

Minutes  
Town Government Study Committee  
February 17, 2011  
Room 203, Town House, Kingston, Massachusetts  
7:00 pm

The meeting was called to order by acting chairman, Jean Landis Naumann at 7:03 pm.

Members present: Paul Tura, Jean Landis Naumann, Frances Botelho-Hoeg, Wendell Chamberlain, Ken Stevens

Members absent: Richard Dennehy, Mary O'Donnell, Keith Elder, Bob Ward

Invited Guests: Water Commissioner, Robert Kostka, Matt Darsch

**APPOINTMENT WATER DEPARTMENT AND WATER COMMISSIONERS:**

The Committee met with representatives from the Water Department and Water Commissioners. The following is a summary of this discussion:

- The Water Department is governed by a 3 member board of Commissioners and consists of a Superintendent and Executive Secretary as well as a total staff of 6.
- The Commissioners set the budget and meet 2 times a month.
- Members of the Water Department have to be licensed. The licensing takes a year to complete and must be renewed every two years. Training is provided by the State and the cost is budgeted by the Water Commissioners. The cost is \$3000 every two years for the total staff. The Town presently has 2 staff licensed at Level 4, 3 staff at Level 2 and 1 staff member at Level 3.
- Water is treated with lime and not chlorinated because of water purity. The Commissioners establish the levels for purity and bacteria. Builders must comply to the requirement for a 0 background bacteria count.
- All water sources for the Town are wells. The only issue at this time is acidity.
- Water tests for bacteria are monthly, all other tests are quarterly. Most of the wells are in the Jones River Watershed. The Trackle Pond Well and Well 186 are outside of the Jones River Watershed. Pumping from the Watershed is limited.
- They are always looking for new well sites. Sixteen acres of land are needed for a well. Presently have 7 wells, 6 of which are active.
- The water systems are protected by fencing around the wells, barbed wire, and alarmed buildings. The cost for a new well is approximately \$1,000,000 if the Town owns the land.
- The Water department is funded by an Enterprise Fund. The Commissioners draw up the budget and have to be self sustaining. Money is set aside for building wells, and repairs in a free cash account. Free cash is presently at \$50,000. The Town is on a metered system. The rate structure has not changed in 12 years. A consultant is used to evaluate the rate system and determine if rates are appropriate. The cost for the rate study was approved at \$8000.00. The service charge was raised in 2010 to \$24.00 per quarter. There is a 4 tier rate system. People pay for the amount they use. When asked about installing two meters for those on the sewer line it was stated that this would be the responsibility of the Sewer Commissioners.
- Departments work very cooperatively, especially with the Highway Department. They share staff and materials. They are not in favor of combining departments because they fear that the water will suffer. Water revenue could be used for other sources and not purely for water. They also work with the Town Treasurer on bonding.
- Presently the water department does the billing for the Sewer Department.
- The present budget is :Personal services \$483,000. Debt service is about 44% of the budget.
- Water mains are replaced yearly or whenever a road is opened for repair. Presently have 15 bleeder pipes that need to be replaced.
- Communication: They have a joint meeting with the Sewer Department on a yearly basis. They communicate with highway and on a weekly basis. They have round table meetings with the Town Planner. They have very little communication with the Town Administrator. There has only been one meeting and that was to discuss negotiations.

- Technology: use MUNIS. They are presently working with the updates that were installed a year ago.
- Water meters are 3 tiered- manual, phone and radio.
- Water Commissioners hire based on recommendations from the Department head. Final approval is by the Selectmen.
- Resources are adequate. Staffing is also adequate at this time. The last hire was in 1996.
- Use the SCADA software program to control the wells. The water Department is not part of the [kingstonmass.org](http://kingstonmass.org) system.
- The Water Department Superintendent participates and attends the monthly Plymouth County water Works meetings.

**MINUTES:**

On a motion by Paul Tura, seconded by Wendell Chamberlain, the minutes of February 3, 2011 were approved as written. The vote was unanimous.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

Jean Landis Naumann gave an update on the Recycling Committee transfer station proposal. They will need in excess of \$1,000,000 to reconfigure the Transfer Station. Recycling will play a major role in decrease of trash. Construction material can be weighed on scales. They would like to establish an Enterprise Fund.

On a motion by Paul Tura, seconded by Fran Hoeg, it was voted to adjourn at 9:15 pm, The vote was unanimous.