

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 11, 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, Pete Edwards, Ken Westby, and Jon Prial attended via Zoom.

Also Present: Deana Covieo-Clarke, Bartholomew Howes, Helen Krzeminski, James Valente. Scott Stein and Victor Alemany attended via Zoom.

Minutes: Stone made a motion to approve the minutes of December 14, 2022, regular meeting. Seconded by Westby. Motion passed.

Public Comments: **Victor Alemany** introduced himself. He commented that it took two years to get permits approved for a lot he bought in North Branch's district. Explaining that he was only permitted to build a small cabin because of the wetlands and configuration of his lot. He stated that North Branch's current ordinance states that there is a two-bedroom minimum for the hook-up fee. He supplied the design for the cabin which will only have one bedroom. There is a cost difference approximately \$5,000 for the second bedroom. He stated that seemed unfair and not good business for West Dover as being required to pay an additional \$5,000 would be a deterrent to possible home builders who will only put in one bedroom. He asked to consider his request to waive the fee for the second bedroom.

Montello responded that because of North Branch's current ordinance, which states a two-bedroom minimum on hookup fees, the board was bound by the ordinance. He stated the board could not consider a fee waiver at this time. Montello acknowledged Mr. Alemany's comments and stated that Jon Prial would take his comments under advisement and would consider them in any future ordinance changes.

Review of monthly updates: Krzeminski and Covieo-Clarke updated the board tracking of customer data, meters, accounts receivable and contracts.

- Krzeminski stated that there were three purchase agreements pending. Snow Vidda, Mr. Alemany's and another one-bedroom cabin. Montello stated that North Branch and the Town of Dover's DRB board were working together to only issue Town building permits based on gallonage purchased from North Branch. Currently the project at Snow Vidda had presented as a 36 unit project but the builders only wanted to buy gallonage for the next phase of 12 units. It was clarified, by Montello, that North Branch will only reserve gallonage for what is

purchased, in full, at the time. North Branch will not take deposits on future projects as it has in the past.

- Montello asked Krzeminski to get an update on the Boulder Ridge project as he said building was happening.
- Valente will draft a letter to send to customers who have delinquent bills over 180 days. This will come from his office.
- Scheduling with individual homeowners for cell head replacement will resume. There are approximately 500 appointments to make. Dover Green asked to wait until spring for their association's appointments. Howes commented that the non-communicating cell heads are the 3G that have been turned off by the service providers and must be replaced with the 4G cell heads to communicate. Howes stated that North Branch has them in stock.
- Covieo-Clarke and Krzeminski updated the board on the conference meeting with Beacon and Muni Smart. It was decided that there was an error in the data/programming that Beacon has. It must be corrected on their end. Our contact at Beacon will be updating us on that progress, so that it can be rectified before the next billing.
- Covieo-Clarke reported on the +180-day accounts. Montello stated that a letter will be going out to those accounts from CVG.
- **Chief Operator's Report:** Howes presented the following report:

Operations

- Our basement sump pump has broken. I have ordered a new one at a cost of \$1,756.44.
- The VFD for RAS pump # 3 has broken. I have ordered a new one at a cost of \$1,775.95.
- Eii came down and could not find the electrical noise causing the erratic readings in our PLC panel when using the recirc pump. They plan to come back down with some additional parts to try again.
- Pump # 3 at MT Snow has broken. I had an electrician install one of the spare pumps at a cost of \$265.
- On 12/23 Negus pumpstation overflowed less than 100 gallons. Both pumps were operating normally, but there were massive amounts of inflow due to the heavy rain and snow melt that caused it to not be able to keep up. We had Houghton Sanitation come and shuttle sewage with his pump truck until the flows subsided.
- I contacted Lane Plumbing about the RFP for replacing our interior spray valves that I sent out this summer. They will contact me back with some options and prices to work on it later this winter.
- Our backhoe cab floor is rotting out along with some other items are broken. I am going to get ahold of Caterpillar to see how much it is to fix it and how much a new one is for comparison.

Holiday Flow Data:

The highest 7 consecutive days was Dec 26, 2022 – Jan 1, 2023 and averaged 452,600 gallons per day. That equates to 3,168,200 gallons total.
Last winter's peak was Feb 17 – Feb 23 and averaged 410,143 gallons per day.
That equates to 2,871,000 gallons total.

This year was the highest 7 day since the winter of 2019.

This winter holiday weekend Saturday through Monday total gallons:
Christmas = 983,000
New Year's = 1,244,000

Treasurer's Report:

- Covieo-Clark stated that InvoiceCloud may not be as cost effective for North Branch as originally thought. Staff at North Branch must request any changes to be made on accounts, which is not efficient, in addition to the \$460/month charge we are getting. She stated that it seems the billing program, Muni Smart, and InvoiceCloud are not in sync on certain data. Prial acknowledges that the systems need to be in sync and stated that he will work with Covieo-Clarke in coordinating a meeting with the contacts at each program.
- Covieo-Clarke reported on the +180-day accounts. A letter from CV&G will be going out to those customers.
- Covieo-Clarke and Westby will be working on refining the balance sheet, the P&L YTD and an annualized P&L.
- Covieo-Clarke stated that the solar company wanted to set up automatic payments. She stated that North Branch didn't need to wait for our additional credits to be transferred, to do that. She will be setting that up. Westby will contact the other solar shareholders about using the credits that North Branch wants to give them.
- Montello asked for an update on the audits from the accountants. Krzeminski stated that Love, Cody & Company replied that the audit work for 2021 is complete, but that Steve Love needed to discuss some of the proposed changes to the draft financial statements, with Ken Westby. Steve Love said that the audit for 2022 will start in January. Westby stated that he would be in contact with Love, about his proposed changes.

Ordinance Update: Prial stated that he was finishing up the draft and had helpful input from Howes on clarifying some of the sections. Prial stated that the most important change will be to generalize how rates will be set, giving the Prudential Committee the ability to set these rates so that they are fair and equitable, to all the customers, without changing the ordinance. He stated that he wanted to have it posted by the annual meeting.

- Montello stated that he would like to dedicate time at a regular Prudential Committee meeting to review the reserve study and where North Branch is on any future meter

replacements, since it impacts the capital budget. He stated he wanted to have this done between now and May.

Insurance Update: Montello stated that North Branches insurances are up for renewal. He asked about a possible cancellation of one of the policies and noted that North Branch's workman's compensation insurance is very high. Krzeminski reported that the cancellation letter on the vehicle insurance was addressed to the current agent. The current agent assured that it was because the agent was changing providers and it was nothing negative on North Branch's part. Krzeminski sent all the updated renewal information to the current provider, and had been working with an underwriter from another organization to obtain a quote from them. She stated that all of the information is in and just waiting for the quote from them.

- Montello wanted to let the board know that he and Covieo-Clark applied for the Employee Reimbursement Credit and hope to see some funds come to North Branch from that.

Old Business: None

New Business; Fixed charges discussion: Prial said that he was still working on the analysis of Spring charges. He stated that it has been found that 90% of the customers who were charged only the minimum were second homeowners in the fall billing. He expects to see that change for the spring billing. Montello added that this analysis will include a study of the impact of the existing master metered properties to possible rate changes or individual access fees.

Executive Session: Prial made a motion to go into executive session, to discuss personnel and legal issues at 11:00. Seconded by Stone. Motion passed. The Prudential Committee came out of executive session at 11:33.

Decisions: Stone made a motion to approve an 8% pay increase for all Operations Staff, to be retroactive as of January 1, 2023. Seconded by Prial. Passed unanimously.

Montello stated that a meeting with two board members, will be done with Krzeminski, within the next 30 days, to review her compensation package.

Montello adjourned the meeting at 11:35.

Respectfully submitted,

Helen Krzeminski

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Assistant Clerk

The next, regular meeting of Nbfd#1's Prudential Committee is on February 8, 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.