

Village of Bellaire

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

Eldon McPherson, Chairman

Trish Drollinger

Laurie Sexton

COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES September 23, 2013

1. **Call to Order:** Chairman McPherson called the meeting to order at 11:07 a.m.

Attendance

Present: Chairman Eldon McPherson, Trish Drollinger, Laurie Sexton

Absent: None

Staff Present: Janet Koch, Clerk and Cathy Odom, Treasurer

Also Present: None

2. **Approval of Agenda:** The agenda was approved as written.
**Motion by Sexton, seconded by Drollinger, to approve the agenda as presented.
Motion carried by voice vote.**
3. **Approval of Meeting Minutes:** The minutes were approved.
Motion by Sexton, seconded by Drollinger, to approve the minutes of April 8, 2013 as presented. Motion carried by voice vote.
4. **Public Comment on Agenda Items:** None presented.
5. **Old Business:** None presented.
6. **New Business**

- a) **Proposed revision to Water Shut-off Policy** – McPherson said there needed to be a resolution formalizing the changes to the water and sewer rates that council had previously approved and that there were proposed changes to the water shut-off notification policy and the shut-off fee for nonpayment.

Drollinger asked why a change for the nonpayment fee was being considered. Koch said it was being brought up as a possibility. Drollinger said it had been set up originally to discourage people from having their water being shut off every month. Odom said the fee had originally been \$100, but the village attorney had said the village could only charge what the actual cost was. McPherson asked if the actual cost is \$30, which is the cost charged for a scheduled turn on, or \$60, which is the current turn on cost after being shut off.

Odom said they can't find the paperwork where the costs had originally been calculated, but she believed the \$60 cost had been determined as the worst case scenario, assuming that a valve was in a pit and had deep snow that needed to be shoveled.

The possibility of a winter fee was discussed, as was a graduated fee for having more than one shut-off per year and billing for actual time spent on a shut-off.

Village of Bellaire

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

Eldon McPherson, Chairman

Trish Drollinger

Laurie Sexton

Drollinger asked if regularly scheduled shut-offs are charged a flat \$30 even if it the job were to be done in winter, with a lot of snow and ice shoveling involved. Odom said yes. Drollinger then said that's what the non-payment shut offs should be charged.

Koch said staff would like to formalize a policy for notifying customers by phone a maximum three times in a calendar year that their water service is in danger of being shut off for nonpayment.

McPherson asked if the current bills indicated the shut-off fee. Koch said the amount is included on the shut-off notices that go out to all accounts that might be in danger of being shut off.

Motion by Sexton, seconded by Drollinger, to recommend to village council to reduce the fee for shut-off of non-payment from \$60 to \$30. Motion carried by voice vote.

Motion by Sexton, seconded by Drollinger, to recommend to village council to pass the resolution amending Resolution 3 of 2012. Motion carried by voice vote.

- b) **Water Replacement fee overcharges** – Koch and Odom explained that during the software transition from the old utility billing software to the new, that it was discovered that some accounts had been overcharged. The accounts are now being billed correctly. Koch said she'd contacted the village attorney and had been told that refunds were required, otherwise the village would be accruing "unjust enrichment."

Drollinger asked how the overcharges had happened. Koch said the large refund due to Antrim County had been caused by the incorrect charging of the monthly water ready fee (then \$161.56) instead of the 4" water line replacement fee (\$22.62). This occurred starting in August 2009, when the water replacement fees were originally added to the bills and ended with the June 2013 billing, when the error was first noted.

The Bellaire High School and Meadowbrook accounts also had incorrect water replacement fees; those were incorrectly billed at \$13.71 instead of the correct \$13.10.

The errors in the Real Estate One account came from an incorrect assigning of a 1.25" line to both the water ready and the sewer ready billing items when the service line is a 3/4" line.

Village of Bellaire
PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

Eldon McPherson, Chairman

Trish Drollinger

Laurie Sexton

The committee discussed if a check or a credit to the accounts would be the best method of compensation. Sexton asked what effect it would have to the village to issue refund checks. Odom said the water fund is fine, although a budget amendment might be needed at the end of the fiscal year. All of the Antrim County, High School, and Meadowbrook refunds would be from the water fund; approximately two-thirds of the Real Estate One refund would be from the sewer fund. With the recent increase in the sewer rates, the sewer fund might be able to absorb the refund, but we wouldn't know until the end of the fiscal year.

Sexton said she didn't recommend crediting the county's account as it could create difficulties for the county's future budgeting calculations.

Motion by Sexton, seconded by Drollinger, to recommend to village council that the following refund checks be issued: \$6,252.30 to Antrim County, \$27.45 to Bellaire High School, \$54.90 to Meadowbrook Medical Care Facility, and \$1,202.10 to Real Estate One. Motion carried by voice vote.

7. **Discussion Items:** The December retirement of Wastewater Treatment Plant Superintendent Russ Fillmore was briefly discussed.
8. **Communications/Informational:** None presented.
9. **Member/Public Comment:** None presented.
10. **Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.**

Minutes compiled by Janet Koch, Clerk

Approved: _____
Eldon McPherson, Chairman

Date: _____