

**North Branch Fire District #1
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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, February 8, 2017.

This Meeting, having been duly warned, was called to order at 1:00 p.m. by Chairman, Hobart Terhune.

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

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

Public Comment: None.

Letters: Dated February 3, 2017 an e-mail from Attorney Paul Giuliani, stating that collecting sewage disposal fees that should have been charged years ago is going to be a real problem because of the statute of limitations. In regards to municipal sewer system assessments, the general statute enables the Prudential Committee to make a finding that improvements to the WWTF will confer a benefit on the entire Fire District, without regard to whether a particular property is connected to the system. Once that finding is made, the Prudential Committee, in setting disposal rates and charges, can impose a sewer system benefit assessment under 24 VSA 3615(a)(4) based on the appraised value of every parcel of real estate in the Fire District. Another option is the levy of a special benefit assessment under 24 VSA 3251-3256. In order to establish the special benefit assessment, there must be voter approval. By statute, the assessment is levied on property in limited areas of the municipality which receive a direct benefit from the improvements being made. Special benefit assessments work well where the municipal sewer collection and transmission lines are being extended into a new part of town. They do not work well when a WWTF is being upgraded because it's hard to say that only a portion of the municipality will receive a benefit from the upgrade. The use of impact fees are sometimes considered to help subsidize the cost of sewer system upgrades. The problem with impact fees is that it takes forever to collect an amount sufficient to do anything worthwhile. The other drawback is that impact fees have to be returned if they are not spent within a relatively short time frame on the improvements for which they were collected.

Dated February 4, 2017 an e-mail from Attorney Paul Giuliani in answer to the question “what happens to a building that never paid a hookup fee and has either partially been torn down or completely torn down.” The buildings in question were connected in 1974 and only paid an application fee of \$50.00. Gallonage was assigned these buildings when the Committee changed from square footage to gallonage.” Giuliani replied “I find it difficult to believe that the property owner has a vested allocation under the circumstances described. Looking at 24 VSA, 3625 sewage treatment allocation reverts if it isn’t used within a specified time period. It looks like that time period expired many years ago. More importantly, however, is the fact that the hookup fee apparently was not paid.”

A letter from Michael Kamercia, account #RO001, requesting dispensation for the charge of \$1,800.00 for a lower lever den. Mrs. Kamercia has a very serious illness and this causes a hardship. Facilla moved to reduce the fee to \$900.00 due to hardship. Seconded by Frere. In favor: Barber, Facilla, Ferrazza and Frere. Opposed: Terhune. Motion carries.

A letter from Allan and Linda Stern, account CA001, requesting the hookup fees charged for a lower level den and office be reconsidered. The letter states that no one has ever slept in either of these areas. Holland stated that the owner’s had finished the basement off and added extra bedrooms as well. Holland charged for 3 extra bedrooms at 120 gpd each and 60 gallons each for the den and the office, a total of 480 gallons x \$30.00 = \$14,400.00. The Committee unanimously agrees with Holland’s assessment as she is being very consistent.

Dated January 31, 2017 an e-mail from Representative Laura Sibia stating she is starting to get calls about the proposed project and hoping her and the Committee might schedule a call, so she understands more about the project, what is driving it and what the future will be after it is completed. (Note: The Committee spoke with Sibia via phone later in the meeting).

Minutes: Ferrazza moved to approve the Minutes of January 4, 2017 as submitted. Seconded by Barber. Passed unanimously.

Ferrazza moved to amend the Minutes of January 18, 2017 as follows page 1, paragraph 6, sentence three, should read, in part “It’s been forty years and an example of what we are experiencing here at the plant the past 15 – 20 years is the pond”. Seconded by Facilla. Passed unanimously. Ferrazza moved to approve the Minutes of January 18, 2017 as amended. Seconded by Barber. Passed unanimously.

Ferrazza moved to approve the Minutes of January 20, 2017 as written. Seconded by Barber. Passed unanimously.

Sign Warning and Approve Documents for the March 28, 2017 Bond: Ferrazza moved to adopt the Resolution Certificate in regards to the Bond. Seconded by Facilla. Passed unanimously.

Barber moved to post the Warning for the Bond at the North Branch Fire District #1 Operational Building and the Administrations Building, The Dover Town Clerk's Office, the Town of Dover Meeting Room (upstairs), the West Dover Post Office and the Dover Free Library. Seconded by Ferrazza. Passed unanimously.

Ferrazza moved to adopt the form of ballot for use at the special meeting of the North Branch Fire District #1, held on March 28, 2017 for the Bond. Seconded by Facilla. Passed unanimously.

The Barber moved to approve and sign the Warning for Article 1, the Bond, and to have it published in the Brattleboro Reformer and Deerfield Valley News on March 3, March 10, March 17 and March 24, 2017. Seconded by Frere. Passed unanimously.

Complete and Review the 2017 Budgets: Tabled.

Complete and Review the 2017 Annual Meeting Warning: Tabled.

Executive Session: Barber moved to go into executive session at 1:28 p.m. to discuss legal and personnel. Seconded by Ferrazza. Passed unanimously.

Terhune left the meeting at 2:10 p.m.

Ferrazza moved to come out of executive session at 3:20 p.m. Seconded by Frere. Passed unanimously. DECISION: Linda Holland will be paid a salary of \$56,756.52, Bart Howes will receive a salary of \$55,620.00, Dylan Bell will receive a total increase of \$1.25 and take the position of Assistant Chief Operator at \$15.75 per hour, Zachary Richter will remain at his current rate of \$14.50 and Rebecca Snow will receive \$17.51 per hour. Ferrazza moved to accept all raises proposed today. Seconded by Barber. Passed unanimously.

Ferrazza moved to have North Branch cover the back VMERS in the amount of \$4,473.03, and have Howes repay the Fire District \$25.00 per week until it is paid in full. Seconded by Frere. Passed unanimously.

Representative Laura Sibia via Phone: Sibia stated she had received and reviewed the materials e-mailed by Holland but still had several questions. Has the Fire District investigated all possibilities for State or Federal funding? What are the posting and publishing dates? Can the bond vote be postponed to a later date to allow for investigating supplemental funding? Sibia stated she would like to be involved in a conference call with the Committee and the engineer. Howes will contact Ed Floyd regarding Sibia's questions.

Barber left the meeting at 4:00 p.m.

Treasurer's Report: Ferrazza moved to pay the monthly bills totaling \$154,787.71. Seconded by Frere. Passed unanimously.

Snow also informed the Committee that she has looked into government banking, perhaps using a “Sweep Fund”. Facilla suggested that Snow research rates for Certificates of Deposit.

The last Operational check written is check #27792

The last Capital check written is check #1124

The last Petty Cash check written is check #863

Snow reported that the current prudent reserve is \$350,641.95.

Chief Operator’s Report: Howes created a rough figure for the budgeting of meter replacement. It will need to be finalized once we know exactly what size meter everyone has installed and come up with an expected cost increase for the future. Every ten years the endpoint needs to be replaced. Every twenty years the whole meter needs to be replaced. Using today’s part prices and a plumber fee of \$200.00 we should be charging an annual fee per meter as follows:

	Annual Funds per Meter 10 year	Annual Funds per Meter for 20 year	Total Funds per Meter per year
Model 25	\$20.20	\$26.15	\$46.35
Model 40	\$20.20	\$28.95	\$49.15
2” Compound	\$40.40	\$109.30	\$149.70
3” Compound	\$40.40	\$124.65	\$165.05

In regards to the statement made at the last meeting about the past overtime hours and the problems in the sprayfield. We used to stay late to spray more gallons therefore having more overtime. This has been mitigated by Howes coming in early and the use of the subsurface. When in use, the subsurface is discharging roughly the same as two hours of spray.

Old Business: None.

Other Business: None.

Facilla adjourned the meeting at 4:45 p.m.

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, Amiee Pritcher, Arlene Palmiter, Donald Albano, Linda Anelli,

Adam Levine, Jeannie Flanagan, Leslie Fraser, Ashleigh Perkins, Laurie Newton, Robert Rubin, Ray Reed, John Densmore, Cliff Turpin, Rolf Parker-Houghton, G. Golet, S. Mac Dougall, L. Harkawik, R. William, Deerfield Valley News and the Brattleboro Reformer.

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