

**May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2010**  
**Special Meeting**  
**Water District Patrons**

A special meeting of the Petersburg Town Board was held on Monday, May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2010 at 7:00PM at the Petersburg Town Hall, 65 Main Street, Petersburg, New York.

Present: Supervisor Peter Schaaphok  
Councilman Richard Snyder  
Councilman William Seel  
Councilwoman Amy Manchester  
Town Clerk Callie Crisp  
Absent: Councilman Raymond Broadwell

Guests: Daniel McCumber, Susan Dawes, Joy Griswold, Bob Griswold, Karen Maxon, Dick Healy, Pam Eggsware, Joseph Dunlop, Dave Huskie, Genevieve Bogucki, Maureen Seel, Audrey Bartus, Ron Bartus

Following the Pledge of Allegiance the Supervisor called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM.

Supervisor Schaaphok started the meeting by explaining the Water District's current dilemmas. Back in 2009, the pumps at wells # 2 & 5 burned out due to a storm. The charges incurred by this incident caused a problem with the budget for the Water District. Fortunately this bill was reimbursed through the Town's insurance policy. However in April of this year the pump burned out for a second time. Although currently the Water District fund is not in a deficit, it will be if no actions are taken to increase revenue. The fees were established in 1986, and the Supervisor proposed modernizing the rate schedule as to reflect current costs. He asked for the participation from patrons in order to determine a fair system.

Supervisor Schaaphok asked the Patrons of the Water District if anyone would be interested in forming a Water District Committee. He had initiated such a committee when he was supervisor back in the 1990's and wondered what had happened to it. The Supervisor feels that although the Town is fiscally responsible for the Water District, the Town Board spends an inordinate amount of time on water issues. Supervisor Schaaphok requested any input from the residents.

The Supervisor gave the following information:

- In 2008, the Water District revenue totaled only \$28,000.00, while it cost the Town \$26,294.00.
- In 2009, the Water District revenue totaled only \$26,619.00, while it cost the Town \$43,192.00.
- In 1986 there were 105 units, currently the Town has 76 units
- An estimated \$28,000.00 a year will need to be raised to keep the Water District afloat
- As of May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2010, the Water District has only \$8,832.00 in budget
- Water Superintendent Todd Stradinger has been working to ensure that all units have meters; only 10 remain to be connected

- Currently, the base rate for water billing is \$131.80 every 6 months, and \$1.00 per 1,000 gallons water used. The base rate includes the fixed rate plus the payment of the Water District loan.
- The loan payment is \$10,267.00 for 2010. Loan payments will continue through 2024
- Approximately \$140.00/unit/year needs to be collected just to pay the loan payment each year.

Supervisor Schaaphok proposed billing the units with no meters a large base fee after December 31<sup>st</sup>, and give the patrons until then to have the meters installed. Supervisor Schaaphok asked the Water District patrons whether they would rather see the \$36.00 base rate increase, or the \$1.00/1,000 gallons raised. Supervisor Schaaphok also proposed creating a reserve fund with the increased revenues, for emergency expenditures such as the pumps burning out. The Supervisor then opened the meeting to anyone desiring to give input or comments.

- Dan McCumber started the discussion by informing the Board of the fate of the last Water Committee. Mr. McCumber stated the previous Town Board's disinterest, and ultimate decision to dismiss the committee during an executive session. He questioned if the same would happen this time around. Supervisor Schaaphok reassured him of the Board's desire for such a committee.
- Pam Eggsware inquired about unpaid water bills, and what happens to the money once the county collects it from the tax bills. The Supervisor informed her that the county reimburses the Water District and then prosecutes the delinquent patron.
- Susan Dawes asked why the water billing was not all on the County tax bills, like the fixed fee set for the Light District. Supervisor Schaaphok informed her that the water billing does not go by assessment, as does the Light District. Mrs. Dawes also informed the Board that she was paying for 3 meters, when only one is used in the house. Other patrons stated the same issue, and the Board agreed that this problem would need to be addressed.
- Mr. McCumber spoke about how although there are only around 80 water patrons, many more residents use the lights and water in the municipal buildings- the Town Hall, Library, Veteran's Hall, etc. and also from the use of the hydrants. He suggested a billing break on the patrons who have hydrants on their property, and possibly determining a way to charge for publicly used facilities.
- Many residents began expressing dissatisfaction with the current Water Superintendent, Todd Stradinger. Some patrons stated refusal to allow Mr. Stradinger to enter their homes. Joy Griswold inquired about whether all meters could be read from the outside, and if this would be an option for the patrons. Joseph Dunlop then asked if there way a way to match the inside meters to the outside readings, to ensure that no patrons are unhooking the meters in order to show less water use. The Board was not aware that this was possible, and would consult Mr. Stradinger.

A discussion then took place concerning the general welfare of the water district. Connections have continuously been lost over the years. While the water lines are fairly new, the hookups to the houses are old and failing. With no new buildings being built within the Water District, new connections will not be added

and revenues will continue to decrease. The increase of rates will provide for part of this lack of revenue.

By the end of the discussion, the following issues were established as the tasks for the pending water committee:

- A 'non-active setup' fee for unworking meters
- Charging for non-metered units
- Creating an exception to billing unbuildable lots
- Determining a fair way to charge for patrons with multiple meters

The Water District Patrons were adamant about billing the few units who still have no meter. The Supervisor stated that the Town Hall was one of these connections, and would soon be metered. The patrons thought that these units should only be given until July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2010, and then billed a \$250.00 fee. The Board also expressed a desire to reimburse Pam Eggsware for the amount paid to the Water District since her property became 'unbuildable.' As for the increasing rates, Supervisor Schaaphok again asked the Water District patrons whether they would rather see the \$36.00 base rate increase, or the \$1.00/1,000 gallons raised. The patrons thought that both slightly increasing the base rate, and increasing the \$1.00/1,000 gallons to \$2.00/1,000 gallons would be most beneficial. The Board agreed to make a decision on both issues and vote at the next Regular Town Board meeting on May 17<sup>th</sup>.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:17 PM.

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Callie Crisp, Town Clerk