



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
Lorinda Baker; District Treasurer
Guy Bellefleur; District Clerk
Sherrie Bellefleur; Three Rivers Recording Secretary

Roll Call

Finds all present

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Approval of Minutes

The Prudential Committee reviewed and approved the minutes from the October 18, 2023, meeting.

MOTION (SULLIVAN; CHIACCHIA): To approve the October 18, 2023, minutes to the meeting. 3-0-0

Public Comment

None

Committee Reports

None

Report of the Treasurer

Lorinda Baker: District Treasurer read the report of the treasurer for October 2023.

Water Department:

- Income for October 2023 was \$ 64,479.60 (an increase of \$48,379.37 from October 2022). This increase could be for a few reasons, the timing, the rate increase and how diligently the water department has been working on these past due water bills.
- Expenses for October 2023 were \$ 53,230.22 (an increase of \$24,987.36 from October 2022). There has been a lot of repairs and meter replacements.
- Net income for October 2023 was \$ 11,249.38 (an increase of \$8,797.13 from October 2022).

Fire Department:

- No significant issues to report.

District:

- All areas well under budget.
- November 14th the 5-month CD at North Brookfield Savings Bank matured generating interest of \$ 4,089.43. This was rolled into a 9-month CD at North Brookfield Savings Bank at a rate of 5.05%.

Warrant:

- Listing of all non-payroll checks for October 2023 were presented for reviewing to the Board. Ms. Baker has said that her and Dave from the accountant's office have been working on uncashed checks. There are a lot of them. She also asked if the Board has looked into Direct Deposit at all. The Board would like to look into this.

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

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

Report of the Fire Chief

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

Administration

- Began work on the Assistance to Firefighter Grant (AFG).
- Meeting with PASI Operations Manager.
- Western Mass Fire Prevention Association Annual Meeting.
- Meeting with Captain Gauthier from Palmer Fire Department.
- Meeting with OEMS.

Fire Prevention/Education:

- 3-presale home inspections
- 1-propane tank installation inspection
- 1-SAFE trailer demonstration
- 1-school bus evacuation drill Old Mill Pond School.

Operations:

- 20-emergency incidents.
- 10-nonemergency service calls.

Training:

- Paratech Advanced Rescue Workshop; Baystate Wing Hospital MDU Drill; Driver Training; Pre Plan 4 Springfield St. Drafting; Ladders; Reading Smoke; Two-person first in engine drill; Chimney chains added to E1; New hire onboarding book; Monson Regional Training; Cadet Program.

Events:

- Memorial Ceremony; Breakfast for Retirees; Halloween Parade.

Some talks took place about going into Palmer High and Pathfinder to discuss careers to classrooms. Ms. Dewberry was able to do this at Palmer High, but they cannot get Pathfinder to respond to their inquiries. Vice Chairman Steve Chiacchia has offered to help reach out to someone at Pathfinder.

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

Report of the Water Superintendent

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

Some discussions took place on the past due accounts. Sam Hoy at the Water Department has been working very hard at trying to set up payment plans or just get the bills paid. Some large accounts are part of the unpaid balances but again those are being addressed. Ms. Sullivan thanked Sam Hoy more than once for all the hard work she/water department is putting in to get these past due bills paid.

Status of water systems:

- Hydrant flushing has been completed. A hydrant was repaired on Calkins Road but now it leaks worse so this one will need to be replaced. Various other hydrants need repairs also.

Return Tools to Trucks:

- The police officer who wrote the police report suggested that we either hire someone to install caps on our trucks, or that we buy game cameras with infrared to be able to read license plates at night. This was discussed for some time. For the time being Ms. Sullivan stresses that anything of value needs to be taken out of the truck. Ms. Dewberry would like to get some quotes on a lock, or a camera or a locking truck bed.

Unpaid Accounts:

Currently the Schedule of Fees lists the price of turning the water on/off as \$60.00. The question was asked if the Schedule of Fees should have a line added that define it as each "house call to collect payment, or to turn off service for non-payment?" It is said by the W.S. Ms. Dewberry that shutoffs are a time-consuming process where we visit each property once in advance to locate and mark out the shutoff with spray paint and then we visit each again to either collect the payment or to shut off the service. Mr. Chiacchia suggests this \$60.00 increasing to \$75.00 and this charge should be to turn the water back on. No charge to shut it off, just a charge to turn it back on. Mr. Chiacchia does like the idea that the water department makes a house visit. The Board has said that this subject will be revisited at a future meeting.

Tank Project-USDA Project Planning Grant:

- Ms. Dewberry completed what she could on the application, and Steve Marhelewicz is helping with the financial aspect. Ms. Dewberry asked the Board if they would like to attend the next upcoming meeting that will be held online on either November 20th or the 22nd. Also mentioned is a Notice of Intent needs to be published in the newspaper. There must be a vote, by the townspeople, in favor of submitting this application.

Rate Study and Capital Efficiency Plan:

- Bob Flagg has said that Bondsville is applying for a couple of grants, and they are already working with Molly and Karen at Tata & Howard. Part of their grant application includes a Rate Study. Therefore, if they receive the grant, they hope that Three Rivers and Palmer would be interested in working together with their current engineers. Three Rivers is very interested in working together but Chairman Norman Czech asked Ms. Dewberry if she could get what our cost would be being that this would be something that will need to be put on the District Warrant for next year.

Installation of New VADAR Billing Software:

- There was a first meeting with VADAR. They suggested that we bill for overage twice per year for two reasons.
 - Rich and Mac will have to continue to handwrite each meter read for the purposes of our Annual Statistics Report to DEP.
 - In the meeting it was said that DEP likes to see the amount of water that was already billed for in our Annual Statistics Report. Not the dollar amount billed but the gallons.

The discussion about being billed twice per year was revisited. Again, it was said that most of the customers voted to keep the billing at once per year. Even though Ms. Dewberry has strong points, because the vote went more toward once per year the Board agrees that at this time this needs to continue the way it has been, billing once per year for the overage in July. Mr. Chiacchia feels there must be an easier way than the water department writing meter readings by hand when read for the DEP at the beginning of the year.

- Unibank offers an electronic check payment service, which they can link to VADAR. They charge customers who decide to use this service \$0.50 per check. This service is free for the water department. Would you like for Sam to put this in place? Note that Unibank also offers a service for credit cards too, but it would cost the water department a monthly fee and Unibank said that this likely wouldn't be worth it for us to pay this fee since we only charge once per quarter. The Board feels if there will be a charge to use Unibank it should be noted on the bill so that the customer knows ahead of time there will be a \$0.50 charge.

Health Insurance:

- Ms. Dewberry has sent the Board an email from Wendy at MIIA, in advance of this meeting. Wendy said that if the district adds vision and dental, MIIA will be able to give a .5% discount to the medical renewal for 7/1/2024.
 - Ms. Dewberry asked the Board if they would like to stay with Delta Dental or would they want to change to Blue Cross Blue Shield?
 - Ms. Dewberry asked the Board if they wished to add Blue Cross Blue Shield vision plan on to the package of benefits currently being offered?

Discussions on health, dental and vision can be discussed in May according to the Board.

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

New Business:

Tax Classification Town Assessor Rachael Carney:

- Racheal Carney was to be at this evening's meeting but did not show up.

MOTION (CHACCHIA; SULLIVAN): To keep the tax classification the same. Approved 3-0-0

Discuss date for Special District Meeting:

- Chairman Norman Czech has announced the date he is looking at to be December 6, 2023, for the Special District Meeting. The District meeting needs to be posted 14 days in advance in at least two or more public places and the District Office and Fire Station. One issued Journal preceding the date and posted in the town clerk's calendar.

MOTION (SULLIVAN; CHACCHIA): To call a Special District Meeting on December 6, 2023, at 7:00 pm. Approved 3-0-0

Screening Committee:

- The screening committee that was selected last month has had some glitches. Some have been on vacation which is holding the interviewing up some. It is suggested to add another to the list and that is the retired fire Chief from Wilbraham.

MOTION (SULLIVAN; CHACCHIA): To add Fran Nody; Retired Wilbraham Fire Chief to the Screening Committee. Approved 3-0-0

Chairman Czech asked Fire Chief Nodurf if he's spoken to the other Board members about the incident with the truck. Chief explained that the truck went to a 911 call, it needed to maneuver in a tight place and the ladder caught on the utility pole wire. Chief is in the process of filing a claim. This would be a rather significant cost. The engine is still serviceable it just does not have it's 35' ladder.

Old Business:

Recording Secretary questioned payment for taking the minutes of the Finance Committee meetings. The Board has said they would notify David at the District Accountant's office to process a payment for this meeting.

Board Members Comments:

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

MOTION (CHACCHIA; SULLIVAN): To adjourn from the Open Meeting at 8:12 pm. Approved 3-0-0

Submitted by:

Approved as to Form and Content:

Sherrie Bellefleur, District Recording Secretary

Norman Czech, Chairman

Date: _____

Date: _____