



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 Vice Chairman
Andrea Sullivan; Prudential Committee Clerk
Steve Nodurf; Three Rivers Interim Fire Chief

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

Chairman Czech has announced that this meeting is being taped by M-Pact TV.

Roll Call

Finds Lorinda Baker, District Treasurer not in attendance at this evening's meeting.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Approval of Minutes

The Prudential Committee reviewed and approved the minutes from the August 16, 2023, meeting.
The Prudential Committee reviewed and approved the minutes from the August 24, 2023, meeting.

MOTION (SULLIVAN; CHIACCHIA): To approve the August 16 & 24, 2023, minutes to the Meeting. 3-0-0

Public Comment

The Prudential Committee Clerk, Andrea Sullivan asked to make something known to the meeting. A notice was being placed on cars over the weekend and she asked if anyone present at this evening's meeting was responsible or knew who may have done this. Ms. Sullivan brought this subject of the notice up not only to see who was responsible but to also enable questions to be asked if anyone had any. No one took responsibility for the notice.

Michael Matthieu asked the Board why it took them 3 months to come up with qualifications for Fire Chief. Chairman Norman Czech replied to say that this was already explained to Mr. Matthieu at a previous meeting.

Mr. Matthieu then asked if it was true that a Palmer Prudential Committee member contacted a Three Rivers Prudential Committee member to offer Palmer Fire to manage our department until we found a permanent chief? Chairman Czech said "not to my knowledge" Mr. Matthieu says he will speak to Mr. Belanger to find out what member he talked to. Mr. Matthieu claims that Mr. Belanger said that Three Rivers did not want to talk about this because we had a plan for the fire chief already. Mr. Matthieu says that the plan was to appoint an interim Chief. Ms. Sullivan asked why Mr. Belanger was not here at this meeting to speak for himself. Mr. Czech addresses this by saying that for one year and a half everything that is being reported back during the meetings has been third party and not coming directly from the person saying what they are saying. The people that actually have questions and are making statements must appear at the meeting themselves to say what they must. No more reporting through a messenger, the Board wants to answer all questions and statements directly with the person.

Lucas McDiarmid, a Three Rivers Firefighter spoke to say how proud he and the other firefighters are of Interim Chief Nodurf and the job he is doing so far. At this time another resident interrupted leaving Chairman Czech no choice but to remind this individual of the

Open Meeting Law. This was read as ***an individual must not disrupt a meeting of a public body; at the request of the Chair all members of the public shall be silent.*** The individual was told he must ask permission to speak. Firefighter Lucas continued to commend the Board and Chief Nodurf.

Richard Pobieglo asked the Board if Chief Nodurf is living outside of the town of Three Rivers. Then he asked if he had plans to move to Three Rivers or is he going to be allowed to live outside of town. Chairman Czech answered saying this is an interim Fire Chief, he is not our permanent Fire Chief.

Mr. Matthieu then asked if others could speak at this meeting even if they are not a District voter. Chairman states this is an Open Public Meeting and anyone in attendance can speak and attend a public meeting.

Another resident, Joanne McDiarmid, asked the Board to ask Mr. Matthieu why he would want another town to come into our town and run our department. Mr. Matthieu states that Palmer has a more experienced chief and more experienced officers, and they were willing to come here to just help.

Mr. Pobieglo then went on to say that he has 32 years of experience and Mr. Matthieu has 42 years' experience. Mr. Matthieu's concern is the amount of time the current crew has for experience and Mr. Pobieglo is concerned with the response time of the Three Rivers Fire Department. A young girl was killed in a motor vehicle accident on Springfield Street but when Mr. Pobieglo was asked for proof of his response time accusation, he stated he left it at home.

Committee Reports

None

Report of the Treasurer

Lorinda Baker: District Treasurer was not present this evening, but her August report of the treasurer was read by the Prudential Committee Vice Chairman Steve Chiacchia.

Water Receipts: August 2023 were down but overall, for the year were up substantially. Operating expenses are in line and revenue has exceeded expenses for the water department by approximately \$30,000. The water department is in good shape right now.

Fire District: Expenses for fire apparatus and maintenance are running a little bit high, not over budget yet but running a little high. Outside of equipment and maintenance everything looks good.

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

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Report of the Fire Chief

Interim Fire Chief Steve Nodurf read his August 2023 Report of the Fire Chief.

Administration

- Transfer of Command
- Fire Academy Online Learning
- EMS Upgrade Project
- Review Onboarding Plan

Fire Prevention/Education:

- 5 Presale home inspections

Operations:

- 18 Emergency Incidents.
- 23 Non-Emergency Service Calls.

Training:

- Engine Company Operations

- Firefighter skills evaluation
- CPR skills
- Ropes & Knots
- MDU training with Palmer Fire Dept & Bondsville Fire Dept.
- Cadet Program

Events:

- National Night Out
- Graduation Private Duby

The Board asked Chief Nodurf to prepare an apparatus and equipment priority list for the next meeting. This as a result of a letter submitted with the monthly report stating that there are repairs that need to be performed to Engine 1 and Engine 2.

MOTION (SULLIVAN; CHIACCHIA): To accept the report of the Interim Fire Chief Steve Nodurf for August 2023. Approved 3-0-0

Report of the Water Superintendent

Nicole Newberry read her Report of the Water Superintendent for August 2023.

Status of water systems:

- 4 leaks were detected during a Leak Detection Survey. These leaks should be repaired by the end of summer or as soon as the parts are received.
- About a half a dozen meters have been repaired for residents who were questioning the price overage on their most recent water bill. The new meters are capable of data logging enabling us to determine if the high-water usage is due to leaks within their houses or if it was due to actual use.
- EJP performed a complimentary repair of the hydrant at Chudy's. The hydrant is now easier to operate.
- 10-12 Norbell Street had a leak on their side of the service line. It has now been repaired.

Unpaid Accounts:

- Shutoff notices in excess of 100 were mailed out. During the week they will be marking out the locations of the shutoffs in residents' front lawns. Anyone who does not address their overdue bills will be shut off on Monday.
- Since shutoff notices have been mailed out the balance due has improved. August 31, 2023, the total due was \$ 94,766.42 then on September 9th the balance due was now \$ 68,517.28.
- There are special circumstances surrounding several long-standing unpaid bills. Sam would like to speak to the Board about those circumstances.

Meter Reading Software:

- Billing software research has continued by Sam. She is still leaning toward VADAR. Mr. Chiacchia suggested leaning toward the same billing software that Palmer Water is using so each water department can back each other up or just help when needed. The Board agrees that this is a good point, but it appears that Palmer does have some billing issues. Some further discussions took place on the price of onboarding and regular pricing after the initial set up. Chairman would like the water department to go with the software they are most comfortable with.

Water for Neighboring Districts:

- The water storage tank in Bondsville needs repair so now the interconnect has been open between our two Districts meaning our tanks and wells are providing water and water pressure to Bondsville. Discussions took place on the rate increases under New Business.

Tank Project:

- McClure Engineering dropped off one roll of our historical drawings, at which time I informed them that we were expecting additional drawings to be returned to us. Since then, I also sent an email and had a phone conversation. We do not yet have the drawings. Mr. Chiacchia will call Chris McClure again on the additional drawings.
- McClure sent a bill for the remainder of the work that they performed. The original quote was for \$18,000. As it turns out the contract is legally binding, and McClure did not hold up their end of the contract. Ms. Dewberry says the first bill that was paid in full was \$11,153, the second bill that has just been received is in the amount of \$ 16,478, bringing that to a total of \$ 27,632. This exceeds the contract by \$9,632. Mr. Chiacchia will also speak to Chris McClure about the billing.

Rate Study and Capital Efficiency Plan:

- All four water departments have replied, and everyone is interested in collaboratively hiring an engineer to work on this. Discussions took place on how to go about hiring an engineering firm and a suggestion to have the water departments all meet and come up with a % of a split.

Community Development Block Grant (SDBG)

- Town Hall received a Community Development Block Grant in the amount of \$1.35 million to work on the area around Mapel Street. They will perform various types of work in this area, both above and below ground. As part of the project, they will replace the water mains, the district's side of the service lines and hydrants.

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

Board Members Comments:

None

New Business:

Discussion on Water Rates with Thorndike:

- A 30% increase is suggested. We started out at \$1.87 then since 2018 the rate has been \$2.10/gallon. A new rate of \$2.73 was agreed upon to take effect January 1, 2024. Steve Chiacchia can notify Thorndike with an email.

MOTION (CHIACCHIA; SULLIVAN): To increase the water rate for Thorndike to \$2.73/gal. effective 1/1/2024. Approved 3-0-0

Discussion on the Emergency Water Rates with Bondsville:

- Mr. Chiacchia is suggesting a slight discount to Bondsville due to the hardship they are experiencing. After a short discussion it was decided to select the rate of \$2.73/gal. effective immediately.

MOTION (CHIACCHIA; SULLIVAN): To charge an emergency water rate to Bondsville in the amount of \$2.73/gallon effective immediately. Approved 3-0-0

Discussion on the Bylaw change to Residency Requirement for Fire Chief:

- Ms. Sullivan shared from the Mass General Law (MGL); it is a 10-air mile radius from the perimeter. In our case it is the perimeter of Three Rivers. It is suggested to change the bylaw to reflect what the MGL states. 10 miles encompasses Belchertown, Wilbraham, Monson, Brimfield, Warren, Ware, Ludlow etc. The MGL requires a move within the perimeter by 9 months but our bylaw states 1 year. This means anyone appointed Fire Chief has 1 year to relocate under the current bylaws. At this time a public member, Kevin Brooke, asked to speak. He was voicing concern about the liability that would be imposed if we allowed a fire chief to live outside of our district. Chairman Czech stressed that there is no way, unless we open the perimeter, we will get an applicant for the Fire Chief that currently resides in the district. What Mr. Czech stressed that with what we can pay, there will never be for example a Boston resident moving to Three Rivers to be the Fire Chief with our rate of pay. Mr. Brooke's then asked where the job postings are. They are in the Mass Fire Chiefs, The Journal, posted out in Ware and the Brookfield's. At this time Mr. Brooke was asked to be quiet now due to expressing accusations, those accusations being that the Prudential Committee is biased because they are Turner lovers. Chairman Czech stated he was nice enough to let him speak outside of public comment, if he wants to make accusations then Mr. Czech will ask him to leave. Mr. Brookes then went to say if he gets asked to leave, he will file a grievance with the Attorney Generals office.

Mr. Matthieu then again asked permission to speak, outside of public comment. He wanted to know if our interim Fire Chief meets the qualifications for our fire chief. It was stated that he did not apply for the fire chiefs' position, he is the interim fire chief. His resume is confidential information. Mr. Brookes was asked to leave the meeting due to speaking out of line.

MOTION (SULLIVAN; CHIACCHIA): To set up a special meeting to change the bylaw to M.G.L. chapter 31, section 58. Approved 3-0-0

Recording Secretary Laptop Request:

- Due to the age and performance of the current laptop that Recording Secretary Sherrie Bellefleur is using it has been requested to purchase a new one. The current one being used is her own personal laptop, since 2015. It was agreed upon to authorize her to purchase a new laptop with the understanding that it falls below \$1,000.00.

MOTION (SULLIVAN; CHIACCHIA): For the Recording Secretary to purchase a new laptop to perform her duties. Approved 3-0-0

Old Business:

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 7:27 pm. Approved 3-0-0

Submitted by:

Approved as to Form and Content:

Sherrie Bellefleur, District Recording Secretary

Norman Czech, Chairman

Date: _____

Date: _____