

A meeting of the Town of Barnstable's Hyannis Water Board was held on October 27, 2009 at 3:15 PM in the Growth Management Conference Room, 367 Main Street, Hyannis, MA.

In attendance were Skip Simpson, Tom Holmes, Deb Krau and Peter Cross.

Staff present: Hans Keijser, Supervisor, Water Supply Division.

Also present from Municipal and Financial Services Group: Austin Ehahart and David Hyder

Public present: none

A quorum being present, Chairman Krau called the meeting to order at 3:40 PM.

The Agenda was approved.

Krau distributed a handout she will be using for a presentation to the Hyannis Civic Association meeting tonight.

A workshop presentation was made by Hyder of M&FS Group, focusing on rate structure and some of the fees. The scenarios presented used square footage data. A question arose as to how to apportion multiple tenant buildings where the units are separately metered but the square footage allocated to each tenant is not known. Hyder said that may require special handling for multiple meters but that the owner of the building would get the fire assessment.

Seven blocks are proposed based upon square footage for residential and commercial fire protection quarterly and monthly billed accounts. Billing is proposed to be based on a single number representing a range of square footages over 40,000 with a straight square footage charge, not the actual square footage to avoid requests for checks on square footage. An alternative is to use the meter size as the determinant.

Krau asked - Do we have a preferred method of billing? Simpson would like some input, but is not sure from whom as the choices are not publicly known. Krau said we will get some feedback from the civic association. Cross said the Board needs to be flexible and to re-evaluate the method after the first year, maybe adjust if necessary. Krau said these methods are designed to get revenues from where costs are generated, but the Board should continually review it.

Simpson said the process used by M&FS is great and it shows the science in determining rates. He prefers option 6, as do Cross and Krau, but he would like the opportunity to change his opinion, based on feedback. Krau suggested modifying option 6 by capping the square footage at 600,000 square feet.

A Motion was made and seconded to approve alternate 6 with a square footage cap, pending a review of feedback

Discussion:

Simpson said this option seems more equitable and the fairest to most. Cross said that many customers have been riding free on fire protection, as they were tax exempted by the fire district, and under this option they must pay their own freight. Simpson agrees.

Krau said that stress on the system is the driver of fees – which customer produces the most stress? The answer is that stress is driven by residential customers, they produce the usage peaks, commercial customers are constant in their usage. She suggested that commercial usage should be a single block and residential usage should be an inclining set of 3 blocks based on usage.

The Board then discussed the quarterly private hydrant charge – should there be an increase in the fee \$102.88 to \$154.85 for 119 hydrants to cover the actual cost of this service or a continuation of the separate charge or wrap the costs into the fire protection fee? Should the hydrants remain private or become public.

Simpson said those with hydrants receive benefit from them, not other customers. Keijser said that repair of the hydrants is now the responsibility of the owners, not Hyannis Water. That would change if they become public hydrants.

A Motion was made and seconded to change the fee as recommended to \$154.85 per private hydrant.

VOTE: Unanimous

The Board discussed the sprinkler head charge, presently at 19 cents each. Should it be increased to 58 cents per quarter? The charge could also be based on the fire line going into the building. Simpson likes the water line charge method. Hyder said the choice is revenue neutral, charging by line is easier to control

A Motion was made and seconded to change the sprinkler head charge to be calculated based on the fire line going into the building

VOTE: Unanimous

The Board discussed System Development charges. Hyder said he recommends the buy-in approach. Currently charges are determined by line size.

Keijser said we now have separate fire and service hook up charges – should we keep this method or combine to a simple hookup? We should also look at the tapping fee for a development – should we keep this fee? Cross said the tapping fee covers the impact of the development on the future needs of the system. A large development is not likely to occur in Hyannis, but there is a concern in redevelopment.

The discussion was continued.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise Geoffrion