



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 6:35 p.m.

## **IN ATTENDANCE:**

Norman Czech; Prudential Committee Chairman  
Andrea Sullivan; Prudential Committee Clerk

Scott Turner; Three Rivers Fire Chief  
Nicole Dewberry; Three Rivers Water Superintendent

## **Roll Call**

Richard Pobieglo; Prudential Committee Vice Chairman, Lorinda Baker; District Treasurer, Sherrie Bellefleur; District Recording Secretary and Guy Bellefleur; District Clerk were all absent from this evening's meeting.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

## **Approval of Minutes**

The Committee reviewed and approved the minutes from the September 7, 2022, Meeting.

**MOTION (SULLIVAN; CZECH): To approve the September 7, 2022, minutes to the Meeting. 2-0-0**

## **Public Comment**

None

## **Committee Reports**

None

## **Report of the Treasurer**

Lorinda Baker: District Treasurer left her Report of the Treasurer for September 2022 to be reviewed by the Committee at this evening's meeting.

### **September 2022**

#### **Water Department:**

- Revenue for September was down \$5,010 below the prior year.
- YTD revenue is \$28,000 below last year.
- YTD profit is \$548, down \$25,790 from prior year.
- Utilities (\$2,788) and insurance (\$2,389) have increased, while repairs (\$9,907) and meter replacements (\$4,620) have declined.
- The Water Department is checking to see if the overage billing dropped from last year to account for the revenue decline.

Chairman Norman Czech questioned this, and Water Superintendent Nicole Dewberry has answered saying her feelings are residents just were not using as much water this year as compared to last year. A possible reason could be the State declared a drought so possibly might be the reason why.

**Fire Department:** No concerns.

**District:** No concerns.

**MOTION (SULLIVAN; CZECH): To accept the Report of the Treasurer for September 2022. 2-0-0**

**MOTION (SULLIVAN; CZECH): To approve the Treasurers Warrant for September 2022. 2-0-0**

## **Report of the Fire Chief**

Fire Chief Scott Turner read the report of the Fire Chief for September 2022.

## **Message from the Chief:**

“We are currently in the final stages of upgrading our First Responder license to Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), which will allow this department to provide a higher level of care at medical emergencies. I’d like to thank the members of the department for putting in the long hours necessary to accomplish this goal. Our community will benefit greatly from this upgrade in service delivery. “

## **Operations:**

- **Emergency Incident response:** The department was dispatched to 12 emergency incidents for the month. These incidents include 1 fire call, 9 rescue & EMS incidents, 1 hazardous condition (no fire), and 1 false alarm.
- **Service Calls:** 30; Most of this month’s assistance was directed around Fire & Life Safety inspections and smoke and carbon monoxide detector installations.

## **Apparatus and Equipment:**

- Car 2 went out of service on 8/27. All others are in service.

## **Fire Prevention:**

- 5 pre-sale home inspection.
- 1 smoke and carbon monoxide detector installation.
- Pathfinder fire drill

## **Training:**

- Chief Turner began Chief Fire Officer Management Training Program at MFA.
- Captain Nodurf attended training in Maine and became certified as a Rope Rescue Technician.
- Five members attended live fire training by the MFA with their Mobile Fire Training Unit hosted by Bondsville Fire Department.
- Vehicle extrication training.

## **Events:**

- Palmer/Monson Family Network Annual Fire Truck Wash.

Chairman Norman Czech asked Chief to explain the difference between Operations vs. Support on the Roster. Chief Turner explains that Operations are members that are trained for firefighter or vehicle extrication and or rescue trainings. Support members are those who are not trained yet, they can perform anything other than operating on emergency incidents like tagging hydrants to setting up ladders and helping after fires.

Chief Turner handed out Apparatus Information that show repairs made on both engines and rescues since the start of using Onscene. The list includes repairs made and repairs still needed. Car 2 is not on the list, but it is known the brakeage issues that have happened over the last 2 years. Last time in it was recommended to have a couple brake lines fixed. The entire brake system needs to be done because it is all rusted underneath and at some point, it is just going to crumble. Chief would like to add Car 2 and Engine 2 to his replacement list. For now the Utility vehicle can replace Car 2, being used for medical calls, inspections and members take that vehicle to training. They are both priorities but Chief feels that Engine 2 should be first on the list. There are several ways to go about this including a grant to replace Engine 2 but prior requests have been rejected. One letter explaining the rejection states we could not justify that we are not able to buy the Engine on our own. A liaison in Boston has said it possibly could be that we do not have enough calls to justify it. Other options would be a loan or lease options (owning after leasing for 10 years for \$1.00) and lastly buying used. Chief will have to put together his information to prepare to request this purchase to the district.

Chief Turner has requested permission to purchase extrication equipment supplying two (2) quotes. One (1) quote from Firematic who has sold the same extrication equipment to Ludlow, Wilbraham, Palmer and Monson. It would be beneficial to us to have similar equipment in case we ran into trouble being that they are battery operated there would always be backup to extra batteries if needed. This was not in Chief’s budget for this year, but he thought that there was equipment money left over from previous years in approximate sum of \$30,000 available. One bid came in at \$25,900 and another at \$39,300 being Firematic, the other quote was Anthus, what we currently have and that one was almost \$40,000. Chief told Chairman Czech the issues with what we have now is we just spent \$2,000 to replace 2 hydraulic hoses. The equipment we have now we’ve had since the 1980’s and already at that point were 5 to 10 years old. Chairman asked Chief Turner to get numbers with what money is available and get back to him during a district meeting.

**MOTION (SULLIVAN; CZECH): To accept the report of the Fire Chief; Scott Turner for September 2022. Approved 2-0-0**

**Report of the Water Superintendent**

Nicole Newberry presented the Report of the Water Superintendent for September 2022.

**Status of water systems:**

- A leak on a water line on Chudy street was found and repaired.
- Preventative maintenance on some wearable parts at the pump station has begun with hopes to finish this up in the next couple of months.
- Both rear brakes on the new truck were replaced after one of the rear brakes seized up.
- Lab samples collected for the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter are in compliance.
- Mary Ann will be on vacation next week with Nicole Dewberry away for the long Columbus Day weekend. Chris Connolly will be filling in at the pump station.
- Water shutoffs took place for all large bills that have accumulated over the years or who have not made a payment for an entire year. Many but not all the properties that we shut off are back on. There is one more shutoff that needs to happen next week, once we get the proper equipment to blow out the dirt that's in the way.
- We broke the valve to the house on Sykes Street and will likely repair that during next week.
- Since profits are down for 2022, Mary Ann looked at the totals for the outgoing bills during the second quarter:
  - 2021 the total bills for the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter were \$148,927.15
  - 2022 the total bills for the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter were \$119,857.58Presumably this difference between years is due to the overage charge. Maybe people are using less water this year over last.

**Meter Rates & Other Charges to Consider:**

- The existing water agreement with Thorndike was discussed. Steve Chiacchia suggested that a Prudential Committee member should contact someone from the Thorndike Prudential Committee to discuss the rate increase. The feeling is to discuss this with Thorndike prior to them receiving a bill with a 10% increase. Currently Three Rivers is charging Thorndike \$2.10 per 1,000 gallons. The big reason for the difference of what we pay, and they pay is we do not maintain their distribution system, whereas in each house in Three Rivers we do maintain the distribution system as it is delivered to each house. In Thorndike we just deliver the water to the interconnect, then they take care of their own distribution system. Chairman Czech pointed out that two (2) years ago when Three Rivers raised their water rates, we did not increase the rate to Thorndike.
- Larger meters around town may need to be considered with the rate increase according to Nicole Dewberry and Steve Chiacchia. Mary Ann is holding off the billing for a possible vote on the business size meter. Some discussions on the Schedule of Rates and Charges took place. Chairman Czech asked Nicole if there is a percentage on recalculating the new fees with her saying roughly around 20%. Also asked is what the backflow testing billed to customer means. This testing is done by Toomey who we hire because they have the license and equipment to do this testing. Chairman advised waiting on an increase for this to see what Toomey does.

**MOTION (SULLIVAN; CZECH): To increase the Schedule of Rates, Fees and Charges effective October 1, 2022, per the list provided by the Water Superintendent. Approved. 2-0-0**

**Update on Tank Project:**

- The full application for the State Revolving Fund is due on October 14<sup>th</sup>. McClure Engineering is finishing up the engineering side of the application.
- The status of the attorney is unknown currently. Rick Manley of Locke and Lord has not been spoken to yet. It is also unknown currently how much of the DEP list he is working on and how much we need to work on by the deadline. Chairman Norman Czech has approved Steve Chiacchia to contact Attorney Manley. Mr. Chiacchia has assured all he will email and call Rick Manley the very next day.
- John Sasur and Nicole met online with DEP from Boston to discuss the next steps of the State Revolving Fund Grant. They said that the financial side of the process will seem very much like the process of buying a house, regarding all that is involved. In parallel to that on the timeline, on the engineering side, we will need to sign another contract with McClure to hire his firm to put the project out to bid.

**Abatement Request:**

- Austin’s application for abatement states “improper billing charges.” From our phone conversations, I remember he said that we should list out the charges either/and/or list the rules on bills to customers. He said that he learned this during a conversation with the Attorney General’s Office. During our conversation he said that the Water Department should accept cash payments. He also said that he would like to receive the abatement because he is being charged for two units in his building when he only has one water line.

Austin was asked if he would bring in documents to show the changes that we should make, according to his conversation with the Attorney General’s Office. Since there is not an open case with the Attorney General’s Office, they do not have any information to share with me yet. They suggested I contact another office to seek advice. That office referred me to the Hampden County Legal Clinic. I submitted the questions I had about billing procedures a couple of days ago, and I received an email stating that I may try to receive answers to my questions during an upcoming Zoom meeting that is open to everyone who is interested.

A short discussion took place on this subject and the committee has agreed to file a motion to deny this abatement of water for Austin Vadnais of 2002 Calkins Road, Palmer MA dated September 28, 2022.

**MOTION (SULLIVAN; CZECH): To deny the Application for Abatement of Water for Austin Vadnais of 2002 Calkins Road, Palmer MA. Approved. 2-0-0**

**MOTION (SULLIVAN; CZECH): To accept the report of the Water Superintendent for September 2022. Approved. 2-0-0**

**Board Members Comments:**

- None

**New Business:**

- **Cell Tower Project**
  - Still working on this.
- **Discuss Administrative Assistant for Water Department**
  - The job posting has been up for just a little under one month. Applications are with Nicole at this evening’s meeting. A discussion took place on some applicants being overqualified and or being content with the rate of pay that will be offered. Andrea Sullivan suggested to do a phone interview to start to enable us to tell the applicant the rate of pay. The rate of pay that will be offered to start will be \$19.00/hour and Nicole will start making calls immediately. Nicole will do in person interviews with the Board when that time comes.

**Old Business:**

None

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

**MOTION (SULLIVAN; CZECH): To adjourn from the Open Meeting at 7:40 pm. Approved 2-0-0**

Submitted by:

Approved as to Form and Content:

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Sherrie Bellefleur, District Recording Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Norman Czech, Chairman

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

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