

NOTICE: This is NOT the official version of the Committee Report as APPROVED by the Board of Aldermen. While reasonable efforts have been made to assure that this is the Committee Report that was presented at a meeting of the Board of Aldermen, you should check the Minutes of that meeting in order to confirm its approval, rejection or amendment. Do not rely on the accuracy of this information without first checking with the City Clerk.

February 9, 2009

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE
ON PUBLIC UTILITIES AND PUBLIC WORKS

The Committee on Public Utilities and Public Works convened on February 9, 2009, with Chairman John Connolly presiding and Committee Member Alderman Bruce Desmond present and voting. Also present were Administrative Assistant Jessie Baker, DPW Commissioner Stan Koty, Highway Superintendent Steve McEachern, Peter Nagle, Hugh Small, Jose Gonzalez and Melina Diaconis from National Grid, Stan Usovicz from Verizon, and William Zamparelli from NSTAR.

Chairman Connolly outlined the problems the city has been experiencing with the various utility companies doing business in Somerville, including double poles, service outages and communications. Mr. McEachern provided the members with the following count of double poles:

- Verizon 174
- NSTAR 8
- Comcast 32

Mr. Zamparelli informed the members of NSTAR's plans to remove its double poles and noted that according to his figures, Verizon has 153 double poles in the city. Chairman Connolly requested that an update on the double pole situation be provided to the committee by the first week of May.

Mr. Koty addressed the ongoing discussions with Verizon regarding their unresponsiveness, communications and problems with double poles, noting that 174 of them is an unacceptable number. He stressed that Verizon is the only utility company that has a communication problem. Mr. Usovicz assured the members that Verizon's communication would improve.

The committee requested that each utility company provide a listing of its supervisors and/or contact people along with a chain of command.

The committee moved on to the procedures for opening a street to perform utility work. Mr. Koty explained the process for obtaining a permit and the traffic management plans associated with a street opening. He noted that he is pleased with NSTAR's recent performance in this area and again pointed to problems with Verizon. Mr. Koty also discussed charging a fee for closing down a street.

Chairman Connolly directed Mr. Koty to work with the Traffic and Parking Department to effectuate a plan to expedite the permitting process.

Representatives from National Grid discussed the gas leak and repairs on Broadway and informed the members that emergencies are dealt with first and that 2nd grade leaks would be dealt with when the weather is warmer.

No papers were acted on.

Alderman John M. Connolly, Chairman
Committee on Public Utilities and Public Works