



Three Rivers Fire District
50 Springfield Street
Three Rivers, MA 01080

Prudential Committee Minutes

Chairman Norman Czech called a meeting of the Prudential Committee to order at 6:33 p.m.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Norman Czech; Prudential Committee Chairman
Andrea Sullivan; Prudential Committee Clerk
Sherrie Bellefleur; Three Rivers Recording Secretary

Scott Turner; Three Rivers Fire Chief
Nicole Dewberry; Three Rivers Water Superintendent
Guy Bellefleur; District Clerk

Roll Call

Prudential Committee Vice Chairman Richard Pobiegló and District Treasurer Lorinda Baker were not present at this meeting.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Approval of Minutes

The Committee reviewed and approved the minutes from the January 4, 2023, meeting.

MOTION (SULLIVAN; CZECH): To approve the January 4, 2023, minutes to the Meeting. 2-0-0

Public Comment

None

Committee Reports

None

Report of the Treasurer

Report of the Treasurer was not available for the meeting tonight. January 2023 will be read at the next meeting in March 2023.

Report of the Fire Chief

Fire Chief Scott Turner read his January 2023 Report of the Fire Chief.

Message from the Chief:

Due to January being a slow month for incident response, members were able to work on updating strategic plan, management plan, training plan and develop new ideas for community relations and recruitment/retention.

Operations:

- **Emergency Incident response:** The department was dispatched to 11 emergency incidents for the month. These incidents include 5 Rescue & EMS incidents, 1 Service Call, 2 Good Intent and 3 False Alarm & False Calls.
- **Service Calls:** 23. These calls include fire safety inspections, smoke & CO alarm installations, open burning regulations, assisting town agencies, fire safety code inquiries and Explorer Program Information.

Apparatus and Equipment:

- Car 2; 2005 Chevy Tahoe is out of service 8/27, Engine 2; 1995 KME is reserve 10/01 and all the rest is in service.

Fire Prevention:

- 4 pre-sale home inspections.
- 1 bar inspection.
- 1 alarm & sprinkler system inspection

- 1 oil tank installation inspection.

Training:

- Rope awareness and operations.
- Hoseline deployment and saving ourselves.

Events:

- No events for January.

Chief Scott Turner graduated from the 28th class of the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy's Chief Fire Officer Management Training Program.

MOTION (SULLIVAN; CZECH): To accept the report of the Fire Chief Scott Turner for January 2023. Approved 2-0-0

Report of the Water Superintendent

Nicole Newberry presented the Report of the Water Superintendent for January 2023.

Status of water systems:

- The Town Hall plans to submit an application for a Community Development Block Grant for Maple Street and if funds allow, for Maple Terrace also. If they receive the grant, then work will include either updating or replacing water mains on those streets along with fixing curbs and lights.
- Ms. Dewberry and Sam Hoy attended a course about a bill pay assistance program. Those customers who qualify for fuel assistance will also qualify for this program. Information about the program and how to obtain the funds through their system for customers was received. This program will go on for at least one year, and it may be extended into future years.
- Mac passed the 3rd and final exam. He will now have in-training licenses to match the rankings of our treatment and distribution systems in Three Rivers. The instructor of Mac's course is impressed with his quick progress over the short time that he has worked for Three Rivers.
- Rich and Mac are finished with meter reads for the turn of the new year.
- DEP sent an email, inviting water systems to submit a monitoring waiver application for lab samples. Although we do not meet all of their requirements to reduce monitoring, we thought we'd try to submit the application for those tests that are most likely to receive a waiver.
- Ms. Dewberry called National Grid to see if we qualify to receive a reduced rate during the night vs. during the day. They said that we are classified as a "medium" size business. Only large businesses qualify for this discount. They re-evaluate this classification once per year for each customer.

Update on Tank Project:

- Work began on additional financial documentation. Stephen Chiacchia has worked to gather this documentation.
- The engineering design documents still need to be submitted.

John Sasur:

- John spoke of a survey that went out by the town of Palmer for all Palmer residents. In the survey what was being looked for was all the different things that were important to the residents. One thing that stood out high on the list was economic development in that Palmer is not going anywhere as far as economic development. One of the members who is on the sub-committee for water and sewer infrastructure for the Town of Palmer reached out to Mr. Sasur. They discussed two critical points, one is they are looking at a study to better coordinate the water districts because this hinders economic development for the Town of Palmer. Two, this is strictly a water issue, it has to do with districts but has nothing to do with fire supply. Mr. Sasur spoke with Stephen Chiacchia about this. This would be parallel with the infrastructure improvements that are happening throughout the town and how they will fit into the bigger picture that we are possibly looking at for bettering our water supply for the good of the Town of Palmer. What is being looked at is a Charge to allow a committee to be established to investigate the benefits and the disadvantages of the District coordinating with other Districts to the benefit to the Town of Palmer. John Sasur and Stephen Chiacchia would like to be appointed along with anyone else that would be interested and come up with the pros and cons. This comes from the citizens of Palmer not the Town of Palmer. This came from the Master Plan Study. Mr. Sasur has met with the Master Plan subcommittee. The whole picture will be looked at and a recommendation will be made to the Board as quickly as possible. Nicole Dewberry, Water Superintendent and Scott Turner, Three Rivers Fire Chief have agreed to be on the committee. A request for files was made. Mr. Sasur says after 1 or 2 meetings the committee should be able to report back to the Board.

This subject led to Nicole Dewberry asking if she can share with the Town Hall a copy of the Intermunicipal Study that was in Draft form done in 2012. Mr. Sasur stresses this is a DRAFT and has never been approved yet. The Town Halls interest in this is to help with writing the grant for the Block Grant Project. Mr. Czech has said Nicole can share this but must stress that this is just a boilerplate draft and is not complete or approved yet.

MOTION (SULLIVAN; CZECH): To appoint to the Water Study Committee Stephen Chiacchia, John Sasur, Fire Chief Scott Turner, and Water Superintendent Nicole Dewberry. Approved. 2-0-0

Pressure Regulator in Well #3:

- Ms. Dewberry asked permission to remove the pressure regulator from the pit of Well #3. The valve to this device has been shut for years and there are other points in the system that regulate pressure, therefore, this change should not disrupt the function of the well, though there is a slight possibility. John Sasur tells the Board that he supports Ms. Dewberry on this and says she's done plenty of investigations into this. Ms. Dewberry has said it is very heavy so removal will have to be figured out. A final decision on moving forward is all that is being requested today. Further discussions can take place in the future but today can she have permission to remove this pressure regulator in well #3.

MOTION (SULLIVAN; CZECH): To approve the removal of the Pressure Regulator in Well # 3. Approved. 2-0-0

Annual Wage Review:

- Ms. Dewberry would like to review wages if possible. The last wage increase was 1 1/3 years ago, during September 2021.
- Stephen Chiacchia was asked for recommendations on a minimum wage increase, and he suggested 5%. It was decided that this will be tabled until the whole board is present and to see what the budget is. This can be discussed at our next monthly meeting.

2023-2024 Fiscal Year Budget Suggestions:

- Inflation has increased significantly. Ms. Dewberry asked to please consider adjusting each line item accordingly.
- An attachment was provided with additional information about specific line items and other considerations.
 - Andrea Sullivan mentioned the Article for the meters. For each small meter that is replaced is \$280/meter. Ms. Dewberry says that to touch the account that is set aside with money in it for the meters requires an article on a warrant. Ms. Sullivan asks how long the money has been sitting in this account and the answer was since the Ray Domey days. If this happened back that far then does that mean the meter charge has not been put into that account since then? Ms. Dewberry says the idea on the bill of having a separate charge for meter and water is we could put that \$6.00 from every household into that account then from that account we could buy meters but, right now we are relying on this for general operations. This money sits in a bank under this account gaining interest. Ms. Sullivan asked how often the meters are replaced. Ms. Dewberry replies saying in theory all are to be replaced because the older ones are wired and the new ones you drive by to read the meter. Another thing is the older the meter gets the less accurate they are. After a meter is replaced, it should last about 10 years. This issue then is not the meter but the battery inside the meter. The meter battery cannot be taken out once they fail you need to replace the whole meter.
 - A short discussion took place on the budget in the areas of electricity and chemicals. It will be hard to propose what amount to list on the budget. Nicole thought about creating a reserve fund, a fund that would be there to use if an electric or chemical bill was much higher than budgeted. The Prudential Committee could give permission to use the reserve fund to pay the excess bill from there. It expires every year just like a line item would. The Financial Committee would have to approve of this.
 - Norman Czech is working on pricing now for General Insurance. He is waiting to hear back from Crimmins and Stolars. Last year what was paid for General Insurance was \$58,000.

Revise Water Purchase Agreement with Thorndike Water:

- Thorndike pays \$2.10 per 1,000 gallons. This agreement was last updated during 2016.
- Consider Creating a new agreement with an annual increase each year.
- Stephen Chiacchia has been trying to get in touch with Thorndike Water. It was brought to Ms. Dewberry's attention that Bob Flagg turned off the valve for water that he was receiving from Three Rivers and is now getting most of their water from Bondsville.

Jerry Skowronek approached Ms. Sullivan about his letter that was sent about a rebate to the rate increase. He states it was in the Bi Laws. This rate increase is not in the Bi Laws it was established in a monthly meeting. He is looking for an abatement. One apartment is

vacant, and his son is purchasing the home. Ms. Sullivan is asking if we can do up a letter and respond to him with copies of the minutes of the meeting. She will review her response with the Board and Ms. Dewberry before sending.

Andrea Sullivan inquired about the status of the broken garage door. Ms. Dewberry says she received one quote and is getting another in a few days. Mac's father-in-law is one giving us a quote. There may possibly be a third quote.

MOTION (SULLIVAN; CZECH): To accept the report of the Water Superintendent for January 2023. Approved. 2-0-0

Board Members Comments:

None

New Business:

- **State Ethics Correspondence:**
 - Guy Bellefleur, District Clerk has informed the Board that the State Ethics Commission has announced mandatory online training. This is for any elected official appointed and volunteer. This would fall under the Prudential Committee the Fire District and the Water District. This is a one hour long course online. The link is on the MassGov.com site. A packet was created and will be distributed with instructions on how to login and take this course. Records are kept for six years, and the updated program will need to be taken every two years.
- **New DEP regulations Legal Action:**
 - DEP regulations regarding drought restrictions would require our water department to become the water police and tell residents to shut off water in regards to sprinklers and not fill pools etc. This could have a financial impact because if we allow watering of lawns, we obviously get more from their bill but if we require them to shut the water off then we are not able to bill for that water usage. Respecting a drought is important to do stresses Ms. Dewberry but it may or may not relate to what is happening in the water department. Mass Water Works is asking DEP to consider each water department individually. A thought is the less usage of our water the bigger chance in the summer months for contamination. If we wanted to go to Mass Water Works and use their law firm it would cost approximately \$80,000 to \$100,000. The more water departments that sign on the better being that the larger departments can contribute more money. If we signed on we could contribute whatever we wish to contribute but power in numbers.
 - Ms. Sullivan says to start off at this time is \$275.00, this is for any department that wants to get on board. Springfield Water Department is willing to put the bulk of funds hoping the smaller departments can come up with some after. Ms. Sullivan feels if we can come up with \$1,000 in legal fees our total would be \$1,275.00.

MOTION (SULLIVAN; CZECH): To join in with the Massachusetts Water Works Association on this litigation for the DEP on nonessential water usage and their restrictions with an upfront payment of \$275.00 with an additional amount to be decided later. Approved 2-0-0

- **Haley Ward Engineering Tank Discussion:**
 - This would be an agreement and sign with Haley Ward Engineering to obtain their services to review plans for the tank restoration project. McClure Engineering is doing the application, also working with us. We're doing as much as we can but there are a lot of engineering components. McClure is also doing all the design. Some questions are do we restore 1 tank of 2 and other questions are what kind of mixing systems. The price quoted from Haley Ward was \$4,100. Steve Marhelewicz says we will need to vote on an article to pay the engineering fees for this current year. Total amount of McClures proposal (some of what is already paid) is \$18,000. Chairman Czech say an article will need to be included in our annual district meeting in May 2023. Mr. Czech will stop to speak with Mr. Marhelewicz on this. Ms. Sullivan has questions like maybe a little more detail on the scope of work. She feels there are too many unanswered questions about what services are going to be performed. Other companies are okay with smaller projects, but this company seems to be better at the bigger projects that we may need them to do. Ms. Dewberry can contact them to ask for more details in their scope of work. Nicole thought maybe some of her emails might have answers and she would gather them together and review.
- **Finance Meeting:**
 - No date yet. Jesse Pobiegló was waiting to hear back from the other members.

Old Business:

- **Cell Tower Project:**

- Nothing new to report on this project.

Discuss and/or take action on any business unknown/unavailable prior to the posting of this agenda:

MOTION (SULLIVAN; CZECH): To adjourn from the Open Meeting at 7:56 pm. Approved 2-0-0

Submitted by:

Approved as to Form and Content:

Sherrie Bellefleur, District Recording Secretary

Norman Czech, Chairman

Date: _____

Date: _____