



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
Stephen Chiacchia; Prudential Committee
Andrea Sullivan; Prudential Committee Clerk
Scott Turner; Three Rivers Fire Chief

Nicole Dewberry; Three Rivers Water Superintendent
Lorinda Baker; District Treasurer
Sherrie Bellefleur; 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 June 7, 2023, meeting.

MOTION (SULLIVAN; CZECH): To approve the June 7, 2023, minutes to the Meeting. 2-0-1

Public Comment

None

Committee Reports

None

Report of the Treasurer

Report of the Treasurer was read by Lorinda Baker; District Treasurer for the month of June 2023.

A Certificate of Deposit (CD) was purchased on June 15, 2023, in the amount of \$200,000.00. The term of the CD is 5-months at a 4.91% interest rate.

June 2023

Water Department:

- Revenue for the fiscal year was on budget. \$4000 over prior year.
- Expenses in total for the fiscal year were \$7,700 under budget.
- Significant variances were,
 - Salaries +\$10,994
 - Utilities +\$6,272
 - Repairs -\$14,531
 - Pump Maintenance -\$5,001
 - Tank -\$7,000
- Engineering expenses were over \$5,521 as bills for the tank project were applied to this account.

Fire Department:

- All areas were under budget.
- \$10,416 of Equipment Article will carry over to FY24.

District:

- All areas were under budget.

Chairman Czech called attention to the balance sheets the Equipment Article 8-22 Fire Equipment, with a balance of \$0.00. Treasurer Lorinda Baker will ask Steve Marhelewicz about this. The reason this is being asked will be brought up later in this meeting.

MOTION (SULLIVAN; CHIACCHIA): To accept the Treasurers Report for June 2023. Approved. 3-0-0

MOTION (CHIACCHIA; SULLIVAN): To accept the Treasurers Warrant for June 2023. Approved. 3-0-0

Report of the Fire Chief

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

Administration

- Food Truck meeting with Town Manager regarding fees for inspection and limiting inspections to one Fire District.
- Western Mass. Fire Chiefs Meeting.
- Meeting with Building Inspector regarding new solar panel codes.

Fire Prevention/Education:

- 1 Food Truck Inspection
- 1 Hot Works inspection, Town Hall
- 3 presale home inspections

Operations:

- 15 Emergency Incidents.
- 14 Non-Emergency Service Calls.

Training:

- "Combat Medic" training at Palmer Police Department.

Events:

- Monson Recruit Firefighter Graduation.

Ms. Sullivan inquired on the results of the Food Truck meeting involving the inspection costs. The concern initially Chief Turner says is that we are charging too much for food truck inspections. What was alleged was Three Rivers charges \$50 for a single time event. Chief confirmed this is false information and that we charge \$25 per year and on special events on a Friday when vendors come in one time per year, we give them a permit free of charge. If they are only here one day per year, we do not charge at all. The meeting cleared up a lot, but one request was to combine the departments together and do one inspection, but Chief Turner's issue is being sure that Three Rivers inspection fee comes to Three Rivers, and that it gets separated. The offer for the Town Manager to attend this open meeting and discuss this further was proposed but he did not show up to this meeting. The Board feels at this time we should leave everything the same.

Chief Turner is asking for the approval to auction off or dispose of the 2005 Tahoe.

MOTION (CHIACCHIA; SULLIVAN): To authorize Chief Scott Turner to auction off or dispose of the 2005 Tahoe. Approved 3-0-0

MOTION (SULLIVAN; CHIACCHIA): To accept the report of the Fire Chief Scott Turner for June 2023. Approved 3-0-0

Report of the Water Superintendent

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

Status of water systems:

- Greg McGregor, the new tank project law firm has offered to stop by to meet everyone the next time he is in Western Massachusetts. Chairman Norman Czech has agreed that the board can meet him.

- Craig Goodreau volunteered his time to take pictures of the tanks. This is for the annual tank inspection survey required by the DEP. He's already taken vent screen images and will return to take pictures of the hatches.
- Glenn of Neponset Controls is going to install a new chlorine chart recorder. The current one is irreparable.
- Timmy of Stonkus performed annual maintenance on the Parco valve for Well #3. They bill at a 4-hour minimum even though he was here for less than an hour. He agreed to coordinate his stop to us next time with Palmer to save us money.
- The chlorine pumps had some maintenance performed by Ms. Dewberry and Mac.
- Mac sprained an ankle on the driveway at the pump station. An accident report was completed. Ms. Dewberry has asked Tom Gregoire (excavator) to improve that area of the driveway. Matthew Morse was asked to improve the stormwater drainage that flows from the street, since water and sand continue to accumulate in the driveway.
- Rich completed the meter reads and the water bills will be mailed soon. This round of bills includes the cost of any overage for the year. Several issues were discovered with the water bills, so Samantha Hoy has agreed to put in extra time to ensure that they are corrected before they are mailed.
- Mac's computer was experiencing intermittent problems. Ms. Dewberry's dad, who is a specialist in IT has rebuilt it. It is likely that this computer will not have the capability to handle Windows 11 and Windows 10 will only be supported until the year 2025. Mac may need a new computer at that time.
- Ms. Dewberry is waiting on parts for her computer that her dad will install a drive into her computer that will be accessible to everyone in the office. At this point all will have access to the shared files no matter what computer is being used.
- The digital files are being organized by topic and date. Sam is also doing the same for the administrative and billing files.

Fax Number:

- Currently we are paying for 2 fax numbers. The one we do not use is included as part of a business package. Permission is asked for to cancel the currently used fax number and replace it with the new number. A suggestion was made to insert a note in the next billing to alert the residents of the fax number change and to update the town website with the new number. This will save the district \$42.00/month.

Tank Project:

- Kara from McClure has called and not yet received a return call from us. We are still missing the application form for the State Revolving Fund. A discussion took place on this beginning with Stephen Chiacchia asking if we had in our possession a written and signed contract by both parties, we do not. It was also noticed that in the contract there was no deadline dates noted. All we have is a verbal communication along with a text message and email to Water Superintendent Nicole Dewberry guaranteeing that this application would be completed by the deadline. It was not. The total price we owed for this contract was \$18,000 but have paid to date \$11,000. We have written designs and plans but the application was never completed. Chairman Norman Czech suggested writing a letter to McClure saying "since we did not receive everything, we were supposed to from you on time unfortunately we had to put this off until next year. We would like however everything that you have completed." Also, in this written communication McClure will be told that we are not using their company going forward. The Committee has asked Ms. Dewberry to draft something up so they can then review. The final letter will be signed by the whole Committee and Ms. Dewberry. The letter when completed should be mailed certified.
- Ms. Dewberry added that McClure still has our paper drawings. They wanted them to scan in then return them to us, but they have not returned them to us yet.

Rate Study and Capital Efficiency Plan:

- Chris Connolly, Bob Flagg and Ms. Dewberry met to discuss the idea of the four water departments in town collectively hiring an engineer to create a Rate Study, Hydraulic Study and a Capital Improvement Plan. The Committee agrees it is best if we can do this with the 3 other departments.

MOTION (SULLIVAN; CHIACCHIA): To move ahead with the Rate Study working together with the 3 other departments.

Approved. 3-0-0

Admin Computer:

- Ms. Hoy's computer is outdated so a new one was purchased. New software updates are being considered:
 *Meter Reading Software: In the beginning of 2024 our current meter reading software will no longer be supported by Neptune. We should transition to the current version of their software in advance of that time. During the Annual Meeting, Article #13 granted \$14,000 toward the purchase of a new meter reading equipment. Even though we already have the device that records the readings it will be nice to have the funding available if that device needs to be replaced. The software in use now was a one-time purchase but the new software is under a subscription model. We will need to budget approximately \$1,500 - \$2,000 per year to pay for the software. There is also a one-time setup fee and training of \$4,527.

***Billing Software:** Our billing software with Rob Longo does not have the capability to download information from the new Neptune meter software. Billing issues could impact our revenue. Permission is being asked to look into other software companies to work with in the future.

Ms. Dewberry also noted that the billing software and Neptune work together. Can she update both at the same time? There may need to be a Special Meeting held at the point of purchasing but for now shopping around is requested.

Some searching has already begun narrowing the companies down to 2 (5 were looked at) that the water department would like to work with.

MOTION (SULLIVAN; CHIACCHIA) To authorize Nicole Dewberry & Samantha Hoy to shop around for software then report back to the Board their findings. Approved. 3-0-0

Tablet:

Ms. Hoy used her personal money to purchase a tablet for her work at the Fire Department, then purchased a different device to better suit her needs. May the Water Department purchase this tablet from Ms. Hoy? The tablet was purchased in November 2022 for \$800.00. Ms. Hoy would like to receive at least \$600 for this device.

MOTION (SULLIVAN; CHIACCHIA) To authorize the purchase of Samantha Hoys tablet in the amount of \$600.00. Approved. 3-0-0

MOTION (CHIACCHIA; SULLIVAN) To accept the report of the Water Superintendent for June 2023. Approved. 3-0-0

Board Members Comments:

Stephen Chiacchia has been approached by Dan Belanger of the Palmer Prudential Committee. He would like to be added to the agenda to talk about areas that we can work cooperatively. One area to talk about could be purchasing insurance. He feels if we buy one big policy it may save us money. Chairman Czech thinks it is a good idea to add him to the agenda and have this discussion.

Andrea Sullivan asked about reorganizing the Board. This will be done at the next monthly meeting which is August 16, 2023.

New Business:

Annual Wage Increase/Water Department Employees:

- Employees last received an annual raise during September 2021. May we consider a raise? Chairman Czech asked Nicole to keep the annual wage increases to the month of July.

MOTION (SULLIVAN; CHIACCHIA) To approve a 5% wage increase to employees of the water department. Approved. 3-0-0

Discussion Full time Water Employee:

Water Superintendent Nicole Dewberry inquired if Mack, her employee could go from part time to full time. Ms. Dewberry will talk to Mack first to see if he is interested in full time but first wanted to get authorization from the Committee ahead of time. If Mack agrees to go full time he can start as early as next week according to the Board. She will speak with him and go from there based on his response.

Meeting date change:

The regular monthly meetings will change from the first (1st) Wednesday of the month to the third (3rd) Wednesday of the month beginning with August 2023. Recording Secretary Sherrie Bellefleur will update the town website of this change and will also change the Committee name to add Stephen Chiacchia.

MOTION (SULLIVAN; CHIACCHIA) To move the regular open meeting date to the 3rd Wednesday of each month beginning in August 2023. Approved. 3-0-0

Fire Chief Job Posting Discussion:

Stephen Chiacchia feels we are not going to appoint a full time Fire Chief in 2 months. He suggests we hire someone for the interim while we are looking for a permanent full time fire chief. First step is to begin within the organization to see if there is anyone interested in applying for the job. Any interested party should submit a letter of interest and a resume. Chairman Czech is thinking on the lines of common courtesy to offer the position to the Deputy Chief, but Mr. Chiacchia would like a resume submitted as opposed to just offering

the job to another. Chairman Czech has asked Fire Chief Scott Turner to post the job from within now. All interested applicants will be submitted by July 31st with a decision being made by August 16th. Giving 1 month for training. Stephen Chiacchia asked Chief Turner if he would be willing to consult after September 1st if needed. Chief Turner agreed to this but taking into consideration the travel to here from his new residence.

Old Business:

None

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

Chairman Norman Czech received a phone call from Dave @ Steve Marhelewicz office asking where we were going to get the money for the rescue vehicle. It was figured back in February or March of last year, under Article 8 -22 Fire Equipment \$28,000. Also approved was the purchase of the Jaws of Life. It was found that a lot of the \$28,000 from April or May was now no longer there, it was spent. The money we thought we had in all of those equipment accounts was not accurate. After some calculations it appears we have left only \$5,200. Discussions took place on how and where the funds will come from to be able to purchase the rescue vehicle. Stephen Chiacchia will talk with Steve Marhelewicz about this. If a special meeting needs to be called, then that will happen. Chief Turner asked if Equipment money would be used from this year's budget and if so will that be put back because there is a long list of equipment needed in the coming year.

MOTION (SULLIVAN; CHIACCHIA): To adjourn from the Open Meeting at 8:10 pm. Approved 3-0-0

Submitted by:

Approved as to Form and Content:

Sherrie Bellefleur, District Recording Secretary

Norman Czech, Chairman

Date: _____

Date: _____