

VILLAGE OF MORRISVILLE
WATER AND LIGHT REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

September 7, 2022
Wednesday

5:30PM
MW&L Office

PRESENT:

Trustees: Carl Fortune, Tom Snipp, Travis Knapp and Robert Heanue

Staff: Scott Johnstone, Penny Jones and Kevin Newton

Guest: Kristen Marriott and Thomas Cloutier, Shawn Enterline (via Zoom)

Absent: Brad Limoge

1) CALL REGULAR MEETING TO ORDER:

Chairman Fortune called the meeting to order at 5:34 PM.

2) ELECT BOARD CHAIR AND CLERK:

On a **motion** by Trustee Knapp and seconded by Trustee Heanue, the board elected (4-0) Tom Snipp as Chairman of the Board of Trustees. On a **motion** by Trustee Heanue and seconded by Chairman Snipp, the board elected (4-0) Travis Knapp as Clerk of the Board of Trustees.

3) CONSIDER AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS:

On a **motion** by Trustee Knapp and seconded by Trustee Fortune the board approved (4-0) adding Action Item #11 to set the Village Tax Rate.

4) TRUSTEE CHECK SIGNER RESOLUTION:

On a **motion** by Trustee Fortune and seconded by Trustee Heanue, the board approved (4-0) the Trustee Check Signer Resolution which authorizes check signers to be Penny Jones, Scott Johnstone, Sara Haskins and Bob Heanue.

5) APPROVE MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING HELD AUGUST 3, 2022:

There is one small change. Carl Fortune was absent for that meeting so he could not open the meeting as stated in Item #1. On a **motion** by Trustee Heanue and seconded by Trustee Fortune, the board approved (4-0) the amended minutes of the regular meeting held on August 3, 2022.

6) APPROVE CHECK REGISTERS:

On a **motion** by Trustee Fortune and seconded by Trustee Heanue. Penny explained the check for the Town of Hyde Park was for property taxes. She briefly explained the many functions of VPPSA and what we pay them for. The check for Courtland Construction was for the Bridge Street pump station. The board approved (4-0) check registers.

7) POWER PURCHASE AUTHORIZATION:

Shawn Enterline (VPPSA) via zoom explained the proposal to acquire additional green wind power from western New York through a power purchase agreement for Howard Wind. The PPA comes with Class I Renewable Energy Credits from Massachusetts. The first-year price is \$80/megawatt hour and we can resell the RECs to Massachusetts and then buy Class I RECs in Vermont to meet our REC commitments. This reselling and buying of RECs will save us approximately \$20 per megawatt hour. With the shortage of natural gas in southern New England, coupled with approximately 70%, the forecast for electricity generation on the spot market being natural gas based, spot market prices are sky-high, making this a good deal. Two years ago, we were ½ way through a five-year contract with Seabrook. Knowing that contract would end and not be renewed, VPPSA has been working on replacement contracts. This project would

fill the remaining energy needs of MW&L and help meet the renewable energy requirements of the State. It was easy for MW&L to be “short” of power when the market prices of power were so low. Those market prices are rising, are predicted to continue to rise, and being “short” is getting more expensive. On a **motion** by Trustee Heanue and seconded by Trustee Knapp, the board authorized the general manager to enter (4-0) the 5-year power purchase contract presented by VPPSA. The board requested another refresher course, at a future meeting, on renewable energy credits (REC’s).

8) VERNET BOUNDARY LINE ADJUSTMENT:

This document’s purpose was to reestablish a lost property boundary line between Village property and Vernet’s property on Route 15A. On a **motion** by Trustee Heanue and seconded by Trustee Fortune, the board approved (4-0) the boundary line adjustment between Village property and Vernet’s property.

9) LIEN AUTHORIZATION:

On a **motion** by Trustee Fortune and seconded by Trustee Heanue, the board approved (4-0) a lien in the amount of \$1,637.47 on the property located at 1936 Elmore Road in Morristown.

10) TRUCK PURCHASE AUTHORIZATION:

Our 2005 bucket truck needs to be replaced and it is difficult to even find a company to perform the required safety checks for inspections anymore. A new truck built to our specs would be expected to take several years due to current supply issues. Supply issues are so bad that two vendors refused to even submit a proposal. One vendor has a truck that will meet our specs, though. As they still have work to do on it, it would not be ready until spring 2023. On a **motion** by Trustee Heanue and seconded by Trustee Fortune, the board approved (4-0) the truck purchase authorization for a 2022 bucket truck from Kiley, not to exceed \$325,000. Our vehicle replacement fund currently has \$385,900 and proceeds from this fund will be utilized to purchase the truck.

11) VILLAGE TAX RATE:

After the budget was set in August, the Village tax rate was proposed to be \$0.0071. On a **motion** by Trustee Heanue and seconded by Trustee Knapp, the board approved (4-0) the 2022 Village tax rate of \$0.0071.

12) OTHER BUSINESS:

a. Management Update. Soul Mate Brewing: question was asked about the current status of the project and if there is anything on the MWL side that is holding up opening. As Soul Mate is planning to truck their wastes to other treatment plants there is nothing on our side is holding things up. They do have to submit their operating plans to both MWL and the state which the owner is aware of. The sewer from the brewery in the back of the building would be separated from the sewer from the restaurant in the front of the building. Copley Hospital was complaining about water pressure. Our tests showed an average of 41 psi. Our current belief is that the pressure issue is within their equipment. High strength BOD rates: It is our hope to have a new high-strength sewer rate to present to the board later in September. Information will be provided to the effected businesses in advance to assure they are aware of the details of the rates proposed and the estimated impact on their bills. Trustee Heanue asked with all this new construction, if there was any prohibition on garbage disposals. There is not. Management agreed to review if this is something that should be considered.

Comcast make-ready work in Elmore continues. PLM is finishing their analysis of the deficiencies of our current electric system. Then, we will be asking them to develop a companion study that looks at what else we’d need to invest in if state policies around climate, clean energy and electrification come fully into

force. This will give us a blue print of what we have to improve. Transformers are still a supply problem. We recently received enough for our immediate needs but we should probably begin regular orders of transformers instead of waiting to run out. We have determined that the \$300 service credit only applies to single-family residences, not commercial apartment buildings.

Penny is meeting with on-line vendors to explore potential solutions for our online payment system. We are still experiencing problems with our e-bills. Scott has had many conversations with interested parties regarding Green River. We have been updated our financial models to reflect current market conditions. While some current conditions help this analysis, Scott is not sure they will change any of the outcomes. The State will issue proposals for a dam safety analysis for the green river dam in mid-September. The U.S. Department of Energy is developing an incentive initiative for small scale hydro safety and helping with water quality compliance. It could be up to 30% of the cost of the project *per facility*. We partnered with VPPSA and Swanton to provide verbal testimony into the important considerations they should include in the design of the incentive program. This could include making sure public power and more rural areas are included. DOE seemed receptive to those ideas.

b. Integrated Resource Plan Guiding Principles: An IRP is similar to a town plan but for the electric system. You look at everything that is coming at you, you conduct analysis around them and how it might influence rates, how it might affect your service to the customers, etc. It then lays out what you need to do immediately, within five years, within 10 years to reach a goal 20 years out. Moving away from fossil fuels and replacing it with electricity is laudable but we need to have an electric infrastructure that can handle it. For example, this may result in residences converting to 400-amp services! This then requires bigger transformers, bigger wires and improved substations. The State will have the final say on any IRP we develop which will be submitted in February. The planning process began last month. VPPSA is doing about 90% of the work for us.

c. Any other Business to come before the meeting. None.

13) PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Kristen Marriott was curious why the Board thinks their meeting are not very well attended. Front Porch Forum should be considered as a place to provide notice of upcoming meetings. Coming to this meeting was informative even if she did not understand a lot of what they were talking about. Chairman Snipp stated we struggle to get more participation especially with some of the issues we've been going through in the last couple of years. We want to be able to speak for the Village, not just us. Unfortunately, there are only certain times when we have a big audience, it's when something happens in your own back yard. Then all of a sudden everyone is here. After that, no one else is here. He doesn't see a magic bullet. Tom Cloutier noted that it is important for people to understand that what you do here is very important. Trustee Fortune stated he feels the Annual Village Meeting gets more publicity than these meeting yet only 20 people show up for the Annual Village Meeting. Unfortunately, it seems human nature not to get involved until something will affect you personally. We advertise the Annual agenda in the News & Citizen. Penny stated that our agendas get posted here, at the post office and at the Town Clerk. It would not be that hard to post on FPF and Facebook. Trustee Fortune said FPF would be good because we have been accused on FPF of doing things behind closed doors. Mr. Cloutier stated he wasn't involved for a long time but he has learned a lot about what's going on. Trustee Fortune said it takes a while just to understand what each board does. Mr. Cloutier asked what the long-term goal was for Green River. We need to generate power. It supports the State Park. The intention is not to remove the dam but our 4000 rate payers can only bear so much burden for the benefit of the State of Vermont. There is an appropriate role for MW&L to play and an appropriate role for the State to play, we just have to figure it out. Kristen asked if MW&L wants the State to take it over. If it is not economically feasible to generate power, having the State buy it represents a good and viable option.

14) EXECUTIVE SESSION:

On a **motion** by Trustee Fortune and seconded by Trustee Heanue, the board approved (4-0) to go into Executive Session at 7:05 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 7:44 PM.

11) ADJOURN REGULAR MEETING:

On a **motion** by Chairman Snipp and seconded by Trustee Heanue, the Board adjourned (4-0) the meeting at 7:45 PM.

Attest: Travis Knapp