



Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
(date)

TOWN OF PAXTON  
**Water Commissioners**  
Minutes of Meeting

Date: Thursday, November 17, 2022

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Meeting Place: John Bauer Senior Center, 17 West Street, Paxton, MA

Present: John Malone (JM), Chair  
David Trulson (DT), Vice Chair  
Rodney Jenkins (RJ), Clerk (*joined at 7:10 p.m.*)  
Travis Thibault (TT), Director of Public Works  
Tiffany Sidhom, Administrative Assistant

Additional: Charles Farrar and John Merrill for Paxton Little League  
Stanley Rem (309 Pleasant Street)

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m.

**Meeting Minutes**

Motion (DT) seconded (JM) to accept the regular meeting minutes from the September 8, 2022 meeting.

**Approval of August and September 2022 Billings Rendered**

The Board reviewed and signed the August and September 2022 Billings Rendered.

**Paxton Little League Bill Dispute**

(TT) stated that there was an issue with how the resolution of some of the large meters in town were input into the billing system which resulted in some customers being charged for far less water than they were actually consuming. Paxton Little League was one of these customers.

(TT) stressed that it was of no fault of either the customer or Paxton Municipal Light Department (who does the billing), but rather a miscommunication with the manufacturer of the meters and how the information feeds into a separate billing software.

Paxton Little League was underbilled for approximately 525,411 gallons of water, which resulted in a bill of \$7,364.69 once the billing software was corrected.

Charles Farrar and John Merrill spoke on behalf of Paxton Little League. They stated that they had been paying bills all summer that had been approximately \$200-\$300 a month, and that they assumed that was the cost of the water. If they had known that the cost for irrigating the fields was so high, they would have asked to shut off the irrigation because the League could not afford bills that high.

Farrar and Merrill mentioned that they rent the use of the field from Paxton Recreation; they are not the owners of the field.

(JM) requested that (TT) speak with the Town Administrator as to whether or not the bill could be legally “waived,” as well as whose responsibility the irrigation bill should be (Paxton Little League v. Paxton Recreation). The Board recommended that Paxton Little League also reach out to Paxton Recreation directly.

The Board decided to wait until their next meeting to hear what information (TT) is able to obtain from the Town Administrator before making a final decision.

### **309 Pleasant Street Customer Bill Dispute**

Stanley Rem of 309 Pleasant Street came before the Board to ask for assistance with a large bill he recently received. His meter was replaced in May 2022. The new meter detected a leak of approximately 10 gallons per hour. Due to an issue with the reporting software, the Department was not made aware of the leak until July 2022, at which time Mr. Rem was contacted. He promptly scheduled an appointment to have the Department perform a leak audit. During that audit, a leaking toilet was discovered, and Mr. Rem shut off water to that toilet. Mr. Rem requests that the Board reduce his bill due to financial hardship and because he was unaware that he had a leak (due to an issue with the meter software); once he was notified of such, he corrected it immediately. Motion (RJ) seconded (DT) to reduce Mr. Rem’s total amount owed by \$500 (the cost of roughly his July 2022 bill, which was based on June 2022 usage; the Board felt that there was a discrepancy with this particular bill) and allow Mr. Rem to set up a payment plan in the amount of \$60 per month (in addition to his regular monthly charges) until the amount he owes is paid off in full. If any payments are missed, a lien will be placed on the property. Unanimous, all in favor. Mr. Rem will speak with Paxton Municipal Light Department to set up the payment plan.

### **Director Updates and Reports**

(TT) stated that there have been issues with large meters (1.5” and above) throughout town and the usage being properly transmitted to the billing software. If an old large meter is retrofitted with a new Badger ERT, the resolution needed to be changed in the billing software. This is something that was just recently discovered, although some of these meters had been improperly sending usage since 2018. Several of the meters were at Anna Maria College. A representative from Stiles Company (the Department’s vendor for Badger meters) has met with the Paxton Municipal Light Department staff to be sure that all information is correct in their billing software. The Department will continue to monitor all these types of meters to be sure that they are accurately reporting.

(RJ) requested that the Department contact all other Departments and sports leagues, etc. throughout town to remind them that they can check their water usage online at any time via the Beacon website (for new meters).

(TT) reported that there are approximately 1,145 new Badger water meters installed throughout town to date. The Department continues to work on replacing meters throughout town. In Spring of 2023, the Department will resume its three-step process of sending a request, demand and then termination letter for properties that it has not been able to gain access to and replace the meter.

Next meeting tentatively scheduled for December 8, 2022.

Motion (JM) seconded (DT) to adjourn at 8:17 p.m. Unanimous, all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Tiffany Sidhom, Administrative Assistant