

**MINUTES OF THE  
SPECIAL MEETING OF OCTOBER 25, 2010**

**WATER COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:**

Mr. Robert L. Burnham, Chairman  
Mr. William R. Erickson, Water Commissioner  
Mr. John S. Lovewell, Water Commissioner

**EWD STAFF PRESENT:**

Mr. Shane A. Ben David, Foreman  
Mr. Fred R. Domont, Water Superintendent  
Mrs. Pia Webster, Administrative Assistant

**OTHER EDGARTOWN OFFICIALS AND STAFF PRESENT:**

Mr. Joseph Alosso, Facilities Manager, Wastewater Department  
Ms. Pamela M. Dolby, Town Administrator  
Ms. Melissa Kuehne, Collector of Taxes  
Ms. Kristy Rose, Assistant to the Town Administrator  
Ms. Margaret E. Serpa, Chairman, Board of Selectmen  
Mr. Arthur Smadbeck, Selectman

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:**

The Board of Water Commissioners of the Town of Edgartown held a Special Meeting within the Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectman of the Town of Edgartown on Monday, October 25, 2010 in the Fred B. Morgan, Jr. Meeting Room of the Edgartown Town Hall, 70 Main Street, Edgartown, Mass. The Special Meeting was called for the purpose of discussing the Town Auditor's recommendation that the Water Department turn over the collection of its water-service revenues to the Collector of Taxes and convert its billing program to the MUNIS system. Chairman Robert L. Burnham opened the Special Meeting at 4:16 p.m.

Margaret E. Serpa, Chairman of the Board of Selectmen, explained that her Board had asked the Board of Water Commissioners, Water Superintendent Fred R. Domont, Wastewater Department Facilities Manager Joseph Alosso, and Collector of Taxes Melissa Kuehne to their meeting to respond to the separation of duties issue that the Town Auditor had raised. To wit, the fact that the bills of the Water and Wastewater

Departments were both generated and collected in-house was a problem; and this problem could be solved by having utility customers billed by the respective Department and then mail their payments to the Collector of Taxes.

“What about MUNIS?” inquired Chairman Burnham, referring to the acronym for Municipal Information Systems, Inc., a company involved in data management and billing systems for governmental entities and utilities. “That’s coming,” responded Town Administrator Pamela M. Dolby. “The other thing,” continued Ms. Dolby, “is the billing cycles.” The tax-billing cycles were already set, she said, and those for Wastewater and Water would be matched up. How those would be coordinated with the tax bills was up to Ms. Kuehne.

Chairham Burnham pointed out that the water business was seasonal and that generating their billings in mid-April and mid-October made good fiscal and logistical sense. His Board and the Superintendent had, in fact, carefully considered the efficacies of this schedule from all angles before they changed over to it in 2004. Ms. Dolby responded that the Water Department could request that the billing schedule remain as it was.

“Well, I’m totally shocked!” declared Water Superintendent Domont, who pointed out that there was nothing in the Management Report about this matter. “Who makes the decision that you can’t bill and collect?” he demanded, reiterating, “I’m just shocked!”

“This comes from the Auditor, Fred,” answered Selectman Arthur Smadbeck, who elaborated that the issue in question had been a “flag” for a number of years. Separating the billing from the collecting was simply a way “for us to run better,” he explained. Ms. Kuehne, the Collector of Taxes, noted that the MUNIS reports would show to the Water Department very clearly what had been collected.

“Does this seem like a reasonable approach?” asked Mr. Smadbeck. Wastewater Department Facilities Manager Joseph Alosso replied, “I think this is the proper way to handle it... Whether or not they pay is not as much of a concern for me.” Chairman Serpa said that each of the Departments was to meet with Ms. Kuehne to work out the details.

When Superintendent Domont again objected to the plan, Town Administrator Dolby informed him that the Town Auditor would be on-Island on November 15. Chairman Burnham commented that the Water Commissioners had been trying to meet with the Town Auditor for years. Chairman Serpa suggested a joint meeting of all parties concerned. She then added emphatically, “You people *have* to use the MUNIS program.”

“Moving on...” continued Chairman Serpa, who was interrupted. Chairman Burnham argued that historically, water utilities had not used the MUNIS program with much success. Superintendent Domont described a workshop on the MUNIS utility billing program that he and his office staff had attended. The screens were cluttered with features a Department his size would never use. Furthermore, there were “lots of things that MUNIS *can’t* do that our billing system *can* do,” he said.

Superintendent Domont also argued that the issue of a Department's not being able both to bill and collect was not in the Management Report. Chairman Serpa explained that there had been a "lack of information" that had held up the FY09 Management Report but that now the problem was known. "It evolves," remarked Town Administrator Dolby.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business, Chairman Burnham asked for a motion to adjourn. Water Commissioner John S. Lovewell made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Water Commissioner William R. Erickson. The motion carried unanimously by voice vote, and Chairman Burnham adjourned the Special Meeting at 4:32 p.m. The Board of Selectmen carried on with their Regular Meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Pia Webster  
Administrative Assistant

APPROVED:  
BOARD OF WATER COMMISSIONERS  
TOWN OF EDGARTOWN

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Robert L. Burnham, Chairman

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William R. Erickson, Water Commissioner

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John S. Lovewell, Water Commissioner