

VILLAGE OF MORRISVILLE  
WATER AND LIGHT REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

December 7, 2022  
Wednesday

5:30PM  
MW&L Office

PRESENT:

Trustees: Travis Knapp, Robert Heanue, Brad Limoge and Carl Fortune

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

Guest: Todd Thomas

Public: Jennifer Faith, Duane Sprague, Brian Hamer, Damon Lee, Tommy Gardner

Absent: Tom Snipp

1) CALL REGULAR MEETING TO ORDER:

Trustee Knapp called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

2) CONSIDER AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS:

None.

3a) APPROVE MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING HELD NOVEMBER 16, 2022:

On a **motion** by Trustee Heanue and seconded by Trustee Fortune, the board approved (4-0) the minutes of the regular meeting held on November 16, 2022.

3b) APPROVE MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING HELD NOVEMBER 30, 2022:

On a **motion** by Trustee Heanue and seconded by Trustee Fortune, the board approved (4-0) the minutes of the special meeting held on November 30, 2022.

4) CHECK REGISTERS (ACTION):

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

5) ZONING/PLANNING SERVICES REIMBURSEMENT (ACTION):

This is a bi-annual reimbursement. On a **motion** by Trustee Limoge and seconded by Trustee Heanue, the board authorized (4-0) the reimbursement of zoning/planning services.

6) ZONING AMENDMENTS (ACTION):

This is the final version after amendments were suggested at the joint Special meeting of the Trustees and the Selectboard. The Selectboard has adopted the changes recommended at that meeting. On a **motion** by Trustee Heanue and seconded by Trustee Limoge, the board authorized (4-0) to approve the zoning amendment changes as proposed that omit the new steep slope regulations in revised section 342, wholly omitting subsection c from section 51055 density clause.

Todd Thomas asked if the Trustees would care to direct the Town toward any work items for 2023 – a “to-do list”. The Trustees tabled the request.

7) OTHER BUSINESS:

- a. 2023 Budget Draft, presentation and discussion.

Staff has been working on budgets and rate increases. The budget is not yet ready for a big presentation. Scott hopes to have this ready for the December 21<sup>st</sup> meeting. The work to-date on the rate increase has been significant and at every turn, every price goes up. When you get ready to file for a rate

case, you have to have a test year. For us the test year will be 2021 because 2022 is not done. So, all, or most, of the cost increases we have seen in 2022 are not necessarily eligible to be considered for a rate increase even though they have been substantiated. However, many of them are included because they are “known and measurable”. There are still some that are significant, that are not known and measurable, and that are still going to hit us next year. A good example is insurance. Our insurance is going from approximately \$40-50,000 up to possibly \$120,000. Trustee Heanue asked why. In part, because our facilities have not been re-evaluated for their appraisal since Penny started. PURMA did that this year for all of the utilities that are part of the PURMA program. MW&L will file with the DPS who will in turn make a recommendation to the PUC. As the consumer advocate, the DPS almost always find somewhere to cut your request down. We originally were looking at an 8% rate increase but that would not leave enough operating budget for day-to-day operations. VPPSA is recommending 14%. Scott & Penny feel that is too high. If we try to keep the rate below 10%, we may have to tap into the Green River fund or assign some of the VTTransco funds for operations. Trustee Limoge has a problem dipping into the Green River fund which has always been historically used for capital expenses or VTTransco stock. And it’s great that we haven’t had a rate increase in 12 years but our infrastructure has suffered.

b. Electric System Deficiencies Study.

PLM was hired to find deficiencies in our electric system. Scott has a plan to slowly increase the planned expenditures around their areas of concern. We have also asked PLM to look at what we have to do to meet the possible State policy of total electrification. There was a brief discussion about right-of-way easements.

c. 2023 Winter Readiness update and discussion.

ISO-NE is publicly saying everything is fine but are asking all utilities to be prepared for rolling blackouts. Backups generation in New England are coal, oil and diesel plants but fuel stockpiles are only at about 50%. An extended cold snap in southern New England will cause a severe shortage. This will be resolved in approximately 10 years as other generation sources come on line. Our plan is to generate as much as possible with our hydro which is the equivalent of shedding load. ISO-NE and VELCO agree! We will pay more in staffing to make sure our hydros keep running 24/7 but we would not be required to have rolling blackouts. We would still have to ask our customers to conserve power and run stand-by generators, if possible. We may have to look at an interruptible rate in the future. We should have 1-6 days’ notice of rolling blackouts. California made this work this past year as they were only hours from blackouts. And even though our customers will not see blackouts, we are still going to have to ask them to conserve. We need to prepare some messaging for our customers, some FAQ’s for staff, training for crews to know which switches need to be opened or closed, and training for plant operators to keep the generators running 24/7.

d. Management Update.

ERG is coming up to look at Cady’s Falls to give us an estimate of how much it will cost to rebuild one of the units next summer. They will also look at the 600 kW unit at Plant #2.

We are receiving bids for tree trimming for 2023. Pete is also busy with end of year processes. We sold our old transformers to Barton Electric.

Penny is working on the rate case and budgets. The new lighting for the shop and office has been just about completed.

Scott had a good meeting with the Friends of Green River Reservoir and they expressed their support for our current efforts to find a resolution. We approved a budget for VPPSA for 2023.

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

8) PUBLIC COMMENT:

None

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9) EXECUTIVE SESSION:  
None

10) ADJOURN REGULAR MEETING:

On a **motion** by Trustee Heanue and seconded by Trustee Limoge, the Board adjourned (4-0) the meeting at 7:04 PM.

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Attest: Robert Heanue