



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

Prudential Committee Minutes

January 14, 2015

Chairman Domey called a meeting of the Prudential Committee to order at 7:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Raymond Domey, Chairman
Donald Reim, Vice Chairman
William Jalbert, Clerk
John Chmura, District Treasurer
John Sasur, Water Superintendent

Scott Turner, Fire Chief
Patrick O'Connor, District Clerk
Diane Baldyga, District Secretary
John Morrison, Morrison Construction
John Mowduk, Finance Committee
Joanne Chiacchia

Approval of Minutes

The Committee reviewed the minutes from the meeting of December 10, 2014.

MOTION (REIM, JALBERT): To accept the minutes from the meeting of December 10, 2014. Approved 3-0.

Public Comment

John Morrison of Morrison Construction asked the Board if any information had been received from the Inspector General's Office concerning the ongoing controversy over money that is owed to him. Chairman Domey stated that the District also tried to make contact, but calls were not returned. Morrison said that he had spoken with someone from the Inspector General's Office, but had been told that no one knew what he was talking about. Domey said that until that Office has completed its investigation, strict confidentiality is maintained about cases.

Morrison asked for information about the open meeting law complaint against the District. Domey's comment was that it would be in the minutes when it was settled as required by law.

Recording Secretary, Diane Baldyga, informed the Committee that she would like to retire in the near future and would appreciate if a replacement was found before the spring. Domey said that they would begin advertising for her position. When asked, he said a letter of resignation was unnecessary.

Organize Approach to AT&T Construction Phase.

Project Manager, Al Nardi, sent the Committee an email saying that he wants to meet with District Counsel, Michael Hassett, and Chairman Domey to begin preconstruction planning. The meeting would involve returning the land the AT&T towers are situated on back to its present appearance when the lease expires. However, the lease agreement does give the District the option to continue using the towers or to have them removed. In Domey's opinion, he would like to hold off on this meeting until AT&T goes through the necessary permit requirements with the Town. Since nothing has yet been done by AT&T, it has started paying for the site as agreed upon in the lease agreement that had been signed on September 17, 2014. Later during the meeting, Domey and Chmura speculated about the last two payments—one for \$2,000 and another for \$1,090. Lack of a notation detailing the payment was confusing.

Report of the Treasurer

- Chairman Domey informed Treasurer Chmura that an incorrect amount was submitted from District Accountants, Livingston & Haynes, and that Domey had already contacted Ron Christianson. The fee on the statement should have reflected a \$5,000 annual fee, which would have resulted in less than the \$500 monthly fee that was billed. An adjustment will be made on future payments.
- Audit of Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2014. Discussion was postponed until next month's meeting. Boxes of records that Domey had received from Stephen Chiacchia should be placed in storage. Chmura believed the records were files needed by the auditors.

MOTION (JALBERT, DOMEY): To table discussion on the audit until February's meeting. Approved 3-0.

- Email from Robin Wdowiak of AJE Financial Services. Wdowiak said that some correspondence was still being sent to her office. She spoke with Kathy Bourcier from Livingston & Haynes and everything was straightened out.

- Teletrac GPS System. Chairman Domey said that bills for the GPS system will come in separately—one for the Water Department and one for the Fire Department—making it easier to keep track of each. Billing will be quarterly. Domey mailed them a tax certificate on January 14, 2015 due to a tax being charged that needed to be removed.
- Inventory of Stored Records. Stephen Chiacchia, Sara Rossman, and Chairman Domey are planning to visit the records retention facility in Connecticut to sort through and inventory the files in the 17 remaining boxes of District records stored there. (Five boxes of Fire Department records had previously been removed.) Domey said that at some point the District will have to start paying Chiacchia for the numerous hours he has been volunteering to help the District. In a letter from District Counsel, Michael Hassett, Domey paraphrased that under state law, an assistant to the Treasurer cannot be hired. However, a person can be appointed as needed to be a consultant to the Treasurer. Chiacchia has not charged for any work he has done to help the District. Domey has advised him to submit a bill when he considers it appropriate for reimbursement.

MOTION (DOMNEY, JALBERT): To appoint Stephen Chiacchia as consultant to the Treasurer on an “as needed” basis. Approved 3-0.

- Procedure for Submitting Invoices. When asked about the procedure for submitting invoices, W.S. Sasur said that he is making the necessary notes. With the approval of a computer at tonight’s meeting, the Water Superintendent stated that BMSI is ready to load the programs to begin the process of work orders and inventory. Domey told Sasur that a form needed to be completed and sent to the Secretary of State for approval before discarding the old computer.
- Bidding Forms and System for Hiring Contractors. Al Nardi is still in the process of putting together bidding forms and a system for hiring contractors for the Water Department. He is waiting for information from the Commonwealth. W.S. Sasur asked to be part of the process. Domey said the forms and system will be discussed when they come in. Nardi is providing the legal requirements. Domey noted that all work must be done at the prevailing wage. These items should be completed by the next meeting.
- Financial Statements. Treasurer Chmura submitted December’s Profit & Loss Statement to the Committee and gave each department head his monthly financial statement. He explained that December is the halfway point of the fiscal year, and feels that it is necessary that the Committee be brought up to date on revenue and expenses. He elaborated that the District and Fire Department has taken in over \$197,000. At this rate, the District should be over last year’s tax revenue by about \$10,000. On the other hand, the Fire Department and District expenses are about \$26,000 in the hole, primarily due to insurance expenses and the loan on the truck. He feels that since these two items have been paid off for the year, the District should be in good shape for the remainder of the year.

Chmura said that the Water Department’s revenue is about \$170,000, which will project to about \$339,000 for the year. W.S. Sasur said that this is because it included the overage from the second quarter, the biggest revenue quarter of the year. He feels that the projected income would more reasonably be about \$300,000. Chmura agreed with his estimation. Chmura continued stating that the Water Department’s year-to-date net income is about \$14,000, which was a little under budget. Other than Pump Station Maintenance and Legal expenses being over budget, everything else seemed to be under control.

Billing Clerk, Toni MacKenzie, gave Chmura the Accounts Receivable statement, which showed \$86,000 in aging accounts due to end-of-quarter invoices just being sent out. Current aging accounts over 90 days are about \$40,000, which is about \$1,700 higher than last month’s report. He recommends looking into the aging accounts. About eight accounts are over \$1,000. Most of these are commercial accounts. Domey said that these should be aggressively pursued after March 15. Chmura informed the Committee that a bookkeeping error had been made in the retirement fund and that he will have Kathy Bourcier straighten it out.

MOTION (REIM, JALBERT): 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 presented a written report to the Committee itemizing the activities of his Department:

- Documentary of TRFD. The Fire Chief distributed CDs of a documentary filmed by M-Pact TV entitled Three Rivers Fire Department Tour & Retrospective. The Chief, members of the Fire Department, and retired firefighters participated in educating its audience about the many facets of firefighting, rescues, vehicles and equipment, as well as sharing special and emotional stories of the Department’s history.
- Call Report. The month of December 2014 received a total of seven (7) calls.

- Fire Department Security System. Turner said this is on-going because Gary Majka from Pathfinder was out sick. The security system will be purchased from ADI at a wholesale price. Domey said that if Pathfinder does not install it, then the system and installation would have to go out to bid.
- Update on Restoration, Registration, and Plates for 1933 MAC Fire Truck. Plates have not been received, and the check has been returned again. Dan Daigle has contacted Todd Smola concerning the Registry's confusion with applying for "antique" plates and not "vanity" plates.
- Disposal of Fire Rescue Truck and blue Pick-Up Truck. Turner sent a text to Marc Graveline, who will look up the mileage for the trucks and give a value on the blue truck. Graveline does not know if he can get a value for the rescue truck but will try.
- Preliminary Budget. Turner gave the Committee a preliminary overview of his budget for the next fiscal year that included salaries and an operating budget. He and Treasurer Chmura will meet with Kathy Bourcier to work on the accounts. Domey said that he wants accounts broken down to reflect specific expenses. Chmura warned that this might result in a duplication of effort as accounts are already broken down by invoice. Domey claims that this only reveals who the vendors are and not the specific item.
- 2015 Vacation Schedule. The requested vacation schedule was provided by the Chief.
- Modification of Fire Station Office and Dispatch Room. Turner requested the Committee's approval to modify the office and dispatch room at the fire station. His office will be enlarged, providing more visibility to the public, but also more privacy and security for him. The dispatch room would have a large window added. The chief's current office will be used for storage. The Fire Chief has already contacted someone for an estimate, but has not received it yet. Domey told him to get some more prices and to give it to the Finance Committee for next year's budget. Turner said he could ask Pathfinder. He mentioned that he never did get the quote from Pathfinder to replace the furnace last year.

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

Report of the Water Superintendent

W.S. Sasur discussed the following items:

- Recommendation for Electric Power Purchase. The Water Superintendent investigated options for the purchase of electricity and provided the Committee with copies of his report. The two recommendations were:
 1. Follow Palmer's purchasing decision with Hampshire County. The District would have to negotiate separately with Hampshire County. The Water Department had previously had a variable rate with them. The first two years provided a savings, but the last year did not. A fixed rate might be a better way to go. The District has five electric accounts.
 2. Obtain a Power Purchasing Agreement with one of the two solar collecting units within the District. More investigation would be necessary before committing to this option.

The Committee will read the Water Superintendent's report and discuss it at a future meeting.

- Update on Building Committee. The Committee worked on a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) draft for architectural services. Sasur had the draft of the RFQ and a legal notice on a disc for the Committee in case editing was necessary. He will send it to District Counsel for a legal opinion. The Building Committee's next meeting is on Thursday, January 29.

MOTION (JALBERT, REIM): To allow the Building Committee to move forward on the Request for Proposals pending approval of legal counsel. Approved 3-0.

- BMSI Schedule for First Billing. BMSI was sent the last updated bills that went out this quarter. BMSI will study the integrated data and try billing for the first quarter of 2015. Domey told the Water Superintendent to budget for the program so meter readings can be read and downloaded by BMSI. W.S. Sasur said that it already has the program, and it is being worked on. Data will go from the reader right into the billing system. Only 10% of the readers will need to be physically read and input by hand.
- Preliminary Budget. A draft will be prepared for next month's meeting.
- Meter and Capital Improvement Stabilization Accounts. Sasur requested a separate Stabilization Account for money generated from meter rentals, as well as for money that could be appropriated from the end of year surplus. This will keep free cash from showing up as a huge amount, and will put it back into the operation of the Water Department. District Clerk O'Connor said it must be done on a Warrant and asked the Water Superintendent for an amount to put into the Warrant article(s). Domey agrees with the creation of this Stabilization Account for meters as the account should not be used for any other purpose. Chmura pointed out that this would mean that water receipts will go down next year. Domey said that should not be an issue since there was always a surplus in the account.

Sasur also wants to establish a Capital Improvement Stabilization Account. He said that it was required by the State for the three-year Sanitary Server, which is an inspection report that looks for deficiencies in the whole system. The District has no high priority deficiencies. A low priority discretionary deficiency was found at the tanks because the drains were too close to the ground. This will be corrected.

- Total Coliform Rule and Annual Statistical Report Training. Assistant Water Superintendent, Scott Majka, is attending the Total Coliform Rule and Annual Statistical Report Training.
- 2015 Vacation Schedule. The requested vacation schedule was provided by the Water Superintendent. It included sick time, vacations, and any other time off since 2012. W.S. Sasur was unsure of October’s vacation date. Chmura noted that the Assistant Water Superintendent’s vacation schedule had not been submitted.
- Computer Quotes. The Computer Wiz gave a quote that was better than others Sasur investigated (Tiger Direct and the State). He likes keeping the purchase and service local. Chmura also felt it was a reasonable estimate.
- Retirement of Water Superintendent. W.S. Sasur gave the Committee his letter of retirement effective June 30, 2015. In it, he gave thanked the Prudential Committee, past Water Commissioners, and District voters. He has been a member of the fire and water departments for nearly 39 years. Vice Chairman Reim told Sasur that he was a good Water Superintendent and knew his business. Reim is sorry to see him go, but said he could always change his mind. Sasur said that it is with reluctance that he leaves because water is his life on so many levels. Domey told him that no action will be taken on his letter of retirement until next month.
- Domey reminded the meeting that he had asked to be put on the agenda of the Palmer Water Department’s (PWD) meeting in January. Instead he received a letter from Charles Callahan, Chairman of the Palmer Board of Water Commissioners. It stated that “While PWD would be happy to assist in an emergency situation if able to do so, we are unable at this time to commit to acting as TRWD’s primary excavator. Due to our current transitional phase . . . it is not feasible for Palmer Water to take on the added responsibility.” Sasur said we do have a contract with them for emergency response that was signed years ago. Domey said he would have liked to discuss a way that the whole town could get water from one another. Other areas of mutual interest, like purchasing and inventory, could also benefit the whole Town. He will attempt to contact the PWD at some point in the future.

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

Old Business

No Old Business.

New Business

No New Business.

Executive Session. At 8:11 p.m. Chairman Domey called for a roll-call vote to enter into Executive Session according to the Open Meeting Law Guide of August 1, 2013, under the Ten Purposes of Executive Session, No. 3: He said that Open Session will be reconvened at its conclusion followed by adjournment of the meeting. Executive Session will include the Prudential Committee, Fire Chief, Treasurer, and District Secretary.

MOTION (JALBERT, DOMEY): To enter into Executive Session to discuss a response to a recent open meeting law complaint that may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the Prudential Committee if conducted in Open Session as allowed under the guidelines set forth in the Attorney General’s “Open Meeting Law Guide.”

Roll Call Vote: Jalbert, Yes; Reim, Yes; Domey, Yes

The Committee returned to Open Session at 9:03 p.m.

Having no further business to conduct in open session, Chairman Domey requested a motion to adjourn. The next regular meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m. on February 11, 2015.

MOTION (JALBERT, REIM): To adjourn from the Open Meeting at 9:05 p.m. Approved 3-0.

Submitted by:

Approved as to Form and Content:

Diane Baldyga, Recording Secretary

Raymond Domey, Chairman

Date: _____

Date: _____