

**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, January 9, 2020.

This Meeting, having been duly warned, was called to order at 12:01 by Vice-Chairman, Thomas Ferrazza.

Members Present: Thomas Ferrazza, Daniel Facilla and Edward Barber.

Absent: Cyndee Frere and Brendan Ryan.

Also Present: Edward Floyd, Carina Hellstrom, Dayna Nobile, Valerie Kaufmann, Livin Vogel, Melanie Hathaway, Jason Hathaway, Rebecca Snow, Bart Howes and Linda Holland.

Public Comment: None.

Minutes: Facilla moved to approve the Minutes of December 5, 2019 as submitted. Seconded by Barber. Passed unanimously.

Letters: Dated January 2, 2020 an e-mail from Julie Lineberger, representing Veronique Czechorowski, stating her original request is valid as she did not know the taxes need to be settled prior to selling the property. This was previously discussed at the December Board of Abatement. The Fire District's attorney has stated "that the lien for sewer charges attach to the served property. Just like property taxes. Don't get involved in determining who is responsible for payment. Send the bill to the new owner and let him sort it out with his sellers." Holland stated that the bill was settled on January 8, 2020.

Dated December 20, 2019 a copy of the State of Vermont Grant Agreement in the amount of \$100,144.00.

Edward Floyd/Technicon P.C./Construction Update: Floyd stated that yesterday, January 8, 2020 there was a final walk through with the State. Floyd wrote a letter for this meeting and that is what needs to be discussed. Many of the "punch list" items have been resolved. The stairs to the Clarifier Bridges have been removed from the Kingsbury

list of tasks. North Branch is willing to coordinate that work and have it done by others. Floyd had a letter to hand out to the Committee it is basically a two part letter. The first part of the letter has some items that are dependent upon the manufacturer to send, replace or fix parts for the Centrifuge, the Clarifier and the spray valves. It has been requested that a verified schedule be supplied that show the delivery date for the parts, the installation date and the operational date for all items. The second part of the letter listed items that are not dependent upon manufacturer schedules, but it would still be helpful to know the schedule for these also.

1. Finish phase/surge protection for the facility.
2. Seal leaking conduit junction box in the basement.
3. Seal the leak coming from the stainless steel junction box in the basement.
4. Repair the voltmeter and ammeter that was damaged during construction.
5. Plug the leak around the spray suction pipe wall penetration.
6. Repair the leak in the 6" centrifuge drain pipe.

Floyd stated that the project is 99% finished. Ferrazza asked Howes if a meeting with the State would clarify the payments associated with the Davis-Bacon Act and AIS.

Billing Discussion Carina Hellstrom, Melanie & Jason Hathaway, Dayna Nobile, Valerie Kaufman and Liviu Vogel: Ms. Hellstrom started and stated she was looking back at her December 2017 bill and she feels like that is where it all started. That year I had less consumption but I paid more than the year before. The same occurred in June 2018. Ms. Hellstrom goes on to state that she did not think too much of it until last year when she was here to appeal her bill. Hellstrom goes on to state that her total bill for this year was over \$16,000.00. Ferrazza stated the reason the fall 2019 bill is high is because of the second bond. Ferrazza also explained that the Fire District has not changed the formula for billing since the plant came on line. Ferrazza goes on to say that the formula is not something we have just made up, it has been used for years. What is going to continue to raise the bills is the fact that the voter's, at two special meetings, told us that they did not want to purchase meters and/or associated parts and that they never wanted to pay for another bond. In ten years the Fire District will be replacing the end points on every meter and in twenty years the Fire District will be replacing all the meters. Ferrazza goes on to state "here is the problem, you are us, this is a municipality, this is not a business, so when we say we absorb it, you absorb it. It becomes part of your bill. Mr. Hathaway stated if the bills continue to increase, how many people will be left in the valley? Hathaway's bill doubled in the spring of 2019. Ms. Nobile stated her bill increase 142%. Ferrazza reminded the public that the plant was only refurbished; we did not do anything that would increase capacity. Mr. Hathaway stated that it is difficult to deal with such a large increase in such a short amount of time. As a new business owner he did not expect an extra \$3,000.00 per year. Ferrazza asked the public present, do you have any ideas and what would you do if you were in our position? Hellstrom stated that the rates are increasing because there are fewer of us here, right? Facilla stated "yes" there are fewer people staying here, more are making day trips. Go to the condominiums, they are empty and they used to be full, stated Facilla especially mid-week. During the summer there used to be 600 Floridians here. That is no longer. Facilla informed the

public that the Fire District put forth at informational meetings three or four different plans to fund this 4.7 million dollar refurbishment. Referring to the sense of community that one of the public brought up, Facilla stated that it is not easy to sit in this seat, because we are with you with this. Facilla stated that three years ago, one of the proposals put forth by the Prudential Committee was to collect \$100.00 from every house/unit/business (hookup) in the Fire District per year for the life of the new bond (20 years) and it was turned down at the informational meetings. The Committee repeatedly heard “bill the users only.” Ferrazza suggested a meeting of the business owners.

Holland and Ferrazza will review the Livin Vogel bill.

Holland will contact Paul Giuliani to see if there is a procedure to change the payment of the bond.

Treasurer’s Report: Facilla moved to approve the bills totaling \$674,747.53. Seconded by Barber. Passed unanimously.

The Prudential Committee went over the account balances.

Prudent Reserve: The current Prudent Reserve is (\$80,289.61)

Last Operational check written #29538

Last Capital check written #1327

Last Petty Cash check written #884

Will discuss placing \$250,000.00 in Brattleboro Savings and Loan at the February meeting. Meanwhile, place the \$250,000.00 in the sleeping space account.

Chief Operator’s Report:

Pond: Howes contacted RTD (the company who lined our holding pond) about lining the polishing pond in 2025. I had asked if they would general contract the project or what work they would perform. They will only install the new liner and fabric. This means that the project will require an engineer and a contractor to perform some reshaping of sand plus any other work and a liner installer. Howes suggested “sleeving” the liner rolls, so they hold their shape. Ferrazza mentioned using PVC. Estimated cost for doing the Polishing Pond in 2024 is approximately \$289,818.52.

Construction: The project has been completed. There are a couple remaining warranty items that Kingsbury will repair or replace when Operations allow them.

1. Bent race skimmer arm on east clarifier.
2. Conveyor sensor on the centrifuge.
3. Two solenoid valves for the sprayfield.
4. Sealing water leaks in basement conduit boxes.
5. Replace the facility voltmeter & ammeter that were broken during construction.

6. Repair the leaking 6” centrifuge drain pipe.

The new clarifiers need stairs to access them. They were not included in the project originally and we have requested pricing from Kingsbury numerous times over the course of many months. They continue to give us the same reply of they will get us a price. I will contact Windham Architectural Metals to get a price. That is the company that fabricated our anaerobic selector, handrails, catwalks and the stairs years ago.

Howes was informed this week that the State has again put us on a financial hold for reimbursements. Howes will contact them to see if this goes into effect before or after the \$339K we paid in PPE19. This is due to Kingsbury not submitting the required AIS/DBA information. This is a conundrum because we were ensured by Roger Bergeron that this was a no cost to us and the change order adding this to the contract which was written with his guidance and signed by him, specifically said it will not affect payment of invoices.

Executive Session: Barber moved to go into Executive Session at 1:34 p.m. to discuss contractual/legal matters. Seconded by Facilla. Passed unanimously. Barber moved to come out of executive session at 2:33 p.m. Seconded by Facilla. Passed unanimously.

DECISION: Holland will continue to check with appraisers.

Vice Chairman, Thomas Ferrazza adjourned the meeting at 2:35 p.m.

Old Business: Contracts will be reviewed in February.

Other Business: None.

Ferrazza moved to adjourn the meeting at 2:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Linda L. Holland,
Administrative Manager

cc: C. Frere, K. Braunbach, T. Ferrazza, E. Barber, B. Ryan, E. Floyd, B. Howes, H. Terhune, D. Facilla, J. Mahon, A. Pritcher, A. Palmiter, M. Himelson, L. Anelli, A. Levine, J. Flanagan, C. Helmstetter, Gray Ghost Inn, J. Desrochers, J. Gooch, Town of Dover, J. Densmore,, J. Redd, M. Garber, P. Fisher, R. Reed, S. Dupries, S. Meade, V. Czechorowski, Y. Strus, L. Fraser, A. Perkins, L. Newton, R. Rubin, C. Turpin, R. Parker-Houghton, G. Golet, S. MacDougall, L Harkawik, R. William, P. Fitzpatrick S. Joyce-Albano, R. Caplan, G. Henry, Deerfield Valley News and the Brattleboro Reformer.

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