

VILLAGE OF MORRISVILLE
WATER AND LIGHT REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

February 7, 2024
Wednesday

5:30PM
MW&L Office

PRESENT:

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

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

Guest: Sara Haskins

1) CALL REGULAR MEETING TO ORDER:

Chairman Snipp called the meeting to order at 5:31 PM.

2) CONSIDER AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS: Scott wanted to add Agenda #8a – Approval of Town Plan Revisions. On a **motion** by Trustee Heanue and seconded by Trustee Limoge, the board approved (4-0) adding Approval of Town Plan Revisions to Agenda Item #8a.

3) PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

4) APPROVE MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING HELD JANUARY 17, 2024:

On a **motion** by Trustee Heanue and seconded by Trustee Fortune, the board approved (4-0) the minutes of the regular meeting held on January 17, 2024.

5) CHECK REGISTERS:

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

6) DRB APPOINTMENTS:

The Trustees received the recommendation to appoint Donnie Blake as a full DRB member and Melissa LeBlanc as the alternate. On a **motion** by Trustee Heanue and seconded by Trustee Limoge, the board approved (4-0) the appointment of Don Blake as the new member of the DRB and Melissa LeBlanc as 1st alternate.

7) ANNUAL MEETING DATE AUTHORIZATION:

With the upcoming solar eclipse scheduled to occur on the same day as the Village Annual Meeting, emergency planners are recommending that all meetings less important than annual meetings should not be held that day. Fortunately, it turns out that the laws from Covid that say you can move the annual meeting are still on the books. So, the recommendation is to move the Village Annual Meeting from April 8th to April 17, 2024. Sara Haskins pointed out that the Town is closing their offices for the afternoon of April 8 because it is anticipated that 250,000 people will be flooding Vermont to view the eclipse. On a **motion** by Trustee Heanue and seconded by Trustee Fortune, the board approved (4-0) to move the Village Annual Meeting from April 8 to April 17, 2024, and to cancel the regularly scheduled meeting for April 17.

8) ASSET SALE AUTHORIZATION:

Per our policy, if we are going to dispense of any assets, we need a vote from the Board. We had in our budget to replace Truck #4 and Truck #5 and we have received three bids with trade-in values with a low price of \$86,000 for two trucks and includes \$14,500 for trade ins. Both trucks combined have a lot of rust. Some companies offered higher trade in values, but the overall bid was higher, too. We found someone offering the \$14,500 trade in along with a municipal discount, making their bid significantly lower than anyone else's. On a **motion** by Trustee Heanue and seconded by Trustee Limoge, the board authorized (4-0) management to sell Trucks #4 & 5 as part of the acquisition of their replacement trucks. Sale/trade in value must not be less than \$14,500 combined.

8a) APPROVE TOWN PLAN REVISIONS:

On Monday night, the Selectboard had a meeting to start the process of getting the Town Plan changed about the transportation provisions specifically. It is definitely a priority for them. The Selectboard approved the proposed changes now in front of the Trustees. Adding this tonight does not make this the Trustees' final decision. This is to get the Planning Council to do the process so that all the public hearings can happen. The final decision will be made after all public hearings. On a **motion** by Trustee Heanue and seconded by Trustee Fortune, the board accepted (4-0) the changes made by the Selectboard to the Town Plan.

9) OTHER BUSINESS:

a. Annual Meeting Planning:

Sara Haskins was in attendance to present the draft of the Village budget and the draft Warrant. Not much different other than the date now needs to be changed on the Warrant. She also changed Article #3 to match what the voters voted for Trustee salaries. She added Article #7 (Discussion of other non-binding business) at Scott's request. Travis Knapp's term is up this year. There are not a lot of changes in the budget.

b. Cybersecurity Presentation:

Most of our vulnerabilities today are in our office network, due mostly to an old server. Our old-fashioned way of manually doing things actually makes us less vulnerable but it's not going to stay that way as we upgrade our system to be able to react in "real-time".

c. SQRP Report:

The Board conducted their annual review of the Service Quality & Reliability Plan (SQRP) for 2023. We have met all of our baseline ratings and Penny is satisfied with our score. (For example, out of the 53,000+ bills we sent out, only 18 were in error.)

d. Management Updates:

Crews responded to a water leak on Congress Street near Cherry Avenue that was on our side of the curb stop. We have another one on Route 15A that still needs to be addressed. We suspected we had some leaks as gallons pumped to the reservoirs has increased. However, we have to wait for the leaks to actually surface before we can do anything. We are still waiting on ERG for repairs to the Cady's Fall vertical generator (they are waiting for parts). The last pieces are coming together and they hope to begin reassembly next month. Trustee Heanue suggested ordering spare bearings and management agreed. McCain Consulting contacted Kevin about finally developing the lots in the Sugarwoods development off Demars Road. Logging continues at Bugbee Springs.

The Line Department had a customer job at Harrison' gravel pit off McFarlane Road in Hyde Park. Seven new poles and relocated six others. The pole survey of the transmission and distribution circuits from the Garfield Road to the end of our system towards Hardwick continues. Bourne's Energy had an overloaded service we had to respond to. We had a change order for the replacement bucket truck we ordered in 2022. The International cab and chassis is not available. Kiley has located a Freightliner cab and chassis that is actually equal to, or better than, the International. Delivery is expected in the summer of 2024. Swanton just ordered two bucket trucks that will be twice as expensive and are at least two years out. Our other bucket truck is a 2013 and will probably need to be replaced within the next five years.

The new payment platform, InvoiceCloud, is still working out very well. Still taking a lot of phone calls helping customer to register. We had a customer on Maple Street complaining about high usage. After doing some research and putting a recording meter, the customer made some comments that made us realize that it was an Airbnb, not a residence and not owner-occupied. We then realized they were being bill residential instead of commercial. When Penny reached out to the customer about changing them to commercial, partially based on their website advertising the place, the customer immediately took the website down. Penny reached out to the DPS and told them she knew of at least three residences that were strictly Airbnb's, not owner-occupied. The DPS agreed they were commercial and needed to be billed as such. If an Airbnb is owner-occupied, it can stay residential.

S213 is a proposed bill that includes a change in the liability of dam owners from general to specific. It would mean we'd be liable for any impact traced back to one of our dams, even is we are not allowed to act by federal and state permits. This is very serious. BED testified yesterday that they would be uninsurable if passed. If this passed, Scott would feel compelled to come to the Board and ask for a bond issue to remove all three dams. It may cost \$10-15 million to remove all three dams. However, if Green River failed and we were held responsible for all damage between Hyde Park and Colchester, you would be looking at \$100's of millions. We would not be able to get insurance! And our financial backstop is the residents of the Village of Morrisville, not the Town or our rate payers. Scott is hoping that cooler heads will prevail. Flexible load management will be needed as we electrify everything but don't beef up the system to handle it. The State and Efficiency Vermont are in cahoots to have EV do that work (flexible load management). Scott has nothing against Efficiency Vermont but this is much different than energy efficiency. The success of flexible load management will almost entirely determine our electric rates. Most people do not understand that most of our transmission rates are driven by one second of peak energy per year. If we lose control of that, and Efficiency Vermont has always had a history of putting most of their efforts where they can meet their goals the quickest, which is always Chittenden County, our rates will skyrocket.

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

10) EXECUTIVE SESSION: None.

11) ADJOURN REGULAR MEETING:

On a **motion** by Trustee Knapp and seconded by Trustee Heanue, the Board adjourned (5-0) the meeting at 6:52 PM.

Attest: Bob Heanue, Clerk