

VILLAGE OF MORRISVILLE  
WATER AND LIGHT REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

January 5, 2022  
Wednesday

5:30PM  
MW&L Office

PRESENT:

Trustees: Carl Fortune, Tom Snipp and Bob Heanue

Staff: Penny Jones, Kevin Newton, Todd Thomas

Absent: Todd Deuso, Brad Limoge

Public: Ron Stancliff, Laura Street, Wayne Elliot (via Zoom), Etienne Hancock (via Zoom) and Tommy Gardner (via Zoom)

1) CALL REGULAR MEETING TO ORDER:

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

2) CONSIDER AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS:

None.

3) APPROVE MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING HELD DECEMBER 15, 2021:

On a **motion** by Trustee Snipp and seconded by Trustee Heanue, the board approved (3-0) the minutes of the regular meeting held on December 15, 2021.

4) APPROVE CHECK REGISTERS 12/16, 12/28 & 12/30:

On a **motion** by Trustee Heanue and seconded by Trustee Snipp, the board approved (3-0) check registers 12/16, 12/28 & 12/30.

5) APPROVE STATE REVOLVING LOAN FUND APPLICATION:

Wayne Elliot (Aldrich & Elliot or A&E) was in attendance via Zoom. The state has a 100% loan forgiveness program available for water infrastructure. Penny reminded the Board at the last trustee meeting staff discussed wanting to GPS the water infrastructure such as water lines, curb valves, etc. The State is only giving out five awards up to \$50,000 each and it is first-come, first-served. With the assistance of A&E we submitted an application and now we need authorization for the loan. It does not require Village approval as it is for engineering services. On a **motion** by Trustee Heanue and seconded by Trustee Snipp, the board approved (3-0) the State Revolving Loan Fund application.

6) AUTHORIZE MANAGER TO SIGN THE ENGINEERING SERVICES AGREEMENT, CONTINGENT UPON STATE APPROVAL:

On a **motion** by Trustee Heanue and seconded by Trustee Snipp, the board authorized (3-0) the Manager to sign the Engineering Services Agreement, contingent upon State approval.

7) OTHER BUSINESS:

- a. Management Update. Trustee Snipp verified that the work being done by Plant #2 off Bridge Street was to repair the back spillway that let go. This work is complete. Sub #3 energization preparation consists of making sure that everything we need to switch back to Sub #3 is in place or on hand. We are also working out a procedure to easily switch loads from Sub #3 to Sub #5, and back, so either substation can carry our load if necessary. Rich Westman informed Penny that Governor Scott has added \$350,000 into the mid-year adjustment budget to be allocated for the dam stability analysis at Green River. At today's VPPSA meeting, a couple of topics were

discussed. The State is pushing for utilities to offer a low-income rate. The discussion at VPPSA was whether we wanted to handle this at the VPPSA level or individually at the utility level or whether we wanted the State to handle it. The consensus was to handle it at the VPPSA level or utility level so that we would be collecting the money and giving it out. It may be a lot of work administratively but the VPPSA group wanted to avoid sending the money to a third party like we do for the energy efficiency charge. However, VPPSA is questioning whether the PUC even has the authority to set low-income rates. VPPSA feels they have the authority to approve them but not set them. Another topic was between the VHFA (incorrectly stated at the meeting as USDA) and Efficiency Vermont, they are looking at ways that a customer could borrow money from the VHFA for electrification projects but MW&L would collect the loan payments for the VHFA through our electric bills. It would be set up so that if anybody applies for a loan, the loan would stay with the property/meter, not the applicant. Also, if the homeowner defaults, MW&L would not be financially responsible to repay that loan. Trustee Heanue asked if we could tack on an administrative fee. Penny did not know about the low-income rate but it was discussed with the VHFA/EV loan program. They don't have all the details worked out yet so Penny cannot determine how much administrative time would be needed. Budget work is still ongoing. Jim has prepared the Capital budget and the transmission and distribution budget that Penny needs to review. The computer server issues have finally been resolved. Because this is the first year that we have over 25 people receiving checks (employees and Trustees), we have to file the W2's electronically so that still needs work. We have a server upgrade for our outage software scheduled for January but we may delay until February.

- b. Any other Business to come before the meeting. Businesses that have a pre-treatment permit with the State have to submit a monthly report and we have not been receiving the report from one of those businesses. Our consultants reminded Penny that, per the permit, the business is required to get the reports to us.

8) PUBLIC COMMENTS ON "TOWN PLAN":

The Chairman opened the meeting to public comments on the Board's regular meeting before comments on the Town Plan. It was asked if there is any plan to go to smart meters. Penny informed that no member of VPPSA have smart meters so VPPSA is working on this project for all its members. MWL hopes to put something in our budget for this in 2023. We are trying to get some funding to help with the projected \$1.2 million cost of smart meters. Todd Thomas informed the Board that the Copley Country Club was looking for bids to replace the decking of the club house, redo the floors and build a longer bar area inside. They are hoping to get funding from the Copley Fund.

Todd Thomas briefly took everyone through the changes to the Town Plan. The Selectboard wanted to replace references to Alexander Street with several options for access from Elmore Street to alleviate congestion at the bottom of Copley Avenue. The Selectboard also wanted to delete language in the plan regarding "trailer parks". Todd pointed out that Pinecrest Trailer Park is a much bigger draw on municipal resources than any other 35+ home subdivision. More time for the Health Officer (Todd), police, and collections for MW&L. Penny verified sometimes we have to send two employees for collections in that area. The Town Plan originally was trying to avoid similar projects. However, the state wants to treat all housing ambiguously. If we want to get this plan accepted by the State and get

Downtown Designation again, the language had to be removed. The river corridor regulations have been removed. Chairman Fortune moved to approve the red-line version of the Town Plan as written seconded by Trustee Snipp. Ron Stancliff has observed the predicament the Village has with excess lands but he is more upset about the possibility of trying to expand the Village limits. He is against development because he looks at the resources today that will not be there in the future. He is also disappointed that no Village residents showed up for this meeting. Laura Streets contests the paragraph about giving the power to charge town non-users a fee to subsidize the Village WWTF. As a town resident, she has a new neighbor installing a septic system for \$30,000. She and all her neighbors have to pay to maintain their own septic systems. She finds it absolutely unacceptable that the Town folks should pay a WWTF fee to shop at Hannaford's. She will shop at Shaw's in Stowe instead and not pay for Stowe's WWTF. Septic costs are a cost of doing business and businesses collect that cost through their pricing. They are not paying for her septic. Laura noted that Wally Reeve pointed out in last night's Selectboard meeting that the State identifies that the users should pay for the septic. Town residents are not users so they should not have this fee. Trustee Snipp pointed out that this idea originated with the Planning Commission, not the Trustees. She is not trying to place blame, she wants the whole paragraph removed! Trustee Heanue asked Penny if she knew anything about a surcharge on the power bills for this. In Penny's opinion, this is basically saying the Town is going to take over the Sewer Department. That is the only way that Town residents would get a sewer charge. It would not be a surcharge on a power bill. It would be the Town of Morristown is going to own the sewer plant, own the Sewer Department and that's how it would be billed. The Trustees pointed out that the language in the original plan about the Town taking over the Sewer Department was deleted but this paragraph still remains. Todd pointed out that Penny was correct in that only the Town can tax town residents. If the Selectboard wanted to make a contribution to the Sewer Department for upgrades, they could rely on this to do so. On a **motion** by Chairman Fortune and seconded by Trustee Snipp, the Board amended (3-0) the original motion to completely delete the paragraph about billing town residents for sewer. On a **motion** by Chairman Fortune and seconded by Trustee Snipp, the Board approved (3-0) the amended motion to accept the red-line version of the Town Plan minus the paragraph on page 23 about billing town residents for sewer.

On a **motion** by Chairman Fortune and seconded by Trustee Heanue, the board approved (3-0) to adjourned the public hearing for public comments on the Town Plan at 6:57 PM.

9) EXECUTIVE SESSION:

At 7:03 PM, on a **motion** by Trustee Snipp and seconded by Trustee Heanue, the board approved (3-0) to go into executive session to discuss **a**) 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 and to discuss **b**) item(s) excepted from open meeting per Title 1 VSA § 313 (a)(1)(B), labor relations agreements with employees. The board came out of executive session at 7:31 PM.

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10) ADJOURN REGULAR MEETING:

On a **motion** by Trustee Heanue and seconded by Trustee Snipp, the board approved (3-0) to adjourned the meeting at 7:31 PM.

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Attest: Tom Snipp