

**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, July 21, 2021.

This Meeting, having been duly Warned, was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chairman, Steve Montello.

Members Present: Steve Montello, Bob Stone, Jon Prial, Ken Westby and Peter Edwards

Also Present: Bart Howes, Rebecca Snow, Helen Krzeminski. Public members: Tom Ferrazza, John Giordano, Kevin Joyce, Sheila Joyce and James Valente.

New Board members Ken Westby and Peter Edwards signed Oaths of Office.

Public Comments:

- Kevin Joyce expressed concern about the handling of his workman's compensation claim, from May 2020. He further stated that decisions on health insurance and present handling of his possible return to work by the Prudential Committee was unfairly based on a personal issue between Steve Montello and himself. He presented the Board with a Return-to-Work Status report from a physician, which indicated he could not return to work until 9/7/21.
- Tom Ferrazza welcomed the new board members. Ferrazza stated the procedures for holding a special meeting, changing amendments or ordinances need to follow guidelines set by the State. Ferrazza stated that the power of petition is not to be used by a Board, that is intended to be used as a remedy for the voting public, who may disagree with a board's decision to call for discussion only. He wanted to clarify that the meeting on October 14, 2021, is a continuation of the Annual Meeting from May 13, 2021. He stated he wanted to make sure that any new business would be conducted correctly according to Vermont State Statutes Title 24.

Minutes: Prial moved to approve the minutes of June 23, 2021. Seconded by Stone. Passed unanimously.

Letters:

- Email's from DiChiaras, Gillespie, Hayde concerning June 7th Abatement hearing, hoping for a possible resolution, is still being deferred until December's Abatement hearing as per original decision. No action taken except to direct Hayde to the website for information he is looking to obtain.
- Kevin Joyce's letter will be discussed in executive session.
- A letter to Steve Charno resolving his sleeping space account was reviewed.
- An email from AmeriGas was reviewed. Stone made a motion to prebuy 6000 gallons of propane from them at 1.76/gallon, for this heating season. Seconded by Edwards. Passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report:

- Westby moved to approve to pay bills in the amount of \$77,467.27. Seconded by Prial. Passed unanimously.
- ADP Run will start August 1, 2021, for all hourly employees

Chief Operator's Report:**Operations**

- Howes reported that he read the Police Dept., Town Hall and Twice Blessed meters. He stated that a letter needed to be sent to the Historical Society so that he could gain access. Krzeminski stated a letter had been sent to them for the request. He reported that the Fire Department and Church did not have meters. It was decided to check on the legalities of charging these two entities for an installation of new meters before a letter would be sent to them.
- Howes stated that the polishing pond depth probe faulted. He stated that this happens nearly every for the past few years after a lightning storm. He stated that Champlin Associates will install a non-contact probe to minimize this issue. Price for the parts and installation is \$1,552.20.

Capital

- Howes reported that Heritage Engineering has sent a budgetary estimate of \$10,625 for the rotor pad concrete repair Request for Proposal and \$3,000 for construction inspection. They also recommended that they be hired at an hourly rate of \$125.00/hr. to allow for flexibility. Howes presented a letter and the agreement. He was told by the engineer that that there was concern that due to the availability of contractors, the actual repairs may not happen this year. It was decided not to go into this agreement with Heritage Engineering, at this time, and Howes will be getting three bids on doing the repairs.
- Howes reported that Cushing's & Sons are scheduled to come down in early August to install 5 additional monitoring wells in the subsurface field. Once they are installed, North Branch can increase their sub surface disposal from 136,172 gallons/day to 163,406 gallons/day. He stated that if the data shows the ground water tables can sustain it, the increase in capacity will become permanent.

Subcommittees:

- Montello suggested forming sub committees which will consist of two board members for each committee and interested public parties. Initially there will be

three committees.1) **Legal/Governance** consisting of himself, Prial and Krzeminski 2) **Rates** consisting of Westby, Edwards and R. Snow and 3) **Sleeping Spaces** consisting of Edwards, Stone and at least one other person who may show interest.

- Howes stated that there are potential shortfalls of having fixed rates and used Stratton as an example who had problems with fixed rates.

Amnesty Program: Stone made a motion to extend the Amnesty Program until December 31, 2021, and to clarify it is not for new construction. Seconded by Westby. Passed unanimously.

October 14, 2021, Meeting:

- It was discussed that there may be a Special Meeting warned, for the same day, as the continuation of the May 3, 2021, Annual Meeting. Items for public discussion may include changing from a calendar year to a fiscal year, rate reduction, ordinance review/revisions.
- R. Snow will let Westby know when the 6-month audit date is set in August.

Meters:

- Howes and Snow reported 62 known meters that have lost communication. Montello asked for a report, from Beacon, every Monday.
- The committee asked to get a report from MUNI of how many accounts are being estimated now. The Committee would like to eliminate estimated charges.

Old Business:

- It was decided to send a letter to Thad Paul at The Lodge at Mount Snow, clarifying his sleeping spaces.
- Valente excused himself when a discussion of the Meduski contract came up. The current contract needs to be signed and will expire October 8, 2021. This contract is at \$25/gallon rate. Four lots have been built and any money returned needs to be reduced by those amounts, should there be a revocation of gallonage.

New Business:

- Prial made a motion to change the Regular Prudential Committee Meetings to the second Wednesday of each month at 10:00 a. m. Seconded by Stone. Passed unanimously.
- Prial stated he will have proposals from Harris Computer and Arcomm Communication for the next meeting.
- Prial asked R. Snow to have an email list of customers by October 1, 2021.

Executive Session: Westby moved to go into executive session at 7:30 p.m. for legal and personnel matters. Seconded by Stone. Passed unanimously. The Prudential Committee came out of executive session at 8:45 p.m.

DECISIONS:

- Prial moved to send a letter to Kevin Joyce stating that his employment terminated when he handed in his keys on February 1, 2021 and Nbfd#1 will reimburse Kevin Joyce for his health coverage available through his elected COBRA coverage from July through September. Nbfd#1 will be reimbursed by a program that is available through the Federal Government. Seconded by Stone. Passed unanimously.
- Prial moved to contract Costello, Valente and Gentry, P.C. law firm, on retainer at \$325.00/month. Seconded by Westby. Passed unanimously.
- Stone moved to hire Cathy Kaufmann to record minutes of meetings, when needed, at the rate the Board is being paid per meeting. Seconded by Westby. Passed unanimously.
- Westby moved to hire a part time office employee. Seconded by Edwards. Passed unanimously.

Montello adjourned the meeting at 8:45 p.m.

The next Regular Prudential Committee meeting will be on August 11, 2021 at 10:00 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Helen Krzeminski

Helen Krzeminski
Administration

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