

**North Branch Fire District #1
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Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the North Branch Fire District #1, Prudential Committee, April 8, 2015.

This Meeting, having been duly warned, was called to order at 1:02 p.m. by Administrative Manager, Linda Holland.

Members Present: Cyndee Frere, Thomas Ferrazza, Hobie Terhune, Edward Barber and Daniel Facilla.

Also Present: Bart Howes, Rebecca Snow and Linda Holland.

Public Comment: Added to the agenda was the request to transfer funds from the Hook-up Account to the Operating Account. Also add the approval of the March 31, 2015 Annual Meeting minutes.

Re-organization of the Prudential Committee: Holland asked for nominations for Chairman. Ferrazza nominated Hobart Terhune for Chairman. Seconded by Facilla. Passed unanimously. Holland turned the meeting over to Chairman Terhune at 1:07 p.m.

Terhune asked for nominations for a Vice Chairman. Ferrazza nominated Daniel Facilla for Vice Chairman. Seconded by Terhune. Passed unanimously.

Terhune recognized and welcomed Cyndee Frere to the Prudential Committee.

Select Official Publications: Ferrazza moved to use the Deerfield Valley News as our official publication and the Brattleboro Reformer, as deemed necessary, as our secondary publication. Seconded by Facilla. Passed unanimously.

Set Official Meeting Dates and Time: Facilla moved to keep the meetings on the second Wednesday of each month at 1:00 p.m. Seconded by Ferrazza. Passed unanimously.

Hook-up Fee Rates: The Committee took time to review the current costs of connecting to the municipal sewer system compared to the cost of installing a septic system. After careful consideration, Ferrazza moved to raise the "A" Priority fee to \$25.00 per gallon, effective immediately. Seconded by Facilla. Passed unanimously.

Ferrazza moved to charge \$50.00 per gallon for the “B” Priority List, effective immediately. Seconded by Facilla. Passed unanimously.

Ferrazza moved to charge \$25.00 per gallon for all small gallonage projects, effective immediately. Seconded by Facilla. Passed unanimously. (Note: small gallonage projects are those 2,500 gallons or less).

Minutes: Facilla noted a correction to the Minutes of March 4, 2015. First page, paragraph 11 should state, in part, *Facilla found the presentation of the report was incorrect*. Ferrazza moved to accept the Minutes of March 4, 2015 as revised. Seconded by Facilla. Passed unanimously.

Minutes of the March 31, 2015 Annual Meeting. Howes noted a correction on page 3, Article 12, line 2, in part, *“may jump up by as much as 75% in nine years”*. Also a correction on page 3, Article 12, line 8. *Ed Floyd discussed the Fire District’s bio solids management needing to be done as well as looking into new clarifiers and drying beds”*. Ferrazza moved to approve the Minutes of the Annual Meeting as corrected. Seconded by Facilla. Passed unanimously.

Letters: Dated March 24, 2015 a letter from William Buswell to Hobart Terhune expressing his concerns in regards to a “letter to the editor” from a Committee member.

Dated March 6, 2015 an e-mail from Bart Howes to the Committee expressing his thoughts regarding the proposed Solar Field.

Dated April 8, 2015 a letter from the Vermont Department of Taxes requesting the Solar Energy Capacity Tax Explanation form be filled out and returned.

Dated March 30, 2015 an engagement letter from Love, Cody & Company, CPAs to perform the 2014 audit. Holland will invite a representative from Love, Cody & Company to attend the next meeting.

Treasurer’s Report: Ferrazza moved to expend \$94,314.18 to pay the monthly bills. Seconded by Facilla. Passed unanimously. Frere suggested that Snow contact Fairpoint to see if she can get a better rate.

Ferrazza moved to transfer the Line Extension Funds to pay the monthly bills until funds come in from the May billing. Seconded by Facilla. Passed unanimously.

Snow reported that the current prudent Capital Reserve is \$432,842.80.

The Committee also reviewed the Budgets, to date, and made comments/changes.

Chief Operator’s Report: Howes submitted a monthly written report indicating the hours of spray, rain/snow fall, pond levels and pump station hours.

Howes also reported that the concrete has broken in many of the CLR rotor pads. This was due to faulty patch work from the initial construction. Ed Floyd is contacting the concrete contractors about repairing it.

The damaged mixer was sent out for inspection and the quoted repair cost is \$6,900.00. The funding is accounted for in the Capital Budget.

Howes has met with the Stiles sales representative regarding the automated meter reading and the District has two options. Option one is a “fixed network” system. The existing heads will need to be replaced with different heads at a cost equal to the current price. The new heads have a life span of approximately twenty years and require numerous “gateways” at \$6,000.00 per unit. The unit collects the reading from the heads and sends them back to a CPU at the Fire District. The estimated life span on the “gateways” is roughly ten years. The number of gateways would be determined by Badger via a study. Option two, a “cell network” system; this system also requires the replacement of the existing heads. The new heads will use existing cell service to send the reading to a “Cloud” based server daily. Fire District personnel can logon to the server to access the readings and generate reports such as “potential leaks”. Individual consumers may also setup a private access to their readings and a list of potential alarms on the “Cloud”. There is a onetime fee of \$5,750.00 to create our custom cloud program. Then it will be \$0.89 per head, per customer. The coverage area will need to be determined by Badger via a study. Either option requires the replacement of every radio head we have already installed. As of March 3, 2015, there are 709 radio frequency heads at \$159.00 each totaling \$112,731.00 in replacement costs.

The pond transfer pump station controls and holding pond level meter have been ordered. The installation will be determined by the electrical contractor’s availability.

The effluent is meeting the nutrient discharge limits, therefore, on April 6, 2015 the subsurface disposal was placed back on line.

The Route 100 generator is in need of some repairs. The coolant heater needs replacing and the Route 100 roof is leaking. Howes has contacted Milton Cat to work on a quote. Barber suggested placing a pole shed over the Route 100 generator.

Howes explained to the Committee some “environmental” matters with the treatment facility i.e. freezing issues with the headworks and strainer, perhaps a building or heat source is required in these areas.

Howes also submitted a list of proposed projects to be placed on an extended Capital Plan. This is a work in progress.

Barber asked Howes when the repair to the conduit on the bridge is to be done and how many hooks will be used. Howes has inquired about rehangng the conduit and an estimate is \$2,500.00. Howes went on to state that the Fire District needs to have one

industrial electrician to become familiar with the plant. Howes suggests J.C. Electric in Jacksonville.

Review Suggestions from the Voter's at Annual Meeting: William Buswell stated at the Annual Meeting that he feels the Committee should set-up a special account to pay for meter replacements. Buswell went on to state "this will make the customer feel like he is getting something back". Frere stated that she feels two years is sufficient time to have the new meters installed. Once the meters are all done, perhaps set-up a special account for replacement heads.

The Committee briefly discussed having one plumber to install the meters/heads. We need to first determine the plumber's rates as well as the meter parts breakdown.

Set a Date for a Special Meeting to Correct the Vote Regarding Bond/Line Extension: The Committee will hold a Special Meeting on April 13, 2015 at 10:00 a.m. to review the Articles for a Special Fire District Meeting.

Proposed Articles are as follows:

1. To see if the Fire District will vote to consider and ratify the Raising and Appropriation of \$114,000.00 for the Bond and to expend \$62,000.00 plus/minus and additional interest assessed by the Federal Government to pay the Bond interest due.
2. To amend the Raise and Appropriate figure approved by the Voters on March 31, 2015 by a reduction of \$62,000.00 from \$890,976.36 to \$828,976.36.
3. To see if the Fire district will vote to reconsider not using the \$52,401.00 for the Bond payment.
4. To transact any other business that may legally come before this Meeting.

Ferrazza moved to accept the proposed Articles. Seconded by Facilla. Passed unanimously.

Other Business: Solar Energy/Putney Contacts. Holland reached out to Daniel Hoviss regarding the Putney Solar Project. Hoviss replied stating Putney does not have a solar project, it started out that we might have a small one, but incentives changed, so we put out an RFP for a power purchase agreement and went with Integrated Solar Alternatives (ISA) to build a large array in a good location, Putney would purchase power from that system. The power purchase agreement allows Putney not to own the equipment and to not need a location. This gives the Town some leeway on future power agreements or installation in other locations. Hoviss goes on to state that they are not too happy with ISA because the project took almost a year longer than it was supposed to and because the installation did not have adjustable arrays, therefore, it is not producing the amount of power we signed up for. Ben Joyce also submitted some preliminary solar farm maps intended to basically depict what a 3 acre site may look like on a selected parcel. One plan shows the effluent disposal field and the other shows a 3 acre site on the 60 acre parcel along Route 100.

Holland will have a RFP prepared for the next meeting in regards to the Administrations Building roof.

Old Business: None.

Ferrazza adjourned the meeting 3:52 p.m. Seconded by Barber. Passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted:

Linda L. Holland,
Administrative Manager

cc: H. Terhune, D. Facilla, E. Barber, E. Floyd, T. Ferrazza, Cyndee Frere, Bart Howes, Ed Floyd, Joe Mahon, W. Buswell, Amiee Pritcher, Arlene Palmiter, Donald Albano, Linda Anelli, Adam Levine, Jeannie Flanagan, Deerfield Valley News and the Brattleboro Reformer.

Posted: North Branch Fire District #1, Wastewater Treatment Facility & Administrations Building. Dover Town Office.