

**North Branch Fire District #1  
78 Dorr Fitch Road  
West Dover, VT 05356**

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**THESE MINUTES ARE NOT OFFICIAL UNTIL APPROVED BY THE  
PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the North Branch Fire District #1, Prudential Committee, November 12, 2020.

This Meeting, having been duly Warned, was called to order at 12:12 p.m. by Vice Chairman, Thomas Ferrazza.

**Members Present:** Thomas Ferrazza, Daniel Facilla, Jodi Keeler and John Snow.

**Also Present:** Betsy Wadsworth, Monique White, Brian Thompson, Bart Howes, Linda Holland and Rebecca Snow.

**Appoint New Members to the Prudential Committee:** Facilla moved to appoint Dr. Jodi Keeler and John W. Snow to the Prudential Committee, until the next election on March 30, 2021. Seconded by Ferrazza. Passed unanimously. Ferrazza introduced both new members to everyone present.

**Public Comments:** Betsy Wadsworth, President of the Southern Vermont Board of Realtors stated she understood that one of her colleagues was going to be on the phone and she wanted to know what his concerns were. Wadsworth stated that she and her coworkers were confused with the change in the Ordinance regarding bedrooms and sleeping spaces. Wadsworth stated that the realtors are the “gatekeepers” of the message regarding North Branch regulations. Wadsworth stated that some realtors have taken the charges for extra sleeping spaces, or for a sofa out of their own pockets. Wadsworth is asking the Committee how they can work together. She also noted that some of the E-mail addresses on the agenda need to be changed so there is better communication between the Fire District and the public. Ferrazza assumes that most of the clients selling their homes have been here more than two years. Wadsworth stated “not necessarily” because there is no more Capital Gains so they are flipping the property quick. Mr. Thompson explained that the seller’s allowed his family to move in a few days early before closing and thus setup the property with the bedrooms as seen during the inspection. Thompson stated that this is his primary residence and they never intended this property to be used as a three bedroom residence. He has set up the lower level bedroom as his office. Monique White stated that North Branch should not care where the sleeping spaces are places. If a unit has eight sleeping spaces is should not matter if

all the sleeping spaces are in one room. Facilla stated that years ago the State went to sleeping spaces so the Fire District went to sleeping spaces for conformity. Facilla went on to say that the State regulations say that a bedroom is a two person space, at a minimum. The State does not recognize a one bedroom home, (or condo) they assess, at a minimum two bedrooms. Facilla goes on to explain that there is a finite amount of gallons that we, the Fire District are permitted to treat, not in a year, but over a seven day period. Christmas and New Year's we come very close, and have actually exceeded, our capacity. Should we go over again the State may come in and say "now you have gone over twice, let me see your records". We can show them that we are attempting to keep a record of the total number of sleeping spaces. Facilla stated that perhaps there needs to be a review of the verbiage in the Ordinance or some clarification. Ferrazza stated that we will have an Executive Session and discuss this later today.

Mr. Thompson has changed a historic three bedroom home, in Timber Creek, to a two bedroom unit with an office. Mr. Thompson has agreed to remove one bed from the bunkroom leaving him six sleeping spaces. One lower level bedroom with a queen bed and a den, counted as one sleeping space and the main level with three single beds. The Committee asked Mr. Thompson to take a picture of the bunkroom and send it to Holland. Mr. Thompson fully agrees with this decision. Holland will have the lien released per the Prudential Committee.

Ferrazza stated that he is only interested in what happens in this valley. The people that are connected to this plant, that's my concern, as it should be our concern. So when they come in from the outside and say they don't understand, they do understand, because they have been told year, after year, after year and we have to worry about people connected to this line. So when we take money for a sleeping space, it lowers the rate for everybody connected. It is not that we are trying to go after these people, but we only have two ways to collect fees, hookups and sleeping spaces.

The Committee is considering a meeting with realtors from Wilmington, Wardsboro, Dover and Newfane to explain the Ordinance changes. They will invite one representative from each real estate office to attend a meeting to be held at the Dover Town Hall. No date set at this time.

**Treasurer's Report:** Facilla moved to pay the monthly bills in the amount of \$69,996.98. Seconded by Keeler. Passed unanimously.

The Committee also reviewed the Profit and Loss as well as the account balances.

Facilla moved to close the seven-eleven (WEX) credit card account and open a People's Bank card in Joshua's name, the same type as Linda and Bart's. Seconded by Keeler. Passed unanimously.

**Minutes:** Facilla moved to approve the Minutes of October 8, 2020 as written. Seconded by Ferrazza. Passed unanimously.

**Letters:** Dated November 6, 2020 from Ed Floyd to Don Haddox a letter regarding the eleven month walkthrough inspection of the North Branch Fire District #1, Wastewater Treatment Plant. The inspection was performed on November 5, 2020 with Matias Miguez and Bill Coon of Kingsbury Companies, LLC. Also present was Steven Moyer, E.I.T. of Technicon P.C. and Bart Howes, Chief Operator. Howes stated that the only thing that has not been fixed is the AMP meter, it is not reading correctly

Dated October 28, 2020 a Land Use Permit Amendment that applies to the lands identified in Book 335, Pages 17-18, of the Town of Dover land records. This permit specifically authorizes the demolition of one of the existing buildings (4,006 square feet) and the construction of a 4,888 square foot commercial retail building. This project is located on 321 Route 100 in Dover, VT.

Dated October 12, 2020 a letter from Therese Lounsbury, Wilmington Town Clerk, stating the Board of Civil Authority has received the Fire District's appeal for the property where the subsurface disposal field is located. Holland will be contacted with a date and time for the appeal hearing.

Dated October 21, 2020 a copy of a letter from Holland to Attorney Barbara Diehl stating that her appeal on behalf of Allen Barnes has been denied by the Prudential Committee. Holland explained that the funds for sleeping spaces are raised to pay for Capital improvements to the treatment facility. By collecting for the extra sleeping spaces the burden to our rate payers is reduced. Holland explained that letters were mailed twice in 2012 stating that if extra sleeping spaces were in the unit/home, the owner had the opportunity to pay at a lower rate.

Dated October 21, 2020 a copy of a letter to Mr. and Mrs. John DeVito stating that their appeal for two pull out sofas and an extras set of bunk beds has been denied. This home had been owned by the DeVito's for twenty-two years. Holland explained that letters were mailed twice in 2012 stating that if extra sleeping spaces were in the unit/home, the owner had the opportunity to pay at a lower rate.

Dated October 8, 2020 from the State of Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, Water Investment Division, a letter requesting confirmation that our records indicate that we have a loan amount of \$4,700,000.00.

**Chief Operator's Report:** Upon inspection of the liner rolls I found that while installing the 3" pipes, the majority of the cardboard cores got ruined. I believe our safest route is to budget for purchasing new liner and fabric in the event that they cannot be used in 2022.

Shane's test was postponed until November 19, 2020.

On November 5, 2020 the eleven month walkthrough of the Facility Project. It was noted that there are still warranty issues that need addressing. They are:

- ❖ Leak in our process water line – now fixed.

- ❖ Broken squeegee in the east clarifier race skimmer – now fixed.
- ❖ Rusty valves and metal on the clarifier – now fixed.
- ❖ Two sprayfield solenoid valves need to be replaced – now fixed.
- ❖ Concrete supports on the clarifier bridge are all broken – now fixed.
- ❖ Facility ammeter is still not reading correctly.

We have been having issues with our “telemetry System” for the Route 100 pumpstation. This is the method our alarm system for the pumpstation communicates with us. It uses a circuit from the telephone company as dry contacts to tell us if we have an alarm. Over the past year it has sent us many false alarms due to Consolidated Communication issues with the line. I recommend that we install a real phone line there and install an alarm panel. I will get prices for the January meeting so that the work can be performed under the new budgets.

Howes will also look into the pricing for the liner and fabric to see if it is feasible to sell what we have on hand.

Facilla mentioned that perhaps Howes should contact Matias Miguez to assist with the Capital Budget. Howes responded that he had spoken to Miguez about this matter and he responded favorably.

**Meduski Contract:** Contract has been prepared and we are awaiting acceptance from the attorney.

**Review Draft Letters to Attorney Ellis:** Moved to Executive Session.

**Ratify Decision Regarding Andrea McLaughlin (SU001):** During the inspection of the house it was noted that there were double beds in two of the bedrooms creating four additional sleeping spaces. Ms. McLaughlin stated that she did not have a realtor and she was “staging” the house for resale. She said she would not have purchased the double beds if she had known that it would cost her \$9,600.00. Tony Tribuno, agent for the buyer, was in the home when he was contacted by phone, and stated that Ms. McLaughlin had removed the double beds and replaced them with twin beds, which made the buyer happy because it created more space in each room. At that point, Facilla contacted Ferrazza and they decided to remove the assessment of \$9,600.00. Facilla moved to ratify the Committee’s removal of the \$9,600.00 fee. Seconded by Keeler. Passed unanimously.

**Executive Session:** Snow moved to go into executive session at 3:12 p.m. to discuss legal and personnel. Seconded by Facilla. Passed unanimously. Keeler moved to come out of executive session at 4:12 p.m. Seconded by Snow. Passed unanimously.

**DECISIONS:** Send letters to our attorney for his review and opinion.

**Other Business:** The Committee also discussed the sixty acre parcel and whether to have is appraised and put up for sale. This will be discussed at the next meeting.

Facilla wants Holland to contact Harris Computer to see if the program will allow sending bills via e-mail.

**Old Business:** None.

Board of Abatement meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 3, 2020 at noon.  
Location 78 Dorr Fitch Road, W. Dover, VT.

The next Regular Meeting is December 10, 2020 at noon.

Ferrazza adjourned the meeting at 4:22 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Linda L. Holland,  
Administrative Manager

**cc:** T. Ferrazza, D. Facilla, J. Keeler, J. Snow, K. Braunbach, E. Floyd, B. Howes, H. Terhune, A. Pritcher, A. Palmiter, A. Perkins, A. Havreluk, C. Helmstetter, C. Turpin, G. Henry, G. Golet, Grayghostinn, J. Gooch, J. Eckert, J. Flanagan-Marchese, J. Mahon, J. Densmore, J. Brunen, J. Redd, L. Harkawik, L. Fraser, M. Hamilton, M. Formel, M. Hathaway, M. Garber, P. Fisher, P. Fitzpatrick, R. Reed, R. Caplan, R. Rubin, W. Ruane, S. MacDougall, S. Dupuis, S. Joyce-Albano, T. House, J. Snow, Weathervane Lodge, Y. Strus, Deerfield Valley News and Brattleboro Reformer.

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