

VILLAGE OF MORRISVILLE
WATER AND LIGHT REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

July 6, 2022
Wednesday

5:30PM
MW&L Office

PRESENT:

Trustees: Carl Fortune, Tom Snipp, Robert Heanue (via Zoom) and Brad Limoge

Staff: Scott Johnstone, Penny Jones, Kevin Newton, Pete Crowley

Guest: Sara Haskins (late)

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 JUNE 15, 2022:

On a **motion** by Trustee Limoge and seconded by Trustee Heanue, the board approved (3-0) the minutes of the regular meeting held on June 15, 2022.

4) APPROVE CHECK REGISTERS:

On a **motion** by Trustee Limoge and seconded by Trustee Heanue, the board approved (3-0) check registers.

5) APPROVE VILLAGE MEETING WARNING:

Tabled until the Village Clerk could be in attendance.

6) APPROVE VILLAGE GENERAL GOVERNMENT PROPOSED BUDGET:

Tabled until the Village Clerk could be in attendance.

7) APPROVE CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY:

Trustee Limoge pointed out a small change in Article 11a, fourth line, change “in its discretion” to “at their discretion”. On a **motion** by Trustee Limoge and seconded by Trustee Heanue, the board approved (3-0) Conflict of Interest Policy as amended.

6) APPROVE VILLAGE GENERAL GOVERNMENT PROPOSED BUDGET:

The amount for the audit was increased by \$100. On a **motion** by Trustee Limoge and seconded by Trustee Snipp, the board approved (3-0) Village General Government Proposed Budget as amended.

5) APPROVE VILLAGE MEETING WARNING:

On a **motion** by Trustee Snipp and seconded by Trustee Limoge, the board approved (3-0) Village Meeting Warning.

8) OTHER BUSINESS:

a. Management Update. Scott wanted to acknowledge all of the work that Penny has been doing covering both the Manager’s position and the Controller’s position, along with transitioning Scott into his new role as Manager. Scott did not want to repeat the written reports from the department managers but pointed out they are happy to answer any questions. As he has become familiar with the utility, the services we provide, and all the wonderful staff, he was impressed with our level of service and our low

cost of services and said it spoke well of years of hard work. He hasn't found any "OMG" issues but is working on a list of not-so-critical things to do.

Penny pointed out that we had another incident of "theft of service" recently. Our attorney stated that our Terms & Conditions allow us to bill some extra costs for theft. Our rates are at a break-even point and a rate increase will be necessary so we can update our Terms & Conditions at the same time. VPPSA has said to expect 5-7% increase in purchasing power from the pool largely due to the cost of getting natural gas into New England. This places even more pressure on keeping up our level of internal hydro generation. Scott has reached out to several of the players in the relicensing of our hydro to meet and get their input in order to chart a path forward.

Pete mentioned that customer jobs have slowed down but not dried up completely. This is allowing him to catch up while still learning the system.

Kevin said we got the asbestos testing back from the former Grist Mill and it was clean. The roll-off has been delivered. The Town Crew pulled out and separated all the timbers and metal. MPD and State Police went through the debris as it was pulled out and found nothing. Blow & Cote has a longer excavator and will be on site with MPD and State Police on Friday to finish. Once MPD and State Police have completed their investigation, Cote will fill the deepest part with riprap, cover it, and neaten the site up. No impact from the fire on Hutchins Street as the sprinkler system had not been charged yet. John Tilton has been digging through old Willard Sanders' drawings and maps and is working with A&E to GPS all the gate valves and other water infrastructure.

As part of the NEPPA Line Apprentice program, our apprentices attended the recent NEPPA Apprentice Rodeo. Pat Sikora came in 1st place overall. He placed 1st on several various sessions and drills and Mike Leriche came in 2nd on one of the sessions. Trustee Snipp thinks it should be in the newspaper!

Nothing new to report on Soulmate Brewing – still awaiting permits. RAB Consulting is representing us and is in contact with the State.

b. Village Meeting. Penny is preparing the Manager's Report and will send it to the Board for review. The Audit has been completed and Penny just needs to write the Management discussion and analysis. The Annual Report has not included the audit for a few years, only a link to our website. Our audit firm says that we will have to return to the April timeframe for our Village Meeting but they will not have the staff to complete the audit before that deadline. We will simply publish the audit on our website as soon as it is available. Our Village Charter states the Annual Meeting will be the second week of April. Governor Scott allowed that to be changed on a temporary basis due to Covid so it is expected that the Village Meeting for 2023 will be in April again.

c. Trustee Vacancy. We had one response to the advertisement of a vacancy on the Board of Trustees. Travis Knapp applied and was in attendance to answer any questions. Travis has been a Village resident for 10 years and wants to support the community.

d. Any other Business to come before the meeting. The Board wants to cancel the regular meeting scheduled for July 20th.

9) PUBLIC COMMENTS: Greg Varnet owns property adjacent to Village property on Park Street. The pins between his property and Village property have been removed over the course of the last 50 years either due to construction on the RailTrail or flood damage, or both. His surveyor could not find the pins but her survey shows one of the pins in the river, possibly due to erosion. John Tilton remembers seeing the pin at one time. As the existing boundary line has been established since 1971, he would like a letter from the Trustees agreeing on this boundary in its current location. This would not be a lot line adjustment, just a reestablishment of the lot line. The Trustees would like to see the final survey before signing off on it.

David Ring has been a Village resident since 1992. When he arrived, we had summer and winter rates. Since 2008 we have one rate. A few years after that, we had rate increases for sewer. He feels the rates are astronomical for doing nothing but flushing the toilet with that water. In the summer he ends up paying for water that is used for gardens and does not go to the WWTF. He would like to see something done for those using just the water, not the WWTF. He doesn't mind paying WWTF charges for the water going down the drain. He feels there are a lot fewer people growing gardens in the Village for that reason. He also knows a lot of people that are flushing anything they can down the drain because they are paying for it. He feels it would go a long way for some people in the Village to get some break from the WWTF charges for a few months in the summer. Maybe a separate meter on an outside spicket. It doesn't take much to read another meter! Trustee Snipp agreed it would be nice for people to see what they are using for their gardens but now you are talking about the extra cost to have a meter installed in the spring and removed in the fall, in addition to the cost of the meter. Scott would like our staff to explore the best practices and costs. He would also like to see if a customer will actually save money with a separate meter when you factor in the cost of the meter and the seasonal installation/removal thereof. The math had been looked at (ten years ago) and the payback was somewhere along the lines of four years – not economically feasible. David is also concerned with the tremendous amount of growth in the Village and the effect on the capacity of the WWTF. He also asked for clarification on the vacancy on the Board of Trustees. David also offered some historical documents to MW&L for displaying. The Board recommended that if these documents are truly historical, they should be professionally conserved and offered to the Town Clerk. The Museum is swamped.

10) EXECUTIVE SESSION:

On a **motion** by Trustee Snipp and seconded by Trustee Limoge, the board approved (3-0) to go into Executive Session at 6:51 PM for a discussion of 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. Executive Session ended at 7:12 PM. On a **motion** by Trustee Limoge and seconded by Trustee Snipp, the Board approved (3-0) Travis Knapp to fill the vacant Trustee position until the next annual Village Meeting.

11) ADJOURN REGULAR MEETING:

Chairman Fortune adjourned the meeting at 7:15 PM.

Attest: Tom Snipp