

SOUTHWEST HARBOR WATER & SEWER DISTRICT

June, 2025

Meeting Minutes

Town Hall

4:00 PM.

Lee Worcester Ralph Dunbar, Ken Minier, Karen Reddersen, Allan Willey
Interim Manger Aaron Zurek

Meeting called to Order: 4:00 PM by Lee Worcester, Chair

Guests to be Heard;

Nick Henry CPA

Nick told the board that he used to do the audit for the water and sewer when they were part of the town entity. Lee asked Nick if the Water side of business could be exempted from the PUC. Nick explained that the only case he knew of happened 5-10 years ago when Portland water district usefully did it. Nick also added that the PUC is a buffer between the water company and the customers. Lee note that the Sewer systems do not fall under the PUC. Lee asked Nick if it was something he could help the district out with in getting exempted from the PUC. Nick said he would reach out to some contacts and look into it. Karen asked what would be some if any benefits in staying under the PUC.

Discussion moved on to talk about the rates we have and where they might be better at. Karen talked about the monies the town used for capital improvements used on district infrastructure. Lee talked about the 30% rule of fire protection and how the district is at 26%. Lee stated that the increase should be done because it's a need not because PUC mandates it. Karen asked about the waiver for fire protection and stated how the District and the Town are on different fiscal years. Lee stated that the rate increase for fire protection should parallel. Nick stated he would inquire about deregulation from the PUC and also look into fire protection waiver from 30%. Lee reiterated how the sewer has never fallen under PUC. Nick stated that ideally a rate increase would happen on 7/1/26. Nick said that the district is not in a crisis mode for cash flow. Lee stated we do not want to get into that situation. Nick then asked the board about sewer and water rate increases being parallel or offset. Nick stated the 2025 budget shows a 28k deficit. Nick asked the board if there would be and changes coming up such as staffing increase or decrease. Karen asked what a 4% increase to the fire protection looked like in dollar amounts. Nick said it would be around \$9,000. Nick stated that the 2026 budget would "paint the picture" for what kind increases the district would need. Lee talked about the possibility of infrastructure changes on Seawall that could expand customer base for the district.

Nick reiterated that pausing rate increases for now until fall and looking into deregulation and looking into fire protection waiver now is his recommendation. Lee said its time for water rate increases because it's been a long time since the last. Karen let the board know she needs numbers by December 1st for the town budget.

Meeting minutes;

Motion to approve May 2025 minutes by Ken, 2nd by Ralph, Unanimous

Financials;

Motion to approve financial report made by Ken, 2nd by Allan, Unanimous

Warrants 110 & 110A

Motion by Ralph to approve the Warrant 110 & 110A, 2nd by Ken. unanimous.

Payroll

Motion to approve November Water & Sewer payroll by Ralph, 2nd by Ken, unanimous

Updates;Alder Lane easement;

Karen discussed the background of the parties involved asking for an easement for a sewer pump line service up Alder Lane from one house to a private pumpstation up the street from the residence that wants to tie in. Karen told the board she had talked to the lawyer about this matter and it is not a sewer extension and would need town approval at the next town meeting if it would go forward. Aaron told the board that he believed having private infrastructure in the town right of way was not in the best interest of the Districts or the Town. Lee made a motion that the project presented by Scott and Melissa Hirsch as presented to the board ought naught to move forward. Allan Willey 2nd the motion. Unanimous in vote by the board.

WWTP project;

The project is going along well, and overall, on its timeline. Digester roof was completed.

Wesley Avenue Hydrant relocation;

Discussion was tabled by the board due to time constraints.

Schuller abatement request;

The Schuller's of 15 Lawrence Lane brought forth an abatement request. The request was made because of a break they had on their line made be a contractor from the abutting property owner. The damage was found with and hour and the loss of water was 167 cubic feet. Subsequently repaired by the contractor. The repair then failed several days later which netted in the loss of an additional 234 cubic feet of water. Aaron told the board he felt that it was a civil matter between

the parties involved. Lee made a motion to deny the abatement request as presented. Ralph 2nd the motion. Unanimous.

Personnel;

Debbie Clark was interested in asking the board if going to (3) 10-hour days instead of her current (4) 8 hr. days would be acceptable by the district. TABLED

Next Meeting, Thursday July 17th, 2025

Meeting Adjourned 5:15 PM, motion by Ralph, 2nd ken, unanimous.