MINUTES

SELECT BOARD WORK SESSION **August 5, 2024**
TOWN HALL - UPSTAIRS **5:00 PM**

ATTENDEES:

Select board members: Leon Rideout, Shane Beattie, Kathy-Jean Lavoie
Others in Attendance: Town Manager Jessica Cyr, Charity Baker, Michael Nadeau, Robin Irving, Members of the Public

Water/Sewer Rate change – Selectman Lavoie distributed and reviewed a spreadsheet she created (attached) with the different rate scenarios recommended by the board in comparison to the current and future operating budgets of both the water and sewer departments. The spreadsheet illustrated whether or not each scenario would cover the operating budget and if so by approximately how much. The board's goal is to make sure the operating budget is covered by the users and to begin setting funds aside for capital improvements to the infrastructure which is extremely overdue. Charity shared a spreadsheet (attached) showing the base fees & usage rates for each of the scenarios and what the calculated warrant for each scenario approximately would be.

There was much discussion whether increasing the base fee or the usage rate is the appropriate change for the users. The board decided to move forward with leaving the base fees as they are and increase the usage rate for all water rate classes to $8.00 per thousand up to 1,000,000 gallons used and $0.50 per thousand over 1,000,000 gallons used and for sewer $8.00 per thousand gallons used.

Town Manager Cyr mentioned the person that has been testing the backflow preventers in town will no longer be performing the testing. The company found to replace him charges $65 per test and requires the town to pay the fees and the town will need to bill the cost to those users on their water/sewer bill. Cyr also would like the charge/fee to include a $10 administration fee which will make the total cost $75 per test. This fee will also be part of the hearing on the rate changes.

The public hearing with the proposed rate change will be held at the August 19, 2024, Select Board meeting. Cyr will post the public hearing notice and have it advertised in the Caledonian-Record.

ARPA funds – Potential viable project(s) – Robin mentioned she inquired if the funds could be used as a match for another grant award and was told it is not intended to be used as match funding. She spoke with Water/Sewer Supervisor Timmy Bilodeau as to where the $340,000 could be used best. They concluded that upgrading Causeway Street to include adding hydrants would be the best use of the funds. Robin mentioned she was talking with former Town Manager Ben Gaetjens-Oleson and he was concerned that they would choose Causeway when Elm Street has been the priority.

Leon Rideout spoke as a tax payer and mentioned that the water line on Causeway Street is an old black campground water line running down the street. He mentioned they have been told that street was going to be updated for many years.

Selectman Lavoie asked if the ARPA funds would cover the entire street upgrade to include paving. It was explained that paving in conjunction with the water project would be covered under ARPA.

Robin's thought is to do the Causeway Street project in conjunction with the northern part of Summer Street. She expects the bond for that project to go through.

There was much discussion regarding the details of the water line and how far down Causeway they could go with the $340,000 that is available.

Selectman Lavoie asked what they would do if Causeway becomes too expensive. Selectman Beattie mentioned having it engineered will indicate the cost and whether it can be covered by the available funds. It was also mentioned that the ARPA funds has to be used in the compact area.

Selectman Beattie asked if materials could be purchased with the funds and used on a project in the future. Unfortunately, that cannot be done.

The board agreed to move forward with Causeway Street being engineered.

Respectfully submitted, Board of Selectmen Date: _____

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Charity M. Baker Leon Rideout

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Shane Beattie

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Kathy-Jean Lavoie