

VILLAGE OF MORRISVILLE
WATER AND LIGHT REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

November 1, 2023,
Wednesday

5:30PM
MW&L Office

PRESENT:

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

Staff: Scott Johnstone, David Heller and Kevin Newton

Public: Tom Cloutier, Etienne Hancock, Bill Pickens, Alexander Cyr (via Zoom) and Tricia Follert (via Zoom)

1) CALL REGULAR MEETING TO ORDER:

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

2) CONSIDER AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS: None.

3) PUBLIC COMMENT:

Tom Cloutier wanted to bring up the possibility of having a discussion on a merger between the Trustees and the Town. Tom had a copy of a letter from Scott giving a history of the topic with a comment that there was no need to merge due to the cooperation between the Trustees and the Selectboard. Tom is not sure the cooperation is there at this point. Tom plans to bring the topic up to the Selectboard and he would like to see from both boards a list of the pros and cons of a merger. He would like to see this as a future Trustee agenda item to discuss the pros and cons of merging.

Alexander Cyr pointed out a typo on our YouTube page and he hoped the proposed planning changes go through without amendments.

Tricia Follert would like the Trustees to consider the Designated Downtown status of Morrisville. This status is a very good thing for a community now and would open up many more avenues for grants and funding for the community.

4) APPROVE MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING HELD OCTOBER 18, 2023:

On a **motion** by Trustee Heanue and seconded by Trustee Knapp, the board approved (5-0) the minutes of the regular meeting held on October 18, 2023.

5) CHECK REGISTERS:

On a **motion** by Trustee Fortune and seconded by Trustee Limoge, the board approved (5-0) the check registers.

6) ZONING AMENDMENTS:

On a **motion** by Trustee Heanue and seconded by Trustee Knapp, the board approved (5-0) the recommended zoning amendments.

7) VERMONT TRANSCO INVESTMENT AUTHORIZATION:

When VELCO needs to raise money for construction projects, they offer investments to each utility based on the size of the utility. The current offering to MW&L is \$256,170. Historically, we have borrowed money for these investments so this is a break-even event for MW&L while we repay the notes. Afterwards, the dividends go straight into operating cash flow. On a **motion** by Trustee Limoge and seconded by Trustee Heanue, the board authorized manager (5-0) to enter into agreements with VT Transco for investment of \$256,170 up determination that the documentation is in order. Further, authorize management to select the option to have the opportunity to accept additional investment in VT Transco if other utilities defer on their opportunity.

8) OTHER BUSINESS:

a. MWL Round Conference Room Naming Request:

Bill Pickens would like the Trustees to consider putting a plaque outside the door to the round conference room honoring Bob Page for his 30+ years of service. He came to MW&L after WWII as a plant operator and worked his way up to Manager. Bill worked for him for eleven years and he learned a lot from him. Bob & Bill had even drawn up plans for a new office complex on the very land we now occupy. During his 30+ years, he was a driving force behind Plant #3, the transmission system and switches between our system and neighboring systems.

b. Budget Drivers 2024:

Things that are driving the budget development are: labor costs keep going up, our share of the costs from the July flooding, lingering costs and lead times for materials, pole replacements and ROW maintenance, electric deficiency study, technology updates, VPPSA labor costs. On the revenue side, the water department needs a modest rate increase and we are evaluating adding a hook up fee. The sewer department needs to update the hook up fees and sewer allocation fees. That department may need a small rate increase to keep up with inflation. The electric department definitely needs to raise rates. Scott is a proponent of regular, small increases and not less frequent, bigger increases. If the State is going to keep slashing proposed rate increases (which cost MW&L a lot of money to file), the Trustees have the authority to raise the rates 2% per year with a minimal rate case, costing MW&L less.

c. Joint Meeting Follow-up discussion:

The Chairman found the meeting too formal and not conducive to discussions. Scott has heard that a lot of people feel the Trustees were not even open to a review of the Town Plan or Downtown Designation. Scott has replied to them that it is not at all what he heard at that meeting or any of our regular meetings, he doesn't have a clue where the Trustees stand on these two issues, and that the rumor of being against these items don't seem to be based on reality.

d. SQRP Review:

The Board reviewed the quarterly SQRP report.

e. Cash Flow Report:

This is our first attempt to show how we are managing the cash flow without the filed rate increase for the electric department. This was a trial run to see if this is the information the Board really wants to see. All appeared supportive of the current report.

f. Management Update:

We grabbed a “baseline” sample of waste flow from the new brewery in town a year ago. A couple of weeks ago we obtained another sample for comparison. It’s only a sample of one day so we will take random samples on random days. We are keeping a close track on water usage as a dramatic increase in water usage will signify large scale brewing has begun.

Customer work for the electric department has slowed down allowing crews to work on capital projects. The tree trimmers finished this week and completed over seven miles.

Staff continues training on Invoice Cloud for online payments.

MWL and ANR had the big meeting about dam safety with FERC. FERC was concerned because they didn’t know what the State was doing with their dam safety study and why weren’t MWL doing our own. When the State explained what their study will entail, FERC then understood why we weren’t doing our own because the State’s will cover about 75% of what our study will need to cover. The State gave their contractors nine months to complete the study. We will then have our engineers review the results and add required supplements.

Scott will put cyber security on a future agenda. We didn’t score very well but we did okay in a few policy issues. Now that the analysis has been done, we (through VPPSA) can apply to DHS for funding to address our shortfalls. About 60% of our issues are tied to one machine, our main server, which is a 2011 and not supported anymore. Our current plan is to transfer all of our mPower programs to either VPPSA or mPower and reuse the mPower server (which is newer) to replace our main server.

The battery proposal set forth by VPPSA was turned down by DOE and apparently nobody got funded. We have not heard why as DOE originally liked the proposal.

g. Any other Business to come before the meeting: None.

9) ADJOURN REGULAR MEETING:

On a **motion** by Trustee Knapp and seconded by Trustee Fortune, the Board adjourned (5-0) the meeting at 7:00 PM.

Attest: Travis Knapp, Clerk