

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, March 8, 2023.

This Meeting, having been duly warned, was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Chairman, Steve Montello.

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

**Also Present:** Deana Covio-Clarke, Bartholomew Howes, Helen Krzeminski ,James Valente and Kerri Walsifer via Zoom.

**Public Comments:** None

**Minutes:** Stone made a motion to approve the minutes of February 8, 2023, regular PC meeting. Seconded by Edwards. Motion passed.

**Walsifer: Discussion of estimated bills.** Kerri Walsifer asked the board for clarification of the abatement process and any other processes that would explain her sewer bill that she thought was a high estimate. The Walsifer's did comply with the ordinance and replace the meter, which the previous owners had not complied with. Policies that the North Branch Fire District had in place were explained to Kerri Walsifer to resolve any concern they may have.

**Review of monthly updates:** Krzeminski and Covio-Clarke updated the board tracking of customer data, meters, account s receivable and contracts.

- Approximately 400 meter cell heads to replace that North Branch does not have communication with, for May's billing.
- Montello stressed the need to get these replacements done and to make sure the monitoring data was corrected by Beacon. Covio-Clark reported that the monitoring data corrections had been made, all but one. Krzeminski commented that a trial import needed to be made before we could confirm all the corrections had been made by Beacon, before the billing import in April.
- Montello asked about the count on master meters. Krzeminski updated the board on the numbers. Prial reported that much work has been done, on the subject, by the Board and staff. He also reported that there needs to be more analysis done to make sure all customers are treated equitably.
- Montello reported that North Branch staff has been finding a number of properties that have hooked into North Branch Fire District#1, without notification or having a meter installed. Procedures for rectifying this will be under executive session, with North Branch's attorney, James Valente.

- Montello reported he has been in contact Sarah Shippee, the Chair of the Town of Dover Review Board of development. He also noted that he and Prial on that same board. Their goal is to open communication between North Branch and the DRB board, as there are a few large developments coming to each board.
- Prial commented that he had done cost analysis of using post cards vs. 8 ½ x 11 sheets for billing. It was decided that any customers asking for paper bills will receive a letter sized bill, instead of the current post card.
- Covievo-Clarke reported there are 9 accounts that are past due 180 days. One of them had responded to a letter by North Branch's attorney, James Valente.
- Covievo-Clark reported 8 closings, on property transfers, this month. One account had a \$3,000 lien against them by North Branch. Covievo-Clark is investigating if the funds were withheld for monies due to Nbfd.

**Chief Operator's Report:** Howes presented the following report:

Operations

- Farrar rush repaired two of our MT Snow pumpstation pumps at a cost of \$21,406.81, one of which has been finished. We now have three operational pumps and are awaiting a spare. Champlin Associates delivered us a temporary control that we will that we will rent while we wait for the correct panel to be build. The cost to rent, deliver, and purchase parts in the old panel that we will reuse in the new control panel will be \$5,228.05. The new panel has an expected cost of \$25,673.08 and a 24 week wait.
- John Bannon wants to eliminate one of his water meters. One meter is for the house and the other is for part of the house that is rented as an apartment. He states parts of the apartment line feed parts of the house so the meters are not truly segregated. He wants to use just one meter. With our recent discussion on master meters, I wanted the PC to decide whether to allow this or not.
- The PC board discussed the options and decided if the customer wanted to eliminate one meter, North Branch would need a letter from a Vermont certified plumber saying all water from both properties are going through one meter.
- Operations has been working diligently on endpoint replacements doing 131 from 2/8 – 3/2.
- Howes reported that NB had hired a certified operator this month. Montello asked if the Operations department was fully staffed. Howes replied that they were. Montello asked for update on two previous employees, who were out on different leaves. Howes and Krzeminski updated the board on the status of those employees.

**Treasurer's Report :** Westby reported that NB was slightly under budget on administrative expenses. Payroll expenses were under budget by \$60,000 and \$20,000 under budget on plant expenses.

- Westby reported 2.4 million in assets. He reported that he inquired about investments with Fidelity Bank. Prial made a motion to open an account with Fidelity Bank for short term investments, with excess funds. Seconded by Stone. Passed unanimously.

**Ordinance Update:** Krzeminski reviewed the dates for the amendment to the ordinance to take effect.

- February 8, 2023 – Board adopted amendments.
- Weeks of February 23 and March 2, 2023- was posted in newspaper.
- March 24, 2023- Last day for voters to file a petition.
- April 9, 2023- Ordinance amendments go into effect if not petition filed.

**Old Business: Peak Week Charges:** Prial reported that he and staff had picked December 23-29 to assess usage data from. North Branch will include a master metered property for the pilot study. He noted that much more work needs to be done before it can be determined who had excess usage during that week and on a repeated basis. Prial would like to have that information for the board at the next meeting.

**New Business:** Montello welcomed Covieo-Clarke, as of April 1, as a full-time employee.

- Montello reminded the board that NB needs to have a schedule on the budget that needs to be approved in May.
- Montello stated that he and Edwards terms will expire, and they are up for election. They both agreed that they will run for three-year terms.
- Montello asked Howes to get quotes on painting and staining the administration building.
- The Annual meeting has been set for June 28, 2023, at 10:00 at North Branch.
- The Abatement hearing will be in July.

**Executive Session:** Prial made a motion to go into executive session, to discuss personnel and legal issues at 11:15. Seconded by Stone. Motion passed. The Prudential Committee came out of executive session at 11:45.

**Decisions:** None

Montello adjourned the meeting at 11:46.

Respectfully submitted,

*Helen Krzeminski*

Helen Krzeminski

Assistant Clerk

The next, regular meeting of Nbfd#1's Prudential Committee is on April 12, 2023, at 10:00 a.m.

**Posted:** North Branch Fire District# 1, Wastewater Treatment Facility building and Administration's building, Dover Town Office and [www.northbranchfiredistrict.com](http://www.northbranchfiredistrict.com).