

VILLAGE OF MORRISVILLE
WATER AND LIGHT REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

June 1, 2022
Wednesday

5:30PM
MW&L Office

PRESENT:

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

Staff: Penny Jones, Kevin Newton, Pete Crowley

Guest: Sara Haskins

Absent: Todd Deuso

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 MAY 18, 2022:

On a **motion** by Trustee Heanue and seconded by Trustee Limoge, the board approved (4-0) the minutes of the regular meeting held on May 18, 2022.

4) APPROVE CHECK REGISTERS 5/23 & 5/25:

On a **motion** by Trustee Heanue and seconded by Trustee Snipp, the board approved (4-0) check registers 5/23 & 5/25.

5) APPROVE PLANNING COMMISSION APPOINTMENT:

On a **motion** by Trustee Snipp and seconded by Chairman Fortune, the board approved (3-1) the appointment of John Meyers to the Planning Commission.

6) OTHER BUSINESS:

a. Management Update. Sub #3 is completely done. Sub #5 will be our next project. The apprentices are getting a lot of necessary hours towards their certifications. The tree trimming company we contracted with last fall cannot get qualified (certified) personnel. They are falling behind and we may have to contract with someone else. Trustee Limoge asked why we cannot brush hog the ROW's to cut down on the amount of tree trimming needed. Pete replied that the lack of adequate ROW easements hinders that. Most easements are 25 feet (12 ½ feet on either side of the line) which doesn't leave much room. Then there are the people who do not want their trees cut at all. Using a brush hog is a great idea in theory but in most places it cannot happen. The Fairwood Parkway West water extension will begin 6/2/22. There will be minimal number of customers affected. There are 3 nesting loon pairs at Green River and Zackwoods so we are generating only to maintain the water levels 3-5 inches below the spillway. Penny attended a CFO forum that will be calling for an equity call but not until next year (this is how Vermont Transco raises money and keep their debt-to-equity ratio in line). Tricia Follert contacted Penny about painting the surge tank at Plant #1 by a group from the Helen Day Art Center. Penny let them know we would need to see a draft before the work was started. Chairman Fortune asked about insurance. The deadline for the sewer pretreatment grants that Rock Art and Soulmate Brewing were looking for was pushed off until sometime in August. No progress yet on the new BOD rates. Trustee Heanue just saw a proposal about limiting the number of boards one person can be on at any one time and asked why we didn't introduce this as an article at the Village meeting and let the voters decide. Penny replied that it is part of our charter so any action taken would have to be done legislatively. We had a

customer for the third time over a 2-3 year period who was disconnected for non-payment jump his electric meter. The police can't do anything because they cannot prove he jumped his own meter. Penny spoke with the DPS and they said we could go to the PUC and ask for permission to charge this customer more for disconnects/reconnects if we have to send a line crew out to disconnect at the transformer. Penny is going to start the process to get a new tariff for disconnect/reconnect fees under special circumstances such as theft of services.

b. Review Draft Conflict of Interest Policy. Penny took the VLCT template and tweaked it a bit. The Selectboard has one that is basically the same thing. The Board needs more time to read through it although it seems pretty boiler-plate. Penny will provide a red-line version for the next meeting.

c. Village Meeting. Sara Haskins handed out a draft timeline of all the statutory deadlines that need to be met before the Village meeting, a draft warning that cannot be finalized for at least another month and a proposed budget. Trustee Heanue proposed a higher trustee compensation. Penny feels that the Trustees should get the same as the Selectboard and the School Board (\$1500). Trustee Heanue suggested that it should be left up to the voters to either approve the article at \$2400 or not. The proposed budget is up 7.2%. The Board needs to give some thought about the dedication of the report. We also added some funds to cover a portion of the training courses for the Village Clerk and her staff. There are two new articles on the Warning. Articles #6 and #7 would establish a reserve fund for unallocated funds. In 2014 there was an Article to provide seed-money for a BIPED Committee. There is a little over \$1100 left in this fund after the BIPED Committee dissolved itself. We could just put that money in the Special Projects fund as the BIPED Committee is dissolved or, because the Article in 2014 raised the money specifically for the BIPED Committee, we could ask voter's permission to move the funds to the Special Projects fund. The Trustees agreed to just move the funds into the Special Projects fund. Penny will put this on the next agenda. Penny pointed out that we only budgeted \$500 for the Special Projects fund and that we have a little over \$2000 left over from the sale of the Bridge St land after giving \$10,000 to Copley Country Club for the floor refurbishment. The \$2400 Verizon lease at Copley Country Club went into the Amy Wade fund for 2022 but the Trustees can tell Penny whether it should go to the Amy Wade fund or the Special Projects fund. Penny will request at the next meeting to move it to the special projects fund. Penny wants to get a legal opinion on the Amy Wade funds, as it is important to know whether we can or cannot spend that money. We have a verbal from lawyers saying we can spend down to the original principal of the fund but Penny wants it in writing. Sara removed the question that was controversial from last year about the Trustees being held liable. Trustee Snipp felt that, in light of getting through the pandemic, the dedication should be to the entire crew and staff for keeping the lights on and the toilets flushing through COVID. The Warning has to be statutorily finalized after Sunday, June 26th and before July 8th so the board will have to have a meeting the first week of July.

d. Monthly VPPSA meeting Update. Barton will be looking for some help possibly through mutual-aid. They do not have a manager (Crystal Currier of VPPSA has been filling in) and the Barton Board Chair had been playing a more hands-on role. When the vote went to not sell, he stepped back leaving Crystal on her own to run it. VEC is only doing trouble calls and meter reading so Barton may be looking at getting some help from the various utilities with customer installs and line extensions. John Morley (Orleans), Ken Nolan (VPPSA) and Crystal will be putting together a schedule as to whether or not there is a listing of customers that are ready for installs. We are trying to prove that being a member of VPPSA and being a public utility is helpful. VPPSA did put in a motion to reconsider to the PUC that they do not have authority to institute or implement a state-wide low-income rate that got filed last week. They are working with AMI and Aclara says with the delayed timeline there will be some cost increases and supply chain issues. Penny will leave it up to the new Manager, Scott Johnstone, to finalize the agreements with VPPSA for the AMI project. Morrisville has set up a payment plan with VPPSA for purchased power to cover the spikes this winter. Penny fully expects to ask the Trustees for funds from the Green River funds

to cover cost overruns on the B22 rebuild and Sub #3 rebuild. Trustee Limoge asked if VPPSA penalizes us for being late on payments. They have not assessed any penalty yet. When they do, we could ask the VPPSA board for a waiver. As we have not had a rate increase in 12 years, there was a brief discussion about a rate increase, which will be needed.

e. Any other Business to come before the meeting. In light of the recent mass shootings, Trustee Snipp asked where we stand on office security procedures. Penny is definitely on board for more training but is not in favor of locking the office. She is not sure if we can implement a no-gun zone policy.

7) PUBLIC COMMENTS: None.

8) EXECUTIVE SESSION: None

9) ADJOURN REGULAR MEETING:

On a **motion** by Trustee Limoge and seconded by Trustee Snipp, the board approved (4-0) to adjourn the meeting at 7:36 PM.

Attest: Tom Snipp