

VILLAGE OF MORRISVILLE
WATER AND LIGHT REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

August 3, 2022
Wednesday

5:30PM
MW&L Office

PRESENT:

Trustees: Tom Snipp, Travis Knapp, Robert Heanue, Brad Limoge

Staff: Scott Johnstone, Penny Jones (via Zoom), Kevin Newton, Pete Crowley

Guest: Etienne Hancock, Todd Thomas, Robin Barnett from KBS (via Zoom)

Absent: Carl Fortune

1) CALL REGULAR MEETING TO ORDER:

Trustee Snipp called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

2) CONSIDER AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS:

None.

3) APPROVE MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING HELD JULY 6, 2022:

On a **motion** by Trustee Limoge and seconded by Trustee Heanue, the board approved (4-0) the minutes of the regular meeting held on July 6, 2022.

4) APPROVE CHECK REGISTERS:

On a **motion** by Trustee Heanue and seconded by Trustee Limoge, the board approved (4-0) check registers.

5) 2021 AUDIT (ACCEPT):

Robin Barnett of Kittell, Branagan & Sargent was in attendance to go over the 2021 audit and to answer any questions of the board. KBS had no adjustments to recommend. However, our financial software package is getting out-of-date and probably should be upgraded soon. On a **motion** by Trustee Snipp and seconded by Trustee Heanue, the board accepted (4-0) the 2021 Audit performed by KBS.

6) TRANSFER FUNDS:

Mostly due to increased purchased power costs, electric operating cash is starting to run short. Penny has identified approximately \$500,000 of capital expenses from 2021 and 2022-to-date that could be covered by the Green River funds. This would allow us to pay off our large balance with VPPSA for purchased power. MW&L will be looking at a rate increase (along with nine other municipal utilities – all due to purchased power). Management is developing a plan of action to utilize more of those funds. On a **motion** by Trustee Snipp and seconded by Trustee Heanue, the board approved (4-0) the transfer of \$500,000 from the Green River CD to the Electric cash account.

7) AUTHORIZE PRE-TREATMENT GRANT APPLICATION:

The State has received funds that have been allocated to assist businesses and communities with pre-treatment of high-strength waste water. Rock Art (RA) is very interested in applying but private businesses are not eligible to apply, they have to be authorized through their community. Scott & Penny have had good conversations with Matt at RA and he has a good plan to increase his side-streaming for about \$45,000. We can charge administrative burdens onto the grant. The application is due by 8/15 but we are still fine tuning the application. On a **motion** by Trustee Snipp and seconded by Trustee Limoge, the board authorized (4-0) the pre-treatment grant application.

8) OTHER BUSINESS:

b. Zoning Code Update Discussion. Todd Thomas and Etienne Hancock were in attendance looking for feedback from the Trustees. With all the new development in the Village, there are many alarms starting to ring with residents in regards to the demolition of old buildings and their replacements. The high-density zoning is not the problem, it is making the new buildings look more in place with the old buildings and fit in a little better. They want any new building that can be seen from the street to look more like a 19th century building. They do not want to duplicate the work of the DRB or create another board for builders to go through, which would only drive up costs and delay projects. Trustee Heanue asked if the State Historical Commission inspected any of the buildings that were torn down or are slated to be torn down to determine if there are any historical significance to them? Etienne was not certain of what they approved or disapproved. The State cannot stop the destruction of a building through the Act 250 process, they can only expose the necessity to document the building correctly. The Planning Council meets again on August 23 for any last minute changes. The first scheduled public hearing will be September 26. The zoning codes updates will probably not get back to the Trustees again until November.

a. Management Update. Pete Crowley pointed out that Dino Fernandez is about to become a full journeyman lineman and has been placed in our on-call rotation. Kevin Newton has not yet determined the source of the water emerging near Trustee Heanue's residence. We will be bringing in a camera to back track the source. A missing camper at Green River was found deceased in the reservoir which we have dutifully notified FERC of as part of our license.

Penny pointed out that our on-line bill access for customers to access bill and pay is also pretty old and starting to give us some issues. We were getting complaints that customers using Apple products could not make payments. We recently learned that customers using Microsoft Edge could not even access the on-line portal. Our attempt to send our e-bills on Friday failed. Penny & Kim Harris (VPPSA) are working with another vendor we use to try to find some work-arounds but it would only be temporary. We are planning to demo other product(s) to attempt to correct this access issue.

Scott stated that we are required to update our Integrated Resource Plan every three years and ours is due in February 2023. The only two municipal utilities to file their new IRP's in this cycle received strongly worded memos from the State about their deficiencies. We will utilize this information in developing our response.

Pete explained another potential problem. Per our Line Extension Tariff, when a customer builds a line extension, they get a \$300 credit for the service and credit for the conduit they install. In the past, if the service credit was larger than the cost of the job, we called it even and did not give a refund. With the cost of conduit being so high, we will need to determine if we provide credit up to the cost of the job or provide refunds?

c. Advanced Meter Infrastructure (AMI) initiative update. This technology will allow us to know when people are using power, which will be necessary with all the new rate structures we are going to be dealing with. It will also allow us to know who is out of power during outages instead of waiting for the customer to call us. Trustee Heanue asked what happens if 60% of our customers opt-out of smart meters like they did when we installed them in the Jersey Heights area. That was 13 years ago. Now, more customers are asking why they can't get the information that their neighbor gets because the neighbor has a smart meter. More people are interested in when they are using their power and they will likely become even more interested when the rate they pay depends on the time of day they use the power. The existing smart meters we have in the field will not be compatible with the new system and will have to be changed out as well. Some municipalities are planning on instituting an ordinance that will not allow customers to opt out so that is something the board must keep in mind when it is our turn. Trustee Limoge asked Scott if there was any reason he could think of why Morrisville would not want to be part of the first group to

switch. The simple answer was staffing. As this is going to happen of necessity, and since the cost is not going to go down; then the faster we get on board, the less it will cost us.

d. VPPSA Updates. Purchased power prices continue to rise and are not expected to go down anytime soon. Fortunately, we only average 10% of our load from the spot market. We may be looking for more long-term contracts so we do not have to rely as much on sky-rocketing spot market prices. VPPSA will also play an important role in any upcoming rate case. They are supporting other rate cases for other municipal utilities across the state handling which we can use as a learning curve for our own rate case.

e. Any other Business to come before the meeting. The Annual Meeting is August 10. The Board does not want to hold their regular meeting on August 17.

9) PUBLIC COMMENTS:

No members of the public were in attendance.

10) EXECUTIVE SESSION:

On a **motion** by Trustee Heanue and seconded by Trustee Limoge, the board approved (4-0) to go into Executive Session at 7:18 PM for a discussion of item(s) excepted from open meeting per Title 1 VSA § 313 (a)(1)(E), pending or probable civil litigation or a prosecution, to which the public party is or may be a party. Executive Session ended at 7:29 PM.

11) ADJOURN REGULAR MEETING:

On a **motion** by Trustee Limoge and seconded by Trustee Heanue, the Board adjourned (4-0) the meeting.

Attest: Tom Snipp