



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

Roll Call

Finds Lorinda Baker, District Treasurer and Guy Bellefleur District Clerk 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 September 20, 2023, meeting.

MOTION (CHACCHIA; SULLIVAN): To approve the September 20, 2023, minutes to the Meeting. 3-0-0

Public Comment

None

Committee Reports

None

Report of the Treasurer

Lorinda Baker: District Treasurer was not present this evening, but her September 2023 report of the treasurer was read by the Prudential Committee.

Water Receipts: Receipts are up YTD \$60,668.83. Cash is up in the Water account.

Fire District: Cash is up in Fire account.

Heating Fuel was questioned "is there a full tank". Fire Chief Nodurf has assured the Committee he will check on that.

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

MOTION (CHACCHIA; SULLIVAN): To accept the Treasurers Warrant for September 2023. Approved. 3-0-0

Report of the Fire Chief

Fire Chief Steve Nodurf read his September 2023 Report of the Fire Chief.

Administration

- Meeting with Operation Manager at Palmer Ambulance about moving ahead with our service upgrade. A letter between Palmer Ambulance and us that they will provide transport will be drafted by Palmer Ambulance.
- Western Massachusetts Fire Prevention Association Meeting.
- Implemented a reinspection fee for all permits effective January 1, 2024.
- Began Plan Review for Solar Panel Installation. The fire department must inspect and sign off along with the building inspector before work can begin on Solar Panel Installation.

Fire Prevention/Education:

- 5 Presale home inspections.
- 1-2-propane tank installation inspections.

Operations:

- 8 Emergency Incidents.
- 7 Non-Emergency Service Calls.

Training:

- Department Training Engine Company Operations (fire attack).
- Duty Crew Training, hose line drills, driver/operator training, forcible entry training.
- Interdepartmental Drill MDU set up and operation.
- Ongoing Cadet Program.

Events:

- Palmer/Monson Family Network Fire Safety & Fire Truck wash.

Chairman Norman Czech asked about a scheduling for the Pathfinder fire drill, but Chief Nodurf said it already took place at the end of August.

Chief Nodurf inquired about obtaining a debit card for himself. A short discussion took place over the benefit of a Debit card or a Credit card. Mr. Czech suggests going to Monson Savings and try and get a credit card through them. The Board agrees on a \$5,000 limit.

Chief Nodurf also inquired about having to pay a water bill when other municipal offices in the town do not have to. Ms. Dewberry assured him that other municipal offices are billed for their water. Chief withdraws his inquiry.

Lastly the Chief asked if the Board looked at any options for apparatus other than investing money in repairs on the existing items. Mr. Czech has said no they have not. For the 10th year in a row, we did not get the grant. Mr. Chiacchia asked the Chief if he's talked to the Town Council about the money that they receive. When you do not have a district, the town distributes some of that to the fire departments and water departments.

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

Report of the Water Superintendent

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

Status of water systems:

- Water is still being supplied to Bondsville and Thorndike.

Items Stolen from Trucks:

- On September 27th over \$1,500 worth of items were stolen from the open beds of the Water Department trucks. A video has been submitted to the police along with a report. Local junk yards have been called in the hope of locating the stolen items. Ms. Sullivan noted that she had seen the vehicle and that it was in Three Rivers when she saw it. Some talks about placing an air tag on the parts took place. At this point, other than buying a locking box for the bed of the truck or installing a camera it may be best to have Ms. Dewberry take items inside each night until they figure something out.

Billing Software:

The contract with VADAR for the billing software has been signed.

Unpaid Accounts:

- Sam has run an aging summary:
 - 8/31 before shutoff notices were sent out the balance was \$ 94,766.42.
 - 9/19 after shutoff notices were sent the balance was \$ 68,517.28.
 - 9/28 a few days after shutoffs were performed, the balance was \$ 42,569.43.

The Schedule of Fees lists the price of turning the water on/off as \$60.00. It was asked if the Board would like to change this to charge for each "house call" that is made, no matter if a check is received at that time or they are shut off?

Charge for Overage Once or Twice per year:

- Of the votes received the results were 152 people voted to keep the current billing cycle at once per year. 81 people voted to change the billing cycle to twice per year. Ms. Dewberry feels that many people really did not understand what was being asked. Mr. Chiacchia asked Ms. Dewberry to wait and see how things go with the new software before this is discussed any further. The goal is to avoid handwriting the readings when they are read in the winter.

Tank Project:

- The drawings from McClure have not been returned to us yet. They have said they are unable to find them now.
- Steve Chiacchia spoke with Chris McClure about his most recent bill. This remains unpaid.

Hydrants:

- Currently there are approximately 140 hydrants in Three Rivers, and most of them are the old Chapman hydrants. Hydrants are flushed two times per year.
 - The cost to replace the wearable parts on each Chapman hydrant is \$745.
For reference, the price of the excavation and pavement, excluding the price of the hydrant itself, at the fire station was \$3,150.

Email Copy about Buying More Meters:

- Items needed at the Water Department for the remainder of this fiscal year were discussed. The top of Ms. Dewberry's list is below.
 - Mac and Rich are working on a project required by the EPA to document every service line in our distribution system by October 2024. To do this documentation project, Rich and Mac must arrange with each homeowner to enter the house, and then go to the service line by the meter to take a picture and record the answers to a few of the EPA's and the DEP's questions. Since it's quite time consuming to make appointments with each household in all of Three Rivers, it makes sense to replace as many meters as possible during this time, while they're already in everyone's basements anyway. This will make the most efficient use of staff time, as opposed to entering the basements for EPA's survey, then making arrangements to go into basements again later on because of limits in the budget.

New meters are expected to last 15-20 years each before the battery dies. The batteries cannot be replaced. It should be planned to replace 65 meters per year. The larger commercial meters for businesses and apartments are a great deal more expensive and vary by size, the small single household meters cost \$302.56 each. Our current line item for meters is \$14,000, which covers the cost of about 46 of the smallest household meters.

The number of meters remaining to replace are as follows:

487 residential meters cost a total of \$147,346.72 and 8 commercial meters of various sizes cost a total of \$10,659.19.

The Board has said that last year \$14,000 was appropriated for hydrants, and we plan to appropriate more. A stabilization account has \$6,000 for water meters and Ms. Dewberry could have access to that for water meters after a transfer of this happens at a special meeting.

Buy and Sell Items:

- There are items Ms. Dewberry would like to sell but is unsure of the proper steps to take to do so. The state has a rule when it comes to salvage.

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

Board Members Comments:

Steve Chiacchia and Norman Czech looked in the safe deposit box on September 29th. The documents that were left in the box have been identified as truck titles, easement, purchase and sale for land, tax exemption certificate. Some very old, expired documents were pulled out and will be shredded.

Mr. Czech received a call from David Lavalley to thank us for helping with the water. He also said at some point he would like to set up a meeting with us (Three Rivers).

A comment that was in the Journal was discussed. Apparently, the comment presumed that Three Rivers was not on board with a project that they would like to put in at Forest Lake. The best resolution is to have a meeting combining Thorndike, Bondsville and Three Rivers.

New Business:

Discuss renewing the CD:

- Treasurer Lorinda Baker asked what the Board would like to do with the CD. The Board thinks renewing it for 5 months would be good. The current CD is with North Brookfield. As of today, a 9-month CD paid more interest than a 5-month cd.
- Chief Nodurf asked if he could move forward with apparatus purchase being that there is a 2-year period. If a PO is put in now, we are able to lock in at that rate today. Mr. Chiacchia asked if we put in a PO and it does not get passed at a town meeting can we cancel that PO? Mr. Nodurf feels we could put that language in on the PO. Chairman Czech feels this should be held off completely until the money is approved. A down payment would need to be made ahead of time. Ms. Sullivan asked Chief to make a call to get specs on a MAC 1 ahead of time, to enable time to read over to understand what down payment needed etc. Mr. Czech wonders why we would want an off the lot apparatus as opposed to specking out exactly what we want. The Chief says that what he's interested in has already been specked out by Boston FD, they have already done all the legwork to what we would build as our own. Chairman says no matter what Chief still needs to come up with a list of specs and those specs must go out for bid. This can be added to the annual meeting that will be held in May 2024.

Appoint a screening committee:

- Fire Chief from Holland Fire Department, Fire Chief from Wales Fire Department and Fire Chief from Brimfield Fire Department with an alternate the Fire Chief from Sturbridge Fire Department. As soon as the Board can get these Chiefs our list of questions, they will schedule the date and time. The location is to be determined. Ms. Sullivan suggests that it should be in Three Rivers. There are 5 applicants for the Chief's position. The applicant's information will be confidential. This committee is here to make recommendations only. Ms. Sullivan will make 4 folders of each applicant for the committee including the alternate.

MOTION CHIACCHIA; SULLIVAN;): To appoint the 3 Fire Chiefs and 1 Alternate as the Screening Committee. This includes Fire Chief from Holland Fire Department, Fire Chief from Wales Fire Department and Fire Chief from Brimfield Fire Department with an alternate Fire Chief from Sturbridge Fire Department. Approved 3-0-0

Discuss Date for a Special District Meeting:

- Finance Committee may be able to meet Wednesday October 25, 2023. Once this is confirmed the meeting will be posted. Once the finance committee meets and approves or disapproves of the Articles that Warrant is closed. After this night we have to wait 30 days for a special meeting.

Old Business:

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

Chairman Czech has one item. In reading through the Open Meeting Law, it has been found that Remote Participation may be used during a meeting of a public body if it has first been adopted by Chief Executive Officer of the municipality for local public bodies the county commissioners for county public bodies or by a majority vote of the public body for retirement board first district regional or state public body. We need to adopt remote participation by a vote. While Steve Chiacchia is away, he can attend on zoom or facetime or just be part of the meeting on speaker phone.

MOTION (SULLIVAN; CHIACCHIA): To accept remote participation in a meeting. Approved 3-0-0

MOTION (SULLIVAN; CHIACCHIA): To adjourn from the Open Meeting at 8:09 pm. Approved 3-0-0

Submitted by:

Approved as to Form and Content:

Sherrie Bellefleur, District Recording Secretary

Norman Czech, Chairman

Date: _____

Date: _____