



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 6:30 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  
Lorinda Baker; District Treasurer

## **Roll Call**

Prudential Committee Vice Chairman Richard Pobieglo and District Clerk Guy Bellefleur were not present at this meeting.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

## **Approval of Minutes**

The Prudential Committee reviewed and approved the minutes from the February 1, 2023, meeting.

**MOTION (SULLIVAN; CZECH): To approve the February 1, 2023, minutes to the Meeting. 2-0-0**

## **Committee Reports**

John Sasur of the Master Plan Committee spoke. A meeting was held with the committee consisting of John Sasur, Stephen Chiacchia, Scott Turner and Nicole Dewberry. The meeting involved going over all of the pros and cons and whether or not the district should even look at this consolidation of all the district water departments. The project is looking at the infrastructure of the towns as whole vs. individual little districts. Their committee voted to urge the Prudential Committee to move forward with pursuing this. The bottom line is this committee thought that it was important to look at the first step which would be coordination. Over a period of years, you will see that the coordination will finally meld into a consolidation in the future. There are a lot of obstacles going into the consolidation being that this whole thing would be a step-by-step process. This committee is in favor of it and wishes that the Prudential Committee will also be in favor of it. If Three Rivers is in favor of moving forward, we would then contact the other districts to then engage in some sort of conversation on this. Chairman Czech asked Mr. Sasur to point out what he thought were cons with his response being, total consolidation like billing differences, water quality issues along with more aggressive testing of the water on a state level. The beneficial side would be shared manpower, insurance costs, consistent materials purchasing. Chairman Czech does state in discussions that we (Three Rivers) are going to be paying for something that has no benefit to Three Rivers. Mr. Sasur points out that Three Rivers will not survive if Palmer does not develop, what is good for Palmer is also good for Three Rivers. Chairman Czech plans to meet with Mike and Tim of the Master Plan Sub Committee per their request for a meeting.

This began with a survey by the Town of Palmer that resulted in the residents saying they felt there is a need for economic development. This development is not happening in Palmer because we do not have the services to provide water and sewer. A lengthy discussion continued for some time resulting in Chairman Czech saying he will look into a meeting date with the Master Plan Sub Committee to discuss this even further. Three Rivers is not initiating this, but we are looking for a seat at the table.

Chairman Norman Czech mentioned to John Sasur before he departs from the meeting that the representative from the health insurance is coming on March 16 at 10:00 am if he wishes to be present.

## **Report of the Treasurer**

Report of the Treasurer was read by Lorinda Baker, District Treasurer. She read January 2023 and will read February 2023 at the next monthly meeting.

### **Water Department**

- Year to date revenue is down \$18,599 from last year.
- Repairs are down \$30,318 and Meter Replacement is down \$16,971 which has offset revenue drop. The \$11,000 bill for engineering on the tank project leaves net income down only \$899.00.

### **Fire Department**

- No issues to report on the Fire Department.

### **District**

- All areas are well under budget.
- Insurance is \$3,610 over budget but is more than offset by legal and reservoir inspections.

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

**MOTION (SULLIVAN; CZECH): To approve the Treasurers Warrant for January 2023. Approved 2-0-0**

## **Report of the Fire Chief**

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

### **Administration**

#### **Meetings:**

- Western Massachusetts Fire Chiefs
- Water District Cooperative Committee Meeting (Master Plan Committee)
- Finance Committee Meeting

### **Fire Prevention/Education:**

- 5 pre-sale home inspections.
- 6 permits issued for open burning.
- 1 oil tank installation inspection.

### **Operations:**

#### **Emergency Incident response:**

- The department was dispatched to 23 emergency incidents for the month.

#### **Service Calls:**

- 15 non-emergency service calls.

### **Training:**

- Private Evan Grimes started Mass Call Volunteer Recruit Academy.
- Regional Training Program-Water Rescue at Crystal Lake in Bondsville.

### **Events:**

- Pathfinder flagpole repairs (solar light added to the top of the pole with assistance from Palmer Fire Department).

Chairman Czech asked Chief Turner about the Jaws and he was told there is a delivery date of April.

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

## **Report of the Water Superintendent**

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

### **Status of water systems:**

- A note was enclosed with the most recent billing asking all customers to use DEP's app to document their service lines. Mac has been asked to head up this project and has already started going door to door with Rich. We have until April 1, 2024, per the request of DEP but the absolute deadline is October 16, 2024.
- Water Superintendent Nicole Dewberry, Sam and help from Mary Ann Duguay have been working on DEP's Annual Statistics Report. This is almost complete.
- Menard Garage Doors of Palmer will have a subcontractor install a new garage door on March 2<sup>nd</sup>.

### **Assistance Programs and Late Fee for Unpaid Bills:**

- Ms. Dewberry has said they are now signed up to work with customers who qualify for the state's Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHWAP). Therefore, residents have ways in which they may seek assistance with paying for their water bills if they qualify.
- Ms. Dewberry is requesting a different method to apply a late fee to unpaid water bill balances. Currently it is 1.5% per month. What is being requested is possibly a flat rate instead of a percentage. She was told to come up with a couple examples of how she would like to apply the late fee and bring these to the next meeting.

### **Customer Billing for Overage in December as opposed Mid-Summer:**

- Ms. Dewberry has requested that they be allowed to charge customers the overage in December instead of Mid-Summer. The reasoning behind this is to save time reading meters if they do both at once instead of twice per year; once to bill midsummer and then once to report to the DEP. Most of the discussions led to this not being a good idea only being that billing for the overage right after Christmas is a very tough time of year for most to do that strictly for financial reasons.

### **Chemical Alarms:**

- High PH and low chlorine alarms have been going off frequently all year. A controls tech must come and modify the wells and chemical pumps so that they shut down in unison, or the continuous read analyzer needs to be changed or both. Ms. Dewberry who would like to be able to have the tech come and repair in the same trip to possibly save money but before anything happens Chairman Czech would like Ms. Dewberry to check with Steve Marhelewicz first to see what is in the budget to have this repair done.

### **Legal Action Regarding Drought Restrictions:**

- This is being tabled until the full Prudential Committee Board is present.

### **Annual Wage Review:**

- This is being tabled until July when there will be extra money in the budget.

### **Community Development Block Grant:**

- The Town Hall is writing the application for proposed work on Maple Street and possibly to include Maple Terrace, they would like to know if we wish to contribute match funding. Chairman Czech asked what the amount even is and how can we match if we do not even know the amount. This would entail new sidewalks, water, and sewer.

### **Possible Source of Future Funding as Noted in Mass Waterworks Association Newsletter:**

- Congressional Earmarks: Congressional offices are starting to accept Community Project Funding (CPF) and Appropriations submissions for FY24, these are otherwise known as "earmarks." If you have a water infrastructure project that you think should be included in your Congresspersons' requests, you should get in touch with their staff to see what their process is to submit a project. It is understood that there are no deadlines nor guidance on what eligibility requirements will be, but it is never too early to start the discussion, so you don't miss the opportunity. Mr. Czech suggest that Ms. Dewberry take a handle on this being she knows best what she would like for her Capital Improvement Plan. She will write or email our Congressperson.

**Update on Tank Project:**

- Ms. Dewberry has the agreement from Haley Ward Engineering and would like to know if the Board would like to sign it tonight. Chairman Czech asked where the money is going to come from for this. Steve Marhelewicz will need to be sure there is enough money in the budget to pay for this. Again, Chairman Czech would like to wait until the whole Board is present to sign this.
- The project design from McClure was due to DEP during October 2022. The design is still incomplete but has been told that the revised application is almost ready.

**Cell Tower Project:**

- On hold. Brad no longer works there. Ms. Dewberry has been in contact with now a Steve Quinn and copied Tom Remillard. They will look into our project and will be in touch in the future.

**Move Chudy Fill Station to Calkins Road in the future?**

- Andrea Sullivan would like to mention a possible solution to stagnant water on Calkins Road. If Capone filled their trucks at Kmart instead of Chudy’s it would get the water moving some in that Calkins Road location. Chairman suggested Chamber Road instead of Kmart. More talks on this will take place.

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

**Board Members Comments:**

None

**Public Comment**

Finance Committee John Mowduk is suggesting that there be a set date for the Finance Committee meeting so everyone knows well in advance when it will be instead of settling on a date last minute without a lot of notice to prepare and plan. Settling on a date Chairman says is hard because sometimes they do not have numbers or budgets ready. A date is usually picked once everyone is prepared with their budgets.

Bonnie Turner questioned where to get a copy of our current liability insurance so she can pull a permit to hold a pancake breakfast on April 2<sup>nd</sup>. Chairman told her it should be in a file at the Water Department.

**New Business:**

- **Finance Committee Appointment**
  - This did not take place as a list of names was not submitted to the Chairman prior to this meeting.

**Old Business:**

**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 8:07 pm. Approved 2-0-0**

Submitted by:

Approved as to Form and Content:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sherrie Bellefleur, District Recording Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Norman Czech, Chairman

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_