said that the Shaftsbury Water Board questions the validity of the rate increase decision. Ms. Kearl continued that the next meeting of the North Bennington Water Board of Commissioners is on Wednesday, October 7, 2026, at 7:00 PM in the North Bennington offices, across from the post office. She encouraged residents of Shaftsbury to attend, even if this issue is not being discussed. Ms. Morin asked who voted on the increase. Ms. Kearl said it was the whole board, but, in the past, these have not been open meetings with warned agendas. She noted that they were working towards more transparency.

7. Other business

No other business discussed

8. Review of Action Items

Ms. Kearl asked Ms. Holley to post the North Bennington Water Board Response Letter and information on the North Bennington Water Board meeting on Town media outlets

9. Executive Session: Legal- Review of Documents

Ms. Kearl asked for a motion to move into executive session. Ms. Hall moved. Mr. Cichanowski seconded. Motion passed 3-0-0 and the select board entered executive session at 5:25 PM. The board came out of executive session after discussion of legal matters. Ms. Kearl announced that quarterly billing had started, and water bills would be sent soon using the \$6.50 rate.

10. Adjournment

Ms. Kearl called for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Cichanowski moved. Ms. Hall seconded. Motion to adjourn approved 3-0-0. Meeting adjourned at 5:51 PM.