

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, August 9, 2023.

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

**Members Present:** Pete Edwards, Steve Montello and Ken Westby. Jon Prial and Bob Stone attending via Zoom.

**Also Present:** Deana Coveio-Clarke, Helen Krzeminski and James Valente. Public attendee was Kenneth Rhee via Zoom.

**Reorganization of the Prudential Committee:** Steve Montello made a motion to nominate Ken Westby as Chairman. Seconded by Bob Stone. Motion passed. Prial made a motion to nominate Steve Montello as Vice-Chairman. Seconded by Edwards. Motion passed. The Prudential Committee welcomed Scott Stein as the newly elected Clerk for the upcoming term. Montello made a motion to have Scott Stein, Nbfd's elected clerk, appoint Helen Krzeminski as Assistant Clerk. Seconded by Stone. Motion passed. Montello made a motion to continue to have CVG and James Valente as North Branch's attorney. Seconded by Stone. Motion passed. Stone asked what CVG's fees were per hour. Valente responded that administrative fees were \$100.00/hr., his fees were \$325.00/hr., and an associate lawyer would charge between \$200.00 and \$300.00/hr.

**Official Publication:** Montello made a motion to continue Deerfield Valley News to be North Branch's official publication. Seconded by Edwards. Motion passed.

**Monthly meetings:** Montello made a motion to continue to hold the Prudential Committee meetings on the second Wednesday of each month at 10:00 am. Seconded by Edwards. Motion passed.

**Public Comments:** None

**JR032 Kenneth Rhee/Late Fees:** Montello made a motion to waive the late fees of \$18.16 to Rhee's spring sewer bill. Seconded by Stone. Prial abstained. Motion passed.

**Minutes:** Edwards made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 28, 2023, Annual Meeting. Seconded by Montello. Prial abstained. Motion passed.

**Treasurer's Report/Invoice Cloud discussion:** Westby stated that the Prudential Committee was given an income statement and a current asset statement to review. He noted that there were no significant items on the income statement that would warrant a discussion. He stated that North Branch was within budget. Regarding the asset

statement, Westby stated that North Branch has 2.9 million in cash, receivables, and investments. He stated that current Capital Reserve funding requirements are \$1,524,524. Westby stated that the short-term investments were due to mature at staggering dates and all were at 5.25 % earned interest. He explained that with 2.7 million in investments, there would be over \$100,000 in earned interest.

Montello asked where North Branch was on the past two years audits. The PC asked Deana Covieo-Clark to work with North Branch's independent firm to bring audits current.

Montello asked Valente for an update on outstanding receivables that his office was handling. Valente gave a summary. Montello stated that there needs to be a policy and procedures in place for handling delinquent bills so that these cases do not need to come before the Prudential Committee until it gets to a possible tax sale. Montello suggested to authorize Covieo- Clark to pursue the delinquents accounts with serving a summons. Valente suggested to put a floor on citation issuance and on tax sale proceedings. It was decided to continue to discuss it in executive session.

Prial asked for an update on those who were connected to North Branch and owed hook-up fees or needed a meter. Krzeminski reported that she had created a spread sheet to keep the PC informed of accounts, notifications, responses, and payments. Montello said he would speak with contractors/builders to try and get a response before a summons would be issued to the property owners.

Prial thanked Covieo-Clark for her efforts in sending numerous letters to keep customers compliant with the ordinance.

Stone made a motion to send notification on November's bill that there will be a \$10.00 charge, starting with May 2024's bill, for those customers requiring a paper bill. Seconded by Montello. Motion was deferred until after a discussion, in executive session, on the matter.

**Chief Operator's Report:** Bartholomew Howes was not present but submitted the following report, in writing, to the Prudential Committee.

#### Aug topics

- I want to contact our Dam Engineer (Fuss & O'Neill) to get an agreement worked up for them to design and oversee construction of the polishing pond liner replacement project and dam work. Dam work would be to fill in the rip rap on the east and south sides with dirt to allow mowing with a trimmer and cutting/removal of any trees Dam Safety requires. We currently have the repairs scheduled for FY2025, but that can be moved back if need be.
- The dissolved oxygen probe in our south reactor has faulted. A new one has been purchased at a cost of \$3066.
- The new spray pump and the disconnect for it have arrived and are installed.
- The new pond recirculation pump has arrived and is installed.
- Sprague Painting has power washed the Admin building. I have reached out to Scott Reed to get an ETA on the wood replacement. He has been on vacation and returns Aug 1. He stated he will schedule it as soon as he can. Sprague wants to wait on painting until the wood is replaced so he can just paint everything at once.

- The scum trough actuator on the west clarifier needs mechanical repair. I have contacted AR

Controls to come and inspect it for repair or replacement.

Montello had the following requests for Howes to present at September's PC meeting:

- To get quotes for air conditioning in the Administration building.
- Update on cameraing the sewer system.
- Update on manhole extensions.
- To get remaining cell head replacements completed before September's meeting.

**Monthly Updates:** Covieo-Clark and Krzeminski updated the Prudential Committee on customer data, meters, AR/billing, and contracts. Montello stated that Eye on Water had been very useful for his associations that last couple of months and asked for suggestions on getting all our customers to register. Krzeminski stated that only 21% of our customers signed up, even with added efforts to get people to register. Prial suggested NB contact Randy Capitani to send out a newsletter, through our contracted agreement with him.

Montello suggested sending a reminder email to local attorneys, of the policy to request a report from North Branch Fire District before closing on properties.

**Private sewer lines and maintenance inspections discussion:** Deferred until September's meeting.

**Excessive use charge discussion:** The PC decided to gather more data and arrange a meeting with our billing software contact at Muni Smart, to see what options are available as far as an automated excess use charge. It was decided not to add another monitoring week, and to keep it at the current weeks, which are the winter holiday week, beginning December 25 and Presidents Day week, beginning February 19.

Prial asked for an update on master meter customers. It was decided to gather more information and table the matter until September's meeting. Krzeminski will present a list of master meter accounts, to include the number of units they serve, at that meeting.

**Old Business:** None

**New Business:** None

**Executive Session:** Montello made a motion to go into executive session, to discuss legal issues at 10:50. Seconded by Edwards. Motion passed. The Prudential Committee came out of executive session at 11:40.

**Decisions:** None

Montello adjourned the meeting at 11:41.

Respectfully submitted,

*Helen Krzeminski*  
Helen Krzeminski

Assistant Clerk

The next, regular meeting of NBF#1's Prudential Committee is on September 13, 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).