

**North Branch Fire District #1
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**THESE MINUTES ARE NOT OFFICIAL UNTIL APPROVED BY THE
PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the North Branch Fire District #1, Prudential Committee, June 11, 2025.

This Meeting, having been duly Warned, was called to order at 10:00 a. m. by Moderator, Ken Westby.

Members Present: Steve Montello and Ken Westby.

Also Present: Representing Nbfd#1 were Deana Covieo-Clarke, Bartholomew Howes and Helen Krzeminski.

Moderator, Ken Westby, read the Articles and reminded members that voting for Article 1 will be by Australian Ballot between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. at the same location. He stated that Articles 2 through 4 would be voted on from the floor.

Article 1. To elect one member to the Prudential Committee and one Officer as follows:

1. One Prudential Committee Member for a three-year term.
2. One Clerk for a one-year term.

Note: The results of voting for Article 1 are posted at the end of the minutes of this meeting.

Westby introduced **Article 2.** To see if the Fire District will accept the Annual Budget. Montello made a motion to accept the 2025/26 Annual Budget, as presented. Seconded by Westby. The article passed.

Article 3. Montello moved to see if the Fire District will vote to collect taxes, and any other charges deemed essential by the Prudential Committee, by the Treasurer, pursuant to Title 32, V.S.A., Section 4791. Seconded by Westby. The article passed.

Article 4. Other non-binding business. Montello presented the Chief Operator's and Administrator's Annual report to be added to the minutes.

Voting Results Elections: 935 registered voters; 12 ballots cast.

Prudential Committee for a three-year term: Westby with 12 votes.
Clerk, one-year term; Scott Stein with 12votes.

Respectfully Submitted:

Helen Krzeminski
Assistant Clerk

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

Administration Summary Annual Meeting 2025

- **Employed since April 2021- 4 + years**
- **Unmetered years of service: From 1988 to 2021. We only went back 6 years for invoicing.**

Amount collected: \$23,3779

Amount still outstanding, in litigation: \$25,817

- **Implemented paperless billing. Half of customers are paperless.**
- **Meters: From 932 meters that had to be upgraded from 3G to 4G since 2022, only 2 remaining.**

From 57 meters that were outdated and had to be hand read, all were replaced but 1 remaining.

- **Master meter accounts eliminated by either having customers install individual meters or pay a separate and equitable fee for each unit under their master meter. (8 accounts, Deer Creek, Grand Summit, Glen Run, Snow Mountain Village Snow and Butterfield Commons)**

- **Fall 2024 \$23,499 collected and Spring 2025 collected \$23,499 in MM charges in addition to their water usage fees.**
- **Excess Use charges: 2023 collected \$14,030, 2024 collected \$33,302, 2025 billed \$8,185.**
- **Grants: Applied for and was awarded \$67,281 from the State of Vermont to make the Administration Building more energy efficient, American Disabilities Act compliant, and a community outreach project. Includes insulation, air sealing, handicap access (which was assessed, in person, by the Vermont Center for Independent Living, in Montpelier, which was paid by a separate grant given to them to do the assessments). Included in the scope of work to be done is an EV charger, battery storage, and lighting upgrades.**
- **Applied for and received a grant to enroll in an 8-month pilot course through University of Vermont Professional and Continuing Education/VLCT. Course included classes in municipal finance and audits, human resources, grant writing, leadership, equity and inclusion, management of local government and meeting management. Completion of course was in March of 2025 which gave me certification from UVM and VLCT's Leadership Institute and 6.4 continuing education credits.**

The course has now been changed to a two-year program with the same CEUs, and cost is \$2,600.

Annual Meeting Report

First thing I want to say is how the facility is fully staffed with 4 licensed operators. Most have been here for multiple years, and all have been here over a year, which has created a good working group and a stable workplace.

NBFD under the Prudential Committee's guidance has focused on a stable financial capital plan that focuses on redundancy, security, and emergency preparedness.

- Redundancy: Strive to have critical spare parts and pumps as backup to ensure smooth operations in the event of failures.
- Security: Fixed the front gate and fence to keep unauthorized personnel out after hours and ensuring our operational equipment is air gapped to eliminate cyber threats.
- Emergency Preparedness: Having automatic backup generators everywhere to ensure we can continue to operate during the continued extreme weather events that have been happening over the past few years. Prior to this:
 - Manual generators had to be brought to two of the pumpstations and regularly manned to ensure they were fueled and operating effectively.
 - The Facility had no backup power, so treatment and discharge stopped, and we had to store all the liquid in our ponds. Crews had to man the facility at all points without power and on many occasions, we had to keep gas powered pumps running just to keep from overflowing the liquid onto the ground.

For the first time since testing began in 1986, there is a No Significant Alteration of the Aquatic Biota (NSAAB) in the Ellis Brook. This provides evidence that the spray field is not resulting in a significant increase in secondary productivity in Ellis Brook. Also, the outcome last study of the Deerfield River which was performed in 2020 resulted in a No Significant Alteration of the Aquatic Biota (NSAAB). The Deerfield has historically swapped between a SAAB and a NSAAB.

In 2024 we took in 56.246 million gallons of sewage. This is right in line with the average for the past 14 years. This equates to an annual daily flow of 153,679gpd with committed projects totaling 33,917gpd. This leaves us 287,404 gpd of uncommitted reserve for future projects. This equates to us having 61% of our capacity available to sell for future projects.

Our ACT 250 peak 7-day avg limitation of 580,000gpd was not exceeded. Our peak was between 12/27//24 & 1/2/25 totaling 412,714gpd which leaves us 167,286gpd. This is right in line with the average for the past 14 years.

Our 2025 Engineers Inspection resulted in only noting for repairs two heads in the sprayfield. It specifically noted "The North Branch Fire District #1 treatment facility and all related components were found to be in good, maintained condition during the inspection. Records provided for the manhole inspection and rating program were found

to be complete and detailed. The crew was forthcoming with operational information and is clearly knowledgeable about the plant. My recommendations from this year's inspection are to continue the effort seen on the manhole inspection plan and continue to keep the plant well maintained as seen during the inspection". Being fully staffed has allowed us to focus our summers on manhole inspection and Right-Of-Way clearing. This along with the sewer camera helps reduce the inflow and infiltration of water into our collection system.

We purchased a new $\frac{3}{4}$ ton pickup truck to replace our one from 2015 and repaired our existing backhoe rather than replacing it which equated to a substantial savings.