

**THREE RIVERS FIRE DISTRICT  
PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE MEETING  
January 14, 2013**



**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Raymond Domey, Chairman  
Donald Reim, Vice Chairman  
William Jalbert, Clerk  
Scott Turner, Fire Chief  
John Sasur, Water Superintendent  
Antoinette (Toni) Mackenzie, Treasurer

Diane Baldyga, Recording Secretary  
Patrick O'Connor, former Fire Chief  
Al Nardi, Project Engineer for Anderson Street Reservoir  
Scott Majka, Water Department Employee  
Belinda O'Connor, new District Clerk

Chairman Domey called a meeting of the Prudential Committee to order at 7 p.m., and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited. After welcoming Fire Chief Turner to his first meeting, Chairman Domey jumped to Old Business as Project Engineer Al Nardi was present.

**Old Business**

Chairman Domey gave two W-9 Forms to Mr. Nardi, one for his use and one to be delivered to Attorney Hassett. Project Engineer Nardi discussed items that needed to be accomplished in order to complete the job at the Anderson Street Reservoir. He stated that something needs to be created to protect the inlet from clogging with leaves and debris so it will drain properly. He suggested using a special camera to check for obstructions like roots in the cast iron pipe. Nardi advised making this operation as self-sufficient as possible. Since access is difficult, he urged that stone be put down for a walkout and a stainless steel ladder be attached to the side of a wall. He said an upside down concrete catch basin should be considered to keep things out of the pipe.

W.S. Sasur said he will check with Palmer's Highway Department as they might have a camera to get a recording. Mr. Nardi will check into the cost of a stainless steel ladder. The next level is to get out into the reservoir and build a stone pad. W.S. Sasur had previously put a stainless steel grate on the pipe to prevent its getting clogged. As the pipe was extended, chicken wire was used for additional fortification. Nardi will get an estimate for this work in the next few weeks. Money will be appropriated and work may start after July.

Chairman Domey next wanted to read a letter of resignation from Dianna O'Connor as District Clerk, which became effective at noon on January 1, 2013. Dianna O'Connor, therefore, was available to preside over the Oath of Office for Fire Chief Turner, and Patrick O'Connor was not sworn in as District Clerk as had been planned and noted in the minutes of December 10, 2012. Furthermore, Belinda O'Connor has agreed to serve as District Clerk until the elections in May.

**MOTION (REIM, JALBERT): To appoint Belinda O'Connor to serve as District Clerk until the elections in May. Approved 3-0.**

Treasurer MacKenzie swore in Belinda O'Connor as District Clerk.

**Approval of Minutes**

The Committee reviewed the minutes from the meeting of December 10, 2012.

**MOTION (REIM, JALBERT): To approve the minutes from the meeting of December 10, 2012. Approved 3-0.**

**Report of the Treasurer**

Treasurer MacKenzie presented the Committee with a list of all checks written in December and the Profit and Loss Budget sheet. Committee members will review and comment on the last three months of statements at the next meeting.

Jeanne Bacauskas, Billing and Collection Clerk for the Water District, is resigning in May. Treasurer MacKenzie will become the new Billing Clerk at that time. According to District By-Laws, she cannot serve as Billing Clerk and Treasurer simultaneously, so she is notifying the Committee of her impending resignation. John MacKenzie has applied for the Treasurer's position. However, the position must be advertised. MacKenzie presented a letter of reference from Stephen Marhelewicz.

Chairman Domey discussed Auditor Chiacchia's recommendation not to accept cash payments for water bills with the Committee and Water Superintendent. W.S. Sasur felt that some elderly customers are more comfortable paying in cash. However, considering that

even Social Security checks must be deposited electronically into checking accounts, the consensus was that now is the time to implement a changeover.

**MOTION (JALBERT, REIM): To no longer accept cash payments for water bills as soon as it can be implemented. Approved 3-0.**

Chairman Domey requested that the Water Superintendent notify customers of this change on the next water bill. The Water Superintendent noted that with this adjustment, collection office hours were no longer necessary. Domey asked when meter readings will be on the water bills. W.S. Sasur said as soon as the new billing software was operational.

Treasurer MacKenzie sought information on the hourly rate for her training. The Committee felt that \$20 an hour would be consistent with similar compensation practices within the District.

**MOTION (JALBERT, REIM): To pay Toni MacKenzie \$20 an hour for training on billing software for the Water Department. Approved 3-0.**

Health insurance booklets and rates used by the Town of Palmer were distributed by Chairman Domey. Further discussion will take place at the next meeting.

**MOTION (REIM, JALBERT): To table discussion on health insurance until the February meeting. Approved 3-0.**

**MOTION (JALBERT, REIM): To accept and approve the Treasurer's Warrant. Approved 3-0.**

**MOTION (JALBERT, REIM): To accept and approve the Treasurer's Report. Approved 3-0.**

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

Fire Chief Turner submitted the call report for the month of December 2012. A total of twelve (12) calls were received: eight (8) all calls and four (4) duty-officer calls.

Fire Chief Turner presented several items to the Committee for its consideration:

1. Replacing an old gas meter with a multi gas meter. He is in the process of getting quotes.
2. Purchasing a new rescue truck. Options are being researched. With \$55,000 already put aside for another rescue truck, Turner recommends one that will upgrade and expand the Department's purposes. He brought in samples to show the Committee.
3. Upgrading the paging system. The current system has several dead spots inside and outside of town. So, reaching individuals is unreliable and inconsistent. He recommends "I Am Responding" for many reasons. It lets him know immediately who is responding to the call. Text messages are sent to cell phones and a GPS informs him how quickly a firefighter can arrive at the station. It has a sign-out system as well. The cost is \$800 for one year, \$750 for three years, and \$625 for five years. Former Fire Chief O'Connor mentioned that a receiver/transmitter situated on Baptist Hill is another option that is being investigated.

Chairman Domey advised Turner that his recommendations for these items will need to be placed in the budget to present to the Finance Committee by the end of March. He also reminded the Fire Chief that the Progressive Discipline needs to be updated to incorporate Equal Opportunity and advancement of people who may want to move up the ladder. Another area that Turner should review is Sections 27, 28, and 29 on page 8 in the Rules and Regulations of the Department regarding "Maintenance of Discipline." A problem may exist with the phrasing of "or officer in charge." Domey believes that all disciplinary decisions should be made by the Fire Chief. However, retired Fire Chief O'Connor pointed out that the following page states that the "officer in charge" deals with only "*minor*" cases of discipline.

Copies of the new printing of the Rules and Regulations of the Three Rivers Fire Department were given to the Prudential Committee members by former Fire Chief O'Connor. Section 13 has been edited to read, "The Chief appoints all deputy chiefs, officers, and fire fighters as necessary (District By-Laws page 4, Article IV, Sec. 3e)."

**MOTION (REIM, JALBERT): To Approve the Rules and Regulations of the Three Rivers Fire Department. Approved 3-0.**

Other related matters:

- The Prudential Committee instructed the Fire Chief to send in a bill for his cell phone;
- The Committee informed the Fire Department it was responsible for the cost of printing its Rules and Regulations;
- According to Attorney Hassett, all elected and re-elected officials must be sworn in;

- Fire Chief Turner will have a contract prepared for the next meeting with a performance bonus stipulation;
- The Fire Chief must sign up for insurance;
- W.S. Sasur commended the new Chief for being focused and having direction, which will be good for the future of the Department
- Sasur was also honored to have served as Fire Chief for three days.

**MOTION (JALBERT, REIM): To accept the report of the Fire Chief. Approved 3-0.**

### **Report of the Water Superintendent**

A lengthy discussion on proposed increases for water rates and other fees took place. W.S. Sasur provided a report on his analysis of how projected revenue was based on the water rates. The study included the Water Department's income based on various rates over several years, past operating budgets, future projected budgets, as well as other factors. Chairman Domey questioned if it was justifiable to raise rates when a surplus of \$83,000 was realized last year. The Water Superintendent felt that what is budgeted is a close estimate to his expenses. In his small department, one or two breaks in an emergency situation can produce massive expenses. He feels it is prudent to anticipate problems and avoid having to borrow money. Additionally, the Water Department had the lowest rates around. If the money is not needed, it is put in a reserve account for when it was needed. Chairman Domey requested an analytical report of surplus amounts between 2005 and 2010.

**MOTION (REIM, JALBERT): To table further discussion of water rate increases until the February meeting. Approved 3-0.**

W.S. Sasur had nothing new to report regarding the proposed site for a Water Department Building on Rt. 181. He urged the Committee to move forward with appointing a Building Committee. Sasur has not heard from the DEP. He will make an appointment and go to see them.

The Water Superintendent explained that the adjustment of the District's boundary along the south side of the Ware River is an annexation project. It will be done at the District Meeting. He will get a description of the properties from Sherman and Frydryk and contact the owners who are not legally in the District. This is covered under the Water Department budget. A Warrant Article must be prepared.

The multi-district Capital Efficiency Report was distributed. It is a culmination of the work done for a distribution system for the three villages and prioritizes what needs to be accomplished. Because of the volume of material and recommendations in the report, W.S. Sasur would like to schedule a joint meeting to finalize it with all the commissioners and Tata & Howard, who developed it. Chairman Domey suggested a meeting between the members of the Prudential Committee and W.S. Sasur to go over the details of the report. Tuesday, January 22, at 3 p.m. was scheduled for this meeting. Sasur informed the Committee that this report was submitted to the New England Water Works Association for presentation. The report is so progressive that the EPA, the Feds, and many other water departments are very interested in it.

Scott Majka answered the Committee's questions regarding his progress in becoming certified. He has passed the D1 test. The Committee reminded him that he is expected to reimburse the District for the costs associated with obtaining his certifications. The Water Superintendent said that he does what is asked, has good attendance, and often quizzes him on math situations he may need to know. Majka assured the Committee that he likes working for the Department.

A discussion ensued regarding the rejection sticker on a Water Dept. truck. The Water Superintendent intends to appropriate funds for a new truck (\$8,000-\$10,000). The Committee feels that the truck is a risk to the District and should be taken off the road immediately. Prices need to be gotten for scrapping the vehicle. Sasur will try to find money to lease a vehicle.

**MOTION (REIM, JALBERT): To take the Water Department truck with the rejection sticker off the road immediately. Approved 3-0.**

The Water Department was reminded to notify Toni Mackenzie of time off for vacations.

Chairman Domey informed those in attendance that W.S. Sasur is chairman of the National Rural Water Association's national regulatory committee in Washington, D.C. Its December 2012 Newsletter was distributed. The Prudential Committee was impressed with the Association's work as well as the commitment of our Water Superintendent. Sasur will be absent from the February meeting as he will be returning from conferences in Washington that evening.

The Water Superintendent asked if he needs to inform the Committee of every upgrade or change in pipe specifications and the like under his Rules and Regulations Policy. The Committee directed him to upgrade as he feels appropriate, but it would like a copy annually.

**MOTION (JALBERT, REIM): To accept the report of the Water Superintendent. Approved 3-0.**

**Old Business (con't.)**

Chairman Domey met with Charles Blanchard, Town Manager, about moving ahead on the Rt. 20 project. Blanchard will help negotiate a deal with Depot Village. A mutually convenient date will be set to meet with Rep. Todd Smola, Blanchard, and Attorney Hassett. Domey will check to see if this is categorized as an open meeting that needs to be posted or just an informational meeting.

**New Business**

A letter from Sunfield Solar has been received asking the District for \$50,000 to purchase the property at 105 North Street. In the first paragraph, it stated that “. . . the Town has expressed an interest to purchase; . . .” Chairman Domey said that the Town Manager said that that was not the case. Palmer has no interest in purchasing that land. The land had been offered to them for nothing. Sunfield Solar is going to sell the land to the solar project, but the 10 acre parcel of land along the river is not required for the project. Chairman Domey said that the value of the land needs to be assessed through a legitimate appraiser. Furthermore, the Prudential Committee will not sign the Pilot Program until Attorney Hassett looks it over.

Chairman Domey has called a records retention company for the District’s records and is waiting for a cost estimate.

Having no further business to conduct in open session, Chairman Domey requested a motion to adjourn. The next regular meeting is scheduled at 7 p.m. on February 11, 2013.

**MOTION (JALBERT, REIM): To adjourn from the Open Meeting at 9:25 p.m. Approved 3-0.**

Submitted by:

Approved as to Form and Content:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Diane Baldyga, Recording Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Raymond Domey, Chairman

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

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