



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

# Prudential Committee Minutes

May 15, 2024

Chairman Norman Czech called a meeting of the Prudential Committee to order at 6:30 p.m.

## IN ATTENDANCE:

Norman Czech; Prudential Committee Chairman  
Stephen Chiacchia; Prudential Committee Vice Chairman  
Andrea Sullivan; Prudential Committee Clerk  
Steve Nodurf; Three Rivers Interim Fire Chief

Nicole Dewberry; Three Rivers Water Superintendent  
Lorinda Baker; District Treasurer  
Sherrie Bellefleur; Three Rivers Recording Secretary  
Guy Bellefleur; District Clerk

## Roll Call

## The Pledge of Allegiance was recited

## Approval of Minutes

The Prudential Committee reviewed and approved the minutes from the April 17, 2024, meeting.

**MOTION (SULLIVAN; CHIACCHIA): To approve the April 17, 2024, minutes to the meeting. 3-0-0**

The Prudential Committee reviewed and approved the minutes from the April 19, 2024, Open & Executive Session meeting.

**MOTION (SULLIVAN; CHIACCHIA): To approve the April 29, 2024, Open & Executive Session minutes to the meeting. 3-0-0**

## Public Comment

None

## Committee Reports

None

## Report of the Treasurer

The Board reviewed the report of the treasurer for March & April 2024.

### March 2024

**Water Department:** Income for March 2024 was \$0.00. (Dave did not get to enter receipts from the March bank statements due to tax season).

Expenses for March 2024 were \$31,087.99 (a decrease of \$3,719.27 from March 2023).

March 2024 Net Income is -\$31,087.99 (a decrease of \$27,367.72 over March 2023 due to Income not being reported).

Fiscal YTD income is \$381,744.79 (same as February 2024 because of income not being reported). Still an increase of \$41,823.71 over July 2022 – March 2023.

Fiscal YTD Net Income is \$12,276.12 for July 2023-March 2024 (\$11,040.38 higher than July 2022 – March 2023).

No accounts are over budgeted amounts currently.

**Fire Department:** Article 5 is slightly over budgeted amount (mostly apparatus).

**District:** No issues

#### **April 2024**

**Water Department:** Income for April 2024 was \$74,773.97 (a decrease of \$1,103.86 from April 2023).

Expenses for April 2024 were \$30,557.41 (a decrease of \$18,889.03 over April 2023 mostly due to Article 3 – meter spend of \$14,000).

Fiscal YTD Income is \$469,169.19 (an increase of \$53,370.28 over March 2024 because it includes March 2024 income that was not recorded on the March numbers.

Fiscal YTD Net Income is \$55,483.96 for July 2023 – April 2024 (\$4,801.78 higher than Jul 2022 – April 2023).

Office & Postage and Meters are slightly over budget. (Meter budget has not been adjusted yet).

**Fire Department:** Article 5 is slightly over budgeted amount (mostly apparatus), (Budget needs to be adjusted).

**District:** No issues.

**MOTION (CHACCHIA; SULLIVAN): To accept the Treasurers Report for March & April 2024. Approved. 3-0-0**

**MOTION (SULLIVAN; CHACCHIA): To accept the Treasurers Warrant for March & April 2024. Approved. 3-0-0**

### **Report of the Fire Chief**

Fire Chief Steve Nodurf read his April 2024 Report of the Fire Chief.

#### **Administration:**

- EMS Upgrade Project
- Ongoing Grant Writing Fire Prevention and Safety
- On Scene for Engine 2 gauges
- Engine 3 sent for grease, oil and tune-up
- Requesting quotes for lighting upgrade
- Ongoing Mentoring with Dave Mottor
- Hearings Officer Webinar

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

- Walk through, Pinocchio's to assess work to be done to re-open
- Occupancy inspections with the Building Commissioner and Board of Health
- Elevator inspection (alarms) Palmer Police Department
- 6 26F presale inspections
- 1 underground tank review

#### **Operations:**

- 17-emergency incidents
- Review and update of Inspection Forms
- Provide Fire Watch for 2066-2072 Palmer Road
- 100-foot Section of LDH Sent for Testing (it was run over by 2 tractor trailers at an incident)
- Walk through 44 Third St. with the Building Inspector and District 1

#### **Training:**

- Live Burn Training in Granby with Mutual Aid Partners
- NFFF Training at MFA Springfield
- Scenario work for EMS responses
- Don/Doff Drills
- Ladder Drills
- Driver Training

#### **Events:**

Chief spoke of the lighting project and the acceptance form attached to his report. The total project cost is \$ 35,376. Guardian would invoice Three Rivers Fire upon receipt of the signed order form.

Then, National Grid will pay Guardian \$24,436 upon project completion. Three Rivers Fire will pay it back on bill in 60 equal monthly installments at 0% interest.

Then, Guardian will invoice Three Rivers Fire upon substantial completion of the project \$2,500.

Lastly the approved utility incentive will be paid directly to Guardian upon project completion. \$3,440 will offset the amount due by the customer to Guardian.

The last utility bill was \$ 313.94 but the way this project is listed it will make the monthly bill be \$407.26. Higher than what was billed but still just under budget since \$408.00 is what is budgeted.

**MOTION (SULLIVAN; CHIACCHIA): To approve the lighting upgrade at the Three Rivers Fire Station. Approved 3-0-0**

Chief also asked about the Apparatus Project with Chairman Czech saying this is probably not going to happen yet.

Lastly, the Chief asked about the exhaust venting that is at \$41,000. Chairman recommends that we take care of the lighting project first then we can revisit this project, but Chairman said to put this in the budget for next year.

**MOTION (SULLIVAN; CHIACCHIA): To accept the report of the Fire Chief Steve Nodurf for April 2024. Approved 3-0-0**

## **Report of the Water Superintendent**

Nicole Dewberry read her Report of the Water Superintendent for April 2024.

### **Status of Water Systems:**

- Completed hydrant flushing.
- Mac and Rich made progress on the service line inventory and changed just a few meters since our meter inventory is low.
- Rebuilt the hydrant on East St. but it still doesn't work and needs to be replaced. To do this, we need to place an order for more hydrants. The discussion took place on if there is enough in the budget to put in an order for hydrants. Ms. Dewberry will check with Dave at the Accountants office on this.
- Water was rushing back into Well #1. A well company began repairs today and will finish tomorrow morning. The O-rings were missing, and the foot valve needs to be replaced.

### **Tank Project**

- No new updates since the finance committee meeting took place one week ago.

### **Water to the Gazebo**

- The water line to the gazebo was accidentally pulled during construction a few years ago. Town Hall would like for it to be replaced. Ms. Dewberry spoke with Chris, and it seems that the line from the main on Springfield St. to the curb stop is likely okay, but everything from the curb stop to the gazebo needs to be replaced. Chairman told Ms. Dewberry to check with the town and see if they plan to do all the excavation on this project. Some more information needs to be obtained before we can discuss more on this. Prudential Clerk Andrea Sullivan is strongly opposed to repairing the water line at the Gazebo in Hryniewicz Park for the sole purpose of watering flowers.

***Chairman Czech informed Ms. Dewberry and all present that he will schedule the Special District Meeting for June 12, 2024, at 7:00 pm.***

Some discussions took place with Ms. Dewberry posting an article in the Journal prior to the Special Meeting explaining what the District would be voting on. It is encouraged to make it clear to all residents that if the vote does not pass the tanks will still need to be restored costing us as a District even more money. Vice Chairman Steve Chiacchia read out loud the notice Ms. Dewberry has already composed. Mr. Chiacchia feels with a little tweaking of the Board it will cover all that needs to be said. Ms. Sullivan stresses that the cons of this need to be shared. Example: if the vote does not pass then the repairs will need to be done on our own cost wise without any grants or loans. Saying something about the timing is important also. Now is the time to grab the grants while they are available to us.

### **Annual Raise**

- Annual raises for hourly employees were aligned with the fiscal year. Employees last received an annual raise one year ago, during July 2023. Ms. Dewberry asked if the Board would like to vote on a raise that is to begin in July.
- For reference, looked up was the recent rates of inflation:

- 2021 was 7.00%
- 2022 was 6.50%
- 2023 was 3.40%

This will be tabled until our next regular monthly meeting.

#### **Amount Remaining in Budget**

- Ms. Dewberry has a few things in mind to purchase, and I would be interested to know how much remains in the budget, without going over, that she may safely spend within the next week or two.

#### **Fill Hydrant at Chudy's**

- Not every water department sells to water delivery companies. Here are two that I am aware of, to serve as points of comparison:

##### South Hadley, District #1

Unlike us, they only sell to two companies, but they sell a lot of water to both. Therefore, they treat these companies as they would treat their residents and charge a minimum charge of \$12 per quarter, and a quarterly meter rental fee of \$10. In addition, they charge \$4.23 per 100 cubic feet (aka \$4.23 per 748 gallons).

##### South Deerfield

Income for the department is roughly ½ from real estate taxes and ½ from water charges. They charge their customers \$5.50 per 1,000 gallons. This means that water delivery companies are effectively charged ½ the price that their residential customers pay. Like us, they said that they plan to do a rate study, and so their charge to water delivery companies may change in the future.

Mr. Chiacchia has said that if we did away with the commercial customers that fill from Chudy's location we would lose that revenue. Who will replace that lost revenue? We, the residents, taxpayers will. A short discussion took place on this subject resulting in no changes as of yet.

#### **Nonessential Outdoor Water Use Restrictions During Times of Drought**

- This year we are requested to implement nonessential outdoor water use restrictions during times of drought, and next year we will be required. From what I understand after reading the information below, it could take some time for us to establish those restrictions, and so we should begin now. Copied and pasted from the 2024-04-12 reminder letter from DEP:

The Registration itself does not give registrants authority to implement the required nonessential outdoor water use restrictions and issue fines or penalties to those who do not comply.

- Municipal water authorities (water districts, water & sewer commissions, etc.) operating under state legislative authority (e.g., Chapter 40N, Model Water & Sewer Commissions), can adopt rules and regulations quickly.
- For municipal suppliers governed by a City Council, adopting an ordinance takes months, but typically less than a year.
- Water suppliers in towns that must adopt bylaws typically bring a proposed bylaw before town meeting. After a bylaw is approved at the town meeting, it must be reviewed and approved by the Attorney General. In this case, adopting enforcement authority can take more than one year.

#### **Extra Hire**

- While flushing hydrants, Ms. Dewberry was reminded of just how many hydrants need attention. Many are difficult to open and close. At minimum, they need to be greased. Others need the wearable parts replaced. If we continue to open and close hydrants in the state that they're in, then we could bend the parts inside and would then need to replace these hydrants. Obviously, it costs more to replace a hydrant than it does to lubricate it or to rebuild it by replacing the wearable parts. To replace a hydrant, we need to purchase the hydrant, pipes, and joints, and we need to hire an excavator.
- With the tank project and the service line survey, we are only able to rebuild one or two hydrants per month, and we haven't greased any. We need to do more. Line item #4330 allots \$10,000 for a temporary worker. Ms. Dewberry asked the Board if they would be willing to hire a temporary worker to help the water department make better progress regarding hydrant repair. If so, what is the process to hire?

The Board feels that instead of hiring another employee maybe the money for that should go into purchasing the new hydrants. Another suggestion is to offer the existing employees overtime.

Fire Chief Nodurf has suggested offering his crews services with helping on these hydrants.

**MOTION (SULLIVAN; CHIACCHIA): To accept the report of the Water Superintendent for April 2024. Approved 3-0-0**

#### **Board Members Comments:**

Vice Chairman Steve Chiacchia comments his concern if we lost some of our commercial water customers in town. Down the road Bondsville will end up selling more water to Thorndike leaving Three Rivers selling less which in turn would impact the rates to our residents.

Reminder: Next monthly Prudential Committee meeting was moved to Thursday, June 20, 2024 due to June 19<sup>th</sup> being a holiday.

**New Business:**

Review and release Executive Meeting Records dated January 9, 2024, due to a request.

**MOTION (SULLIVAN; CHIACCHIA): To release the Executive Session Records from January 9, 2024. Approved 3-0-0**

**Old Business:**

Chairman Czech asked Chief Nodurf if he is all good with his new contract and he states that he is and will move forward with signing the contract. The District will pay for a term life insurance policy. Chief needs to get a few quotes from insurance companies and present them to the Board so they can approve one of them.

Water Superintendent Nicole Dewberry has mentioned that she does not have a policy yet. She’s been told to get quotes also and bring them back to the Board for a decision to be made.

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

**MOTION (SULLIVAN; CHIACCHIA): To adjourn from the Open Meeting at 7:54 pm. Approved 3-0-0**

Submitted by:

Approved as to Form and Content:

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

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

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

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