

VILLAGE OF MORRISVILLE
WATER AND LIGHT REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

January 3, 2024
Wednesday

5:30PM
MW&L Office

PRESENT:

Trustees: Tom Snipp, Travis Knapp (late), Bob Heanue, Brad Limoge and Carl Fortune

Staff: Scott Johnstone, Penny Jones and Kevin Newton

Guest: Gary Holloway

Public: Don McDowell, Jamie Brewster

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: None.

4) APPROVE MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING HELD DECEMBER 20, 2023:

On a **motion** by Trustee Heanue and seconded by Trustee Limoge, the board approved (4-0) the minutes of the regular meeting held on December 20, 2023.

5) CHECK REGISTERS:

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

6) OTHER BUSINESS:

c. Management update:

Kevin reported that during the last round of flooding, we shut the well down before any possible inundation could occur, thereby protecting the integrity of the reservoirs. There was significant scouring of the river bank near Well #2. We need to work with the State as the rebuild of Tenny Bridge with new abutments is now causing the river to cut into our aquifer. Approximately one third to one half of the fill Grimes placed after the July flood is gone.

The new bearings for the horizontal unit at Cady's Falls are about two weeks away. The vertical should be completed in the next month or two, in time to catch spring runoff. Trustee Heanue pointed out that if Lake Lamoille, which is an artificial lake, were dredged properly, it could impound considerably more water and thereby better protect down-river towns such as Johnson from some of these floods. Scott replied that the Legislature seems to be very focused on the flood issues of the past year and to hear about solutions. While they won't likely start with that very practical and public solution, they will talk about recreating or reclaiming flood plains so it can do it "naturally" because that is what the environmentalist have told them to do. There are many of us who will go testify and harken back to the 1920's when we built most of these flood control dams and recommend dredging to reestablish the impoundments. What they will do with all that remains to be seen

The biggest focus for the office is answering phones for the new online payment platform. Our old system will be disabled on February 1.

David Heller has been doing a lot of prep to for that two-pole replacement on the transmission line in Stowe which is scheduled for the week of January 22nd. All paperwork necessary to do that project has been filed. This is a pretty important sub-transmission line in the state and it is our responsibility for replacing these poles on behalf of not only our customers but customers across the state. This will require an outage on this line for approximately two days that we are coordinating with VELCO to work around.

Scott attended a VPPSA meeting today and there has been a lot of discussions regarding all of the policy changes coming from the State. They are all likely going to happen this year. VPPSA had agreed to have the members be more involved in the process with the staff at VPPSA this year with creating a Legislative Committee to look at all of these renewable energy standards, low-income energy bill subsidies, etc. It could make a difference in just how expensive electricity gets in Vermont.

a. Downtown Designation Discussion:

Gary Holloway, Downtown Program Manager with the Department of Housing, Community Development, was in attendance to give an overview of the program, explain the benefits, explain the requirements and to answer any questions of the Board.

b. Draft Budget 2024:

The Board reviewed an update of the Water Department budget reflecting a recommended 5% rate increase effective April 1st. The Electric Department budget is extremely complex, with ever-increasing costs and State requirements, being hindered by the State to raise rates for infrastructure costs until 1½ years later and, therefore, constantly running a deficit. This year's budget is in need of about a 10% rate increase which the State will never approve because they are "current" costs. So, we are modelling the 2% local control rate increase effective April 1st and 5% approved by the State effective October 1st (5% is only a guess as to what will be approved). Cash flow will be a problem for the foreseeable future. Currently, our rates are the 5th lowest in the state. With even a 10% increase this year and possibly 10% next year, we will still be around 10th in the state and less than the state average.

d. Any other Business to come before the meeting: We will begin work on the Management Report and Dedication for the Annual Report. At the next meeting, Bill Pickens and Bob Page's sons will be in attendance to unveil the plaque on the conference room.

7) EXECUTIVE SESSION: None.

8) ADJOURN REGULAR MEETING:

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

Attest: Bob Heanue, Clerk