



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
Sherrie Bellefleur; Three Rivers Recording Secretary

Roll Call

Matthew Lemieux; District Counselor and Finance Committee, Michael Matthieu; Retired Deputy Chief and Finance Committee, John Modak the Finance Committee.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Approval of Minutes

The Prudential Committee reviewed and approved the minutes from the November 15, 2023, meeting.

MOTION (CHACCHIA; SULLIVAN): To approve the November 15, 2023, minutes to the meeting. 3-0-0

The Prudential Committee reviewed and approved the minutes from the November 29, 2023, meeting.

MOTION (CHACCHIA; SULLIVAN): To approve the November 29, 2023, minutes to the meeting. 3-0-0

The Prudential Committee reviewed and approved the minutes from the November 29, 2023, executive session meeting.

MOTION (CHACCHIA; SULLIVAN): To approve the November 29, 2023, minutes to the executive session meeting. 3-0-0

The Prudential Committee reviewed and approved the minutes from the November 30, 2023, meeting.

MOTION (SULLIVAN; CHACCHIA): To approve the November 30, 2023, minutes to the meeting. 3-0-0

The Prudential Committee reviewed and approved the minutes from the November 30, 2023, executive session meeting.

MOTION (SULLIVAN; CHACCHIA): To approve the November 30, 2023, minutes to the executive session meeting. 3-0-0

The Prudential Committee reviewed and approved the minutes from the December 1, 2023, meeting.

MOTION (SULLIVAN; CHACCHIA): To approve the December 1, 2023, minutes to the meeting. 3-0-0

The Prudential Committee reviewed and approved the minutes from the December 6, 2023, Special District meeting.

MOTION (SULLIVAN; CHACCHIA): To approve the December 6, 2023, minutes to the Special District meeting. 3-0-0

Committee Reports

None

New Business:

Welcomed to the meeting is Patrick Farrow and his wife Stephanie. Other District figures were introduced to the Farrow's leading to the Board asking a few questions. Patrick was the choice of the screening committee to hire a new Fire Chief. He met all the requirements that the Board was looking for and then some. The Board would like to take the advice of the screening committee and offer Patrick Farrow the Fire Chief's position pending contract negotiations. Mr. Farrow stood to tell everyone a little bit about himself. He's been in the fire service for 18 years and is currently the Deputy Chief at the Hampden Fire Department holding that position for the last 5 years. Also, Wilbraham Fire for the last 13 years where he has been a firefighter/paramedic.

Chairman Czech had a couple of questions to ask, the first being if Mr. Farrow took the position what he would do with the senior staff that is currently at Three Rivers Fire department. Mr. Farrow's plan would be to begin with assessment and meetings to get a grasp where the department wants to go as a whole, where the committee wants them to go but he strongly believes there is a role and a position for everyone in the department, especially at a time when not many are volunteering, so a thorough assessment and hopefully keep everyone happy, find that strength and weakness and try to accommodate everyone.

A second question by Chairman Czech is if there is a vision on how to recruit more people in mentioning that the department does have a decent cadet program. Mr. Farrow's response was he would support the cadet program that he's heard nothing but great things about that program. The Regional Committee, he's heard a Three Rivers firefighter is the top of that class, showing what that training program is doing, . As far as recruitment, staying active with social media, showing what we are doing, where we are getting our equipment, developing a plan to get into the schools, attract people to influence them to potentially a career that many of them already have.

One last question was being that Mr. Farrow is out of town and has been called to the scene would he assume command upon arriving or would he let the commanding officer on scene continue? Mr. Farrow states his leadership style has always been one of empowerment and if it is nothing that requires him to immediately take action he would keep those individuals because it is a learning experience and that is how everyone learns. If it something that is a little more out of hand and needs guidance then the chain of command can be followed, the necessary face to face and briefs and get a good sense of what is going on, appropriately assume command.

Vice Chairman Chiacchia asked where Mr. Farrow stands on his currently attending college, what his goals are. He's obtaining his associate degree right now. Mr. Farrow has 7 courses left. The timeframe on completion would be September of 2024. Mr. Chiacchia also asked if Mr. Farrow had any budgeting experience. Mr. Farrow is very familiar with line items and budgets.

Mr. Czech asked Mr. Farrow when he would be able to start if he accepted the position after contract negotiations. Mr. Farrow says to be fair to his current employer at least a 2-month notice. This would be approximately March 2024.

Mr. Czech asked if Mr. Farrow would try and come to the Three Rivers Department to get familiar with things in his spare time. Mr. Farrow states that he would 100% be stopping in to hopefully be able to work alongside of the interim chief now just to get a better grasp of all aspects of the position that were not able to be pulled off the internet.

A contract and employee handbook were handed to Patrick Farrow for his review. Upon completion of reviewing Mr. Farrow will contact Andrea Sullivan to set up the time to meet and discuss. Mr. Farrow is interested in the position.

MOTION (SULLIVAN; CHIACCHIA): To appoint Patrick Farrow as Fire Chief pending contract negotiations. 3-0-0

Mr. Farrow spoke; thanking all for the opportunity to serve as the Chief and is grateful for the trust we are instilling in him, and he is going to take that to the fullest knowing its responsibility. To the firefighters in the room and the staff he is really looking forward to this opportunity and will support and empower them to the best of his ability. To the Prudential Committee and the Community members he strongly looks forward to working with them, listening to them all and making sure all the needs are met of the town. His goal is always going to be firefighter safety, empowering training and being dedicated to continuous improvement to the service that this town has provided.

The Board says, "Thank You."

Report of the Treasurer

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

Water Department:

- Income for November 2023 was \$ 33,977.55 (a decrease of \$33,000.00 from November 2022). This had to be a timing issues with receipts.
- Expenses for November 2023 were \$28,764.45 (a decrease of \$13,411.14 from November 2022).
- Net income for November 2023 was \$5,213.10 (a decrease of \$20,487.15 from November 2022).
- Fiscal YTD Net Income is \$80,493.78 (an increase of \$63,493.03 from Jul-Nov 2022).
- All expense accounts currently under budget.

Fire Department:

- 5009 Fire Department Operations software over budget by \$785.72.
- 5012 Fire Apparatus Maintenance over budget by \$10,906.33. This account has had money appropriated at the Special District Meeting so this will be seen in the December budget.

District:

- All expense accounts well under budget.

Warrant:

- Listing of all non-payroll checks for November 2023 attached to the Treasurers Report.

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

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

Report of the Fire Chief

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

Administration

- Started the "spec process" for a New Apparatus
- Grant Proposals
- EMS Upgrade Project
- Review Onboarding Plan
- Permit Eyes
- Meeting with Chief on District 1 & 3
- Donation Request from Home Depot
- Met with Chief Burns
- Follow-ups with residents after calls

Fire Prevention/Education:

- 7-smoke detector installations
- 13-carbon monoxide detector installations
- 2-26F pre-sale inspections

Operations:

- 19-emergency incidents
- 5-nonemergency service calls

Training:

Engine company operations, driver training, rescue company operations, ropes & knots, pump operations and cadet program.

Events:

- Veterans Day Parade

Chief Nodurf asked about the Fire Prevention Fee Schedule. The fees increase \$25.00 putting them more in line with what others are charging. Matthew Lemieux brought up the food truck inspection fee. This fee has been addressed at previous meetings and the decision was made to leave the fee for this inspection as is which is \$25.00. The only vendors that are charged a fee are the year-round trucks.

Car 2's appraisal came in at \$300.00. Chief is asking if it can be used for training purposes. The Board authorizes him to do so.

MOTION (SULLIVAN; CHACCHIA): To authorize Chief Nodurf to use Car 2 for training purposes then scrap it. 3-0-0

Landon, a cadet graduated, potentially 2 or 3 will go to call/vol academy either in the spring or the fall. Fire prevention work is expanding. 2 Grants are in process, one member attended a DFS Course and Advanced Firefighting Strategies and tactics. 2 members took a DFS sponsored driver training course which was 8 hours of classroom and 6 hours of actual driving. Pathfinder career night opportunity was missed, and some safe grant funds were found that we did not think we had but we did. Chief is hoping that those funds have been moved into a fire department account so we can use this money and not have to give them back to the state. Chairman Czech will investigate this tomorrow. The money would need to be spent by June before we were to lose it.

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

Report of the Water Superintendent

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

Status of water systems:

- Tom Gregoire was hired by a homeowner to replace a service line on Springfield Street. Due to the service line being corroded the curb stop valve blew off and the excavation hole filled with water. Mac & Rich were able to slow but not stop the flow into the excavation site. This temporarily left the downstream neighbors without water pressure. Afterward the downstream portion of the main line down to the end of the road was flushed.
- Tom worked with the water department to replace an old-style buffalo box curb stop on Main St., which broke when they did shutoffs for nonpayment. The homeowners also replaced their side of the line too.
- The old Chapman hydrant on Belchertown Road had a leak. The water dept. tried to rebuild the wearable parts, but the leak was actually worse afterward. Tom was asked to replace it. A bent rod was the assumed issue which would have been too costly to replace leaving it best to install a new hydrant.
- Mac worked with Toomey to inspect the backflow preventer devices. One of the backflow preventers within the pump station failed so now parts are on order.
- The pH probe was replaced.
- The parking spots into the field that are across the street from the pump station were mowed. Ms. Dewberry along with Mac have been leaving notes on the car's windshields saying to not park so close to the well per state law but the same cars repeatedly park there. The chain across the entrance of the dirt road was reestablished but it will have to be unlocked again during the next summer when Pathfinder need access to mow. A sign will be installed stating that unauthorized vehicles will be towed at the owners' expense.
- The paperwork and digital files from the tank restoration project have been organized but there is still a lot of files left to organize from the time after Chris left.
- Lab samples for this quarter are complete and so far, everything is fine.
- The sodium hydroxide injection quills at the pump station were cleaned.
- Rich and Mac have continued to work on the service line inventory.
- The project of adding antifreeze to hydrants is running behind but this will continue again on some of the warmer days.
- Sam Hoy is continuing her work on the transition to the new VADAR billing software.

Return Tools to Trucks:

- Just a follow-up with the Board on this subject since Mac prepared a list of prices for truck bed covers. Ms. Sullivan stresses strongly to just bring all of the parts at risk for being stolen in to the water department each night and take them back out the next day.

Tank Project-USDA Project Planning Grant:

- Ms. Dewberry met with Henry from the USDA over Zoom to discuss the application process. Steve Marhelewicz and Ms. Dewberry completed almost all for the application. A couple more attachments are needed then Ms. Dewberry will submit. Results should be known during the middle of next year.

Rate Study and Capital Efficiency Plan:

- Ms. Dewberry spoke with Steve from Tata and Howard Engineering. He gave a ballpark quote to help us work through the budget for next year.

Matthew Lemieux spoke of the issue on Springfield Street with the ice on the road. The water on the mountain backed up and the pipe behind the houses was clogged with leaves and debris. The town came with a truck on the weekend, and they blew out the lines. So far, no backups even after the heavy rain. The issue becomes that it is not the water districts issue nor is it the towns issue. Back in 1937 the Otis company which is the Tambrands installed all of that infrastructure. Over time the people who bought those houses that right away

was assumed by the owners of the houses. So technically the town nor the water department are not responsible. For 1 and 2 or 3 years we have to have the pipe blown out the town is not complaining at the moment. The DPW did come and take pictures.

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

New Business:

Discussions took place on the possible date to hold the Finance Committee meeting. Mr. Lemieux stated that the plan was the Finance Committee had asked to see the preliminary budget first, ask questions and then finalize the budget. The end of January looks to be a good time to plan the first meeting with the Finance Committee. Then 45 days following could be the final meeting. Chairman Czech of the Prudential Committee will contact the Finance Committee Chairman Jesse Pobieglo to set this meeting up.

Old Business:

Fire Chief Steve Nodurf has requested of the Board a copy of the recording from the Executive Session of August 24, 2023's meeting. The Board has 10 days to respond from the date of this request. Mr. Czech has told Chief Nodurf that he would see him tomorrow about this.

Chief Nodurf has asked the Board to look at Article 4 of the bylaws; Section 4 A & B. The letter that Steve Nodurf has states he has been appointed, adjective notwithstanding. If he has been appointed, he cannot be removed without just cause and a hearing. Chairman Czech responds that he was appointed Interim Fire Chief with Mr. Nodurf asking if there was an agreement to that. Steve Chiacchia adds that Mr. Nodurf was told verbally. The reason Mr. Nodurf asked for the recordings is there were comments made that would be on the recording that are not in the transcripts. Mr. Nodurf has found the transcripts of that meeting, and those comments are not there. The rules of the bylaws says it does not have to be verbatim when it is put on paper but the audio will have everything that was said in that time frame. What was said in that time frame was "are you good with this without having a paper copy for right now" and Mr. Nodurf said "as long as everyone keeps their end of the deal" Mr. Nodurf went on to say that the board got defensive saying this is an official meeting it is being recorded and documented of course the board will do that as long as everyone keeps their end.

What was said there was by the next meeting there would be a document outlining Mr. Nodurf's roles and responsibilities, and he's assuming the end time of his Interim Chief, he does not have that document showing that with his signature on it saying he agreed to this. Therefore, by District Bylaws he cannot be removed as Interim Fire Chief without a hearing. Andrea Sullivan is going to go back and listen to the tape again. Ms. Sullivan did smile at him because she felt that the document should be presented and if he felt comfortable taking on the role without having that signed right then and there and all agreed. Ms. Sullivan did not know until recently that the document never happened, and she apologized, but in the discussion, it was stated as being an Interim Chief until we filled the position and that is in the audio. Mr. Nodurf states that the bylaws are the bylaws, there is no stop time to the Interim. According to Nodurf is this is a bylaw issue, and it is the rules.

The discussion went on a bit more resulting in the statements of the rules are not being followed with Interim Fire Chief Steve Nodurf appointment and now another Fire Chief has been appointed for the job he already has.

Chairman Czech stresses again that the appointment was Interim until the position was filled.

Mr. Nodurf states "prove it." Mr. Nodurf is not trying to be difficult, but Ms. Sullivan does not agree. Mr. Nodurf is trying to see that this transition goes without question.

Board Members Comments:

None

Public Comment

Michael Matthieux asked if there are ladders on the truck, engine 1. Chairman Czech states the ladder rack is fixed but they are trying to find a ladder. There is another issue with the truck and that being the tank to pump hose let go. This hose will also be repaired by the close of business. The ladder replacement is being worked on diligently.

John Modak is requesting that the Board start looking at using local excavation company of John Morrison. He feels there have been many options to retain his services, but we are not. Water Superintendent Nicole Dewberry has complete control of who is called based on certain jobs that are needed.

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

MOTION (SULLIVAN; CHIACCHIA): To adjourn from the Open Meeting at 7:35 pm. Approved 3-0-0

Submitted by:

Approved as to Form and Content:

Sherrie Bellefleur, District Recording Secretary

Norman Czech, Chairman

Date: _____

Date: _____