

VILLAGE OF MORRISVILLE
WATER AND LIGHT REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

January 17, 2024
Wednesday

5:30PM
MW&L Office

PRESENT:

Trustees: Tom Snipp, Bob Heanue, Brad Limoge and Carl Fortune

Staff: Scott Johnstone, Penny Jones, Kevin Newton and David Heller

Guest: Tom Page, Richard Page and Bill Pickens

Public: Alex Cyr (via Zoom) and Peter Bourne

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) CONFERENCE ROOM DEDICATION:

The meeting moved temporarily outside of the conference room for the dedication of the conference room to Robert Page. Many thanks to Bill Pickens for the suggestion of the dedication of this room to the Board's attention and thanks to the relatives of Bob Page who are in attendance tonight. Recently the Village Trustees voted to dedicate the "round room" as the Bob Page Conference Room. Bob was a long-time employee at Water & Light, dedicating a good portion of his work life to service to our community, a portion of this service was as head Manager here. During his request for recognition of Bob Page, Bill Pickens shared with us all that in addition to his many good works here, the idea and concept of our new offices was instigated by Bob. While at the time they rejected the site due to worry about environmental contamination, they came up with a plan for a new building that didn't work out. But this building is kind of what they envisioned. In light of the many years of service to the Village, his tenure as Manager and his vision that became this facility, the Village Trustees voted to name this conference room the Bob Page Conference Room. The inscription on the plaque reads as follows: "Bob Page Conference Room: This conference room is dedicated to Bob Page in appreciation for his long tenure of leadership at Morrisville Water & Light. Among his many accomplishments, Mr. Page began the process of finding a new home for MWL – a process which concluded with the construction of this facility." On behalf of Tom and the other members of the family, Richard Page, thanked the "Commissioners" for bestowing this honor on Dad and he was sure he would be pleased. He especially wanted to thank William (Pickens) for his efforts in making this possible. If Dad were here, he would not have told us about this event. We would have woken up in the morning and his press agent, mother Mary, would have informed them that something went on last night. We would then have gone out and done something that would have totally embarrassed him. We appreciate this and it is a great room! Richard Page wanted to echo what Tom said and thanked Bill and the Water & Light "Commissioners" and organization. Any of the stories we could tell we wouldn't want recorded! Peter Bourne stated that Uncle Rob worked 32 years and his insight, of course he worked with

Willard (Sanders), was truly important. He thinks it's great that he gets noticed, even at this time, these old gentlemen next to me get to see some of the accolades he so richly deserved. So thank you! Tom state that when Bill was hired, Dad was quite pleased that the Commissioners at the time agreed to hire him as they were of kindred spirits. Bill Pickens worked with Bob for eleven plus years, he was his mentor as Bill came here fairly green. Bob was the type of leader that said "okay, this is what we need to do. Go do it. Let me know when you got it done." And basically stood back and let you go. "Just do your job. All you have to answer to is me" (Bob). Bill loved Bob as a gentleman and wished he had done this years ago. He thanked the Board for their help in getting it done.

Chairman Snipp thanked everyone for doing this and for their stories. Without that, we may never have known about Bob and what he had done. He thinks we owe it to the people because we have some hard workers who have been here and are still here and those people need to be recognized too. Thank you! Trustee Limoge wanted to say congratulations to everyone concerned and it was good to see the Page boys again and he really appreciated Bill's efforts in shepherding this through. It is a well-deserved tribute.

5) APPROVE MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING HELD JANUARY 3, 2024:

On a **motion** by Trustee Heanue and seconded by Trustee Limoge, the board approved (4-0) the minutes of the regular meeting held on January 3, 2024.

6) CHECK REGISTERS:

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

7) 2024 BUDGET APPROVALS:

On a **motion** by Trustee Heanue and seconded by Trustee Limoge, the board approved (4-0) the electric, water and sewer budgets for Morrisville Water & Light for 2024. On a **motion** by Trustee Heanue and seconded by Trustee Fortune, the board approved (4-0) to increase the electric rates by 2% across all tariffs. On a **motion** by Trustee Heanue and seconded by Trustee Fortune, the board approved (4-0) to increase the water rates by 5% across all tariffs (the last rate increase for water was in 2015). On a **motion** by Trustee Heanue and seconded by Trustee Limoge, the board approved (4-0) the use of the Transco dividends for 2024 (this keeps the rate increase smaller).

8) OTHER BUSINESS:

a. Annual Meeting Planning:

The Annual Village Meeting is scheduled for April 8, 2024, at the VFW. The Board needs to think about the dedication of the Annual Report. Staff suggests recently retired Frank Ferrante and the Board agreed. Did the Board want anything special on the warrant, which will need to be approved no later than at their March 6th meeting? Trustee Limoge suggested that Scott have an explanation of what we are doing and why and that 99% of it is out of our control. Trustee Fortune concurred. The Chairman wanted to include a discussion about Green River and how the State will not allow drawdowns to accommodate future flooding.

b. Management Updates:

ERG is still waiting for the bearing for the horizontal unit at Cady's Falls. They hope to be on site in March. There was a sewer backup on Brooklyn Street near Wabun Avenue that Manosh assisted with. Borings were done for the Jersey Heights pump station and they can only get down 7'11" so they are looking at Plan B. At the WWTF, the decanter valve issue caused some bugs to die off pretty badly. Dan has some to inject to reactivate the system. Logging at Bugbee Springs is proceeding well with another check delivered today. Paul Davis Restoration has quoted \$500/event for cleaning up homeless encampments on Village property. The State is still interested in fencing off this area to protect the rail trail.

The Electric Department is in the annual slow season of winter with customer work falling off. Crews are focusing on "hot spots" for ROW trimming that may not be a focus of our contractor but need attention. We've had a rash of car vs pole accidents (with a couple of them being DUI's). A customer at the airport had a secondary service fail that we were able to relocate to another transformer. We were able to contribute mutual aid for the first time in many years. We initially sent three crewmen to VEC then sent four. We sent two crews to Lyndonville. A good experience for our crews with a lot of accolades for their participation. Trustee Heanue wanted to thank all the crews for being proactive on the trimming and the maintenance, that's why we didn't have many outages. We are still working through the legal process to get access to our transmission line to Stowe to replace ancient poles. The condemnation process has officially begun.

The new InvoiceCloud payment platform is going well and we are learning a lot. The reception by the customers has been better than Penny expected. The new credit card machine is working well and actually interfaces with our billing software.

For the second time, the Vermont Law Center has made a specious filing trying to force FERC to force us to start complying with the 2016 Water Quality Permit. Everything they have filed has been asked and answered by FERC and rejected so they have basically asked for another hearing under another name, which they don't have the authority to ask for. We've tried to play nice on these types of issues but Scott has given our lawyer permission to come out swinging on this with a pretty strongly worded response that doesn't play nice at all.

c. Any other Business to come before the meeting:

The Chairman was at a recent Selectboard meeting where someone was complaining about the flags. The Chairman knows that we don't buy them, we just put them up. Is there a way that we could help fund some flags? He also knows that the Christmas lights need some updating and need to be more inclusive. Scott believes the Amy Wade funds could be used but MACC should request it. MW&L wants to stay out of the politics and just keep putting the lights up and taking them down only. Until just the last year, the Town has been very proactive in keeping the flags updated and fresh. The Chairman stated that it looks like MW&L is in charge of the decorations and to say "we just put them up and take them down" doesn't sound good. Let's see if the VFW can help with the flags.

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9) EXECUTIVE SESSION:

At 6:35 PM, on a **motion** by Trustee Heanue and seconded by Trustee Fortune, the Board (4-0) went into Executive Session to discuss item(s) excepted from open meeting – 1 VSA 313(a)(1)(E).

At 6:42 PM, on a **motion** by Trustee Heanue and seconded by Trustee Fortune, the Board (4-0) came out of Executive Session.

10) ADJOURN REGULAR MEETING:

On a **motion** by Trustee Fortune and seconded by Trustee Heanue, the Board adjourned (4-0) the meeting at 6:42 PM.

Attest: Bob Heanue, Clerk