



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

# Prudential Committee Minutes

October 9, 2013

Chairman Domey called a meeting of the Prudential Committee to order at 7:05 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

## IN ATTENDANCE:

Raymond Domey, Chairman	John Chmura, District Treasurer
Donald Reim, Vice Chairman	Patrick O'Connor, District Clerk
William Jalbert, Clerk	Scott Turner, Fire Chief
John Sasur, Water Superintendent	Diane Baldyga, District Secretary

## Approval of Minutes

The Committee reviewed the minutes from the meeting of September 11, 2013.

## **MOTION (REIM, JALBERT): To approve the minutes from the meeting of September 11, 2013. Approved 3-0.**

The minutes from the Finance Committee meeting on September 23, 2013 will be added to District files.

## Report of the Treasurer

Treasurer Chmura presented the Committee with final copies of the Balance Sheet for 2013 as well as the profit and loss statement for September. He noted that Fire Department expenses are \$12,000 more than last year's expenses at this time due to retirement expenses, projects, and firemen's salaries. Water Department expenses, however, are about the same as last year's, but water receipts were up approximately \$12,000.

Chairman Domey asked if the 2013 surplus was known. O'Connor said that Free Cash had not been certified by the State yet. Chmura and the Committee continued to discuss various accounts and their balances. W.S. Sasur explained how the rental fee charged for meters contributed to the Free Cash account. He said that previous committees had considered having a dedicated account for meter receipts so money would not need to be borrowed when new meters replace the existing ones in another five to seven years. Treasurer Chmura asked about the Water Revenue Reserve and will check with Stephen Marhelewicz to determine its purpose. Sasur asked him to inquire about setting up a dedicated account for the meter receipts as the software is capable of segregating the charge. He feels that the Department should not have to borrow money for operational costs.

Discussion continued about the Water Surplus Account, a Utility Truck for the Water Department, and the Supplement Budget of \$54,000. District Clerk O'Connor stated that Stephen Marhelewicz cautioned that \$54,000 was taken from surplus to offset Water Department expenses signifying that more money was spent than was taken in. O'Connor explained that expenses were \$354,000, but water receipts only amounted to \$300,000 leaving a shortage of \$54,000. The water rates are not reflecting water expenses. This issue will be examined after the annual audit.

Chairman Domey briefed the Committee about the following items:

- A down payment of \$1,000 was made to procure the Royce property. The balance will be paid after the Special Meeting on October 29.
- The lease of property off Baptist Hill by AT&T for a telecommunications facility will need to go out to bid. Attorney Hassett will proceed with the bidding process.
- A vehicle for the Water Department will be purchased after the Special Meeting on October 29. W.S. Sasur will get quotes from the State's Bid List and local vendors. He will work with John Chmura, who is the District's Procurement Officer.
- The Fire Department wants to dispose of two vehicles. Fire Chief Turner explained that the blue truck needs repairs, but that someone might be able to get it running again. The rescue truck has a lot wrong with it. Last summer an individual expressed interest in purchasing and restoring it. Another person said he might be able to sell it in the South for up to \$10,000.
- The Special Meeting on October 29 should go smoothly. After it, some of the items above can be completed.

Chairman Domey feels that the annual audit should wait until Free Cash is certified. Chmura said Stephen Chiacchia is also doing Palmer's audit. Domey said he has already asked him to do Three Rivers' audit. Chiacchia said this will be the last year he can do it legally since he is Fire Chief Turner's stepfather.

Treasurer Chmura briefly reviewed the details of the Profit and Loss Statement so the Committee will understand why the dates differ.

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

**MOTION (REIM, JALBERT): 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 September 2013. A total of sixteen (16) calls were received: six (6) all calls and ten (10) duty-officer calls.

A request to participate in the annual Halloween Parade on October 31 was received from Amvets Post 74.

**MOTION (JALBERT, REIM): To allow the use of the fire truck for the Halloween Parade. Approved 3-0.**

A letter of request to use the fire trucks for the annual Veterans' Day Parade on November 11 was received.

**MOTION (JALBERT, REIM): To allow the use of the fire trucks for the annual Veterans' Day Parade. Approved 3-0.**

Four firemen attended the Swift River Rescue class on September 28 and 29. Although one of the attendees became sick during the training, he was able to be certified at the operational level. Fire Chief Turner would like to have him complete the training next year. The other three completed the training and are certified at the technician level. The class was very intensive and physically demanding. These men will be eligible for "train-the-trainer" course. As a result, they could then train other members of the fire department here saving a substantial sum of money. Some of the men need to be trained and certified at the technician level with Rope Rescue. Other training would involve men on shore.

The Fire Chief discussed Palmer's casino host community agreement. He observed that although the numbers are the same, three versions have been given out to the public regarding how the money will be allocated. The version on Palmer's website discloses that a one-time offering of \$295,200 go to the Three Rivers, Thorndike, and Bondsville fire districts. He noted that one district has no fire department. He was told it will be similar to a grant with no specific allotment to any of the districts. The terms of the grant have not been disclosed to the districts. Turner and the Committee expressed their displeasure in not being included in the negotiations. All of Palmer's fire districts should have been represented at the meetings for the host community agreement. He feels that an indeterminate lump-sum "grant" neglects the ongoing issues for full-time personnel, mutual aid, tax revenue, equipment maintenance, accidents, and other factors.

Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG) will become available in October this year instead of November. Fire Chief Turner would like to put in a grant to replace the Department's 16 year old air packs. Because of the age of the Department's air packs and the four subsequent revisions since their purchase, he feels that he would have a good chance in obtaining the grant and that additional funding may not be necessary. The cost to hire someone to write the grant would be \$350. However, Turner's cousin is the Easthampton Fire Chief, and he offered to write the grant.

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

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

W.S. Sasur updated the Committee about the following items:

- Discussion about the cell tower proposal had been addressed already.
- An organizational meeting took place in September for the Water Department/District Office building. A slate of officers was determined, and the requirements of the open meeting laws were discussed. The next meeting is on October 17.
- Power washing the 60-foot high tank was being completed. Tree trimming in the area was also being done.
- The Water Department was not included in negotiations regarding Palmer's casino host community agreement. Chairman Domey stated that neither Bondsville nor Three Rivers was given the option of providing water for the casino even though these two districts have plenty of water. He feels that this could have lowered everybody's rates. Sasur commented that it would have

been nice to know what the deal was, but no one knows. Clerk Jalbert asked about the status of the wells in Ledyard. Domey said separate pipelines were brought in and that wells were capped.

- Well #3 pitless adapter work has been completed and is operational. Seeding and clean-up work still needs to be done. The sum of \$30,000 had been appropriated for this work.
- At the last meeting of the Coordinated Water District study, consideration was given to changing the first project from the pipe line to the installation of a water tank in Bondsville. This would serve all the Districts. Having equal pressures between Districts to service each other makes more sense. Engineers will look at an interconnection and increasing the diameter pipe. Domey mentioned that the possibility of forming a collaborative is being investigated by lawyers in Bondsville and Three Rivers. The Water Superintendent stated that the Coordinated Water District is a model for other small utilities and will be more economical for them. Domey said Bondsville is a conscientious group of individuals to work with.
- The purchase of the Royce land had been addressed already.
- The Environmental Protection Agency has asked W.S. Sasur to participate on a federal regulatory advisory committee. His commitment would involve attending 5 two-day meetings at no cost to the District. The Committee was very supportive offering financial reimbursement, if necessary, and the time needed to serve on this commission. Domey said it was an honor and good for the District. The Committee congratulated him on being selected to serve in this capacity.

**MOTION (REIM, JALBERT): To reimburse the Water Superintendent for any out-of-pocket expenses incurred to serve on this federal regulatory committee and to eliminate any charge against his personal or vacation time. Approved 3-0.**

- The Water Department employee wants to continue his education over the winter to prepare for future potential changes in the water system. Documented hours of continuing education are required also to continue holding existing licenses. The Department has budgeted for continuing education expenses. The Water Superintendent will help guide the selection of courses.

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

### Old Business

Chairman Domey received a call from Al Nardi suggesting that the problem with the rock in the pipe at the Anderson Street Reservoir be taken care of now and complete the rest of the job in the spring. W.S. Sasur disagreed because it would cost more. He said it becomes two projects instead of one; it will take three days instead of one; and the excavator will be there in the spring. Since the pipe is being kept clean, it should be satisfactory until then. All members of the Committee agreed to wait until spring. He mentioned that Paul Holcomb, from P & D Landscaping, was going to remove two trees in that area.

### New Business

District Counsel, Michael Hassett, arrived after attending a meeting about the casino. He explained some controversies with the casino's host community contract. Part of the Community Mitigation Program says that the town may apply the gaming revenue payment to a general mitigation fund for the fire and water departments of Three Rivers, Bondsville, and Thorndike known as the "Neighborhood Fire and Water District Grant Fund." It amounts to \$295,200. Among the questions Hassett wants answered are: What has to happen to get the funds? Who says so? Why was the town's fire districts not invited to the negotiations? Nobody at the meeting with Hassett was at the meeting two years ago when this was instigated. He feels that the town's fire districts were excluded because they are not considered "surrounding community" as defined by the legislature. Instead, they are considered part of Palmer and not eligible to share in the compensation allotted to adjacent communities. In recognition of that, this fund was established. Hassett will meet with Blanchard on Thursday, October 10, to get more information and answers. After consulting with other attorneys, they all agreed that the designation of not being a "surrounding community" put the town's fire districts at a severe disadvantage.

Approaches Hassett could take to resolve the controversy include:

- Asking the legislature to recognize Three Rivers as a "surrounding community."
- Talking with Steve Brewer, Gale Condaras, and others to do something for us.
- Speaking with the guy who signed this contract.
- Reopening the agreement.

Fire Chief Turner said that the fire districts are being taken advantage of because they are separate. Even though the districts are part of Palmer, they were excluded. . Both past and present Fire Chiefs were told that a verbal request was all that was needed of them.

They feel their requests were completely ignored. Turner asked Hassett how Palmer Ambulance, a private, unaffiliated service having no contract with the Town, was included in this agreement.

W.S. Sasur suggested listing legitimate short- and long-term impacts the casino will have on the District’s expenses regardless if we are a “surrounding community” or not. He would prefer an annual stipend of \$25,000 a year instead of a one-time grant. Chairman Domey requested that the Water Superintendent and Fire Chief compile a legitimate list of impacts. He said that Bondsville and Thorndike would also like to be included. Attorney Hassett said that the casino is planning to release an impact study by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission by November 1.

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 November 13, 2013.

**MOTION (JALBERT, REIM): To adjourn from the Open Meeting at 9:18 p.m. Approved 3-0.**

Submitted by:

Approved as to Form and Content:

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

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Raymond Domey, Chairman

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

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