

DORSET FIRE DISTRICT #1

PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE REPORT



RECOGNITION

All our Firefighters

- led by Alan Casey, Fire Chief

Exiting Prudential Board members

- Jack Stannard - 50 years of service with the water system
- Jean Kingston

Rob Gaiotti: Dorset Town Manager

- grant application & dry hydrant process
- regularly attends our meetings and provides input

PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE

Milton McWayne: Chairman

- 3 year term, expires 5/17
- Milton.McWayne@vermont.gov

Open Seat

- 3 year term

Abbott de Rham

- 1 year term, expires 5/16
- abbot@derham.com

Open Seat

- 1 year term

Ben Weiss

- 1 year term, expires 5/16
- zoomtext@gmail.com

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Held series of meetings with town and East Dorset fire district

Approved proposal for water system engineering study

By-law revisions to accommodate fire tax equalization

6 dry hydrant sites identified

DISTRICT CHALLENGES

1. Water shortages during dry seasons
2. Fire tax inequity with East Dorset
3. Sub-par ISO firefighting rating
4. Water fees are not linked to water usage
5. Antiquated communication with water user

1. Water Shortages

Dorset water system

- Kellogg Springs supply water to reservoir
- 205,000 gallon covered reservoir, 250 feet above village
- 201 households and businesses are hooked to system

Last summer's water shortage

- springs production dropped to 85 GPM
- reservoir low was less than 6 inches (11 feet deep when full)
- water restrictions in place for 8 weeks

Proposal: Supplemental Water Supply

Water system engineering study has commenced (Kepler Consulting)

- map and inventory the system infrastructure
- plan to create adequate water supply (both potable and firefighting)
- update operating procedures of district
- develop funding strategies

Preliminary thoughts on supplementing the water supply

- drill a well to tap into local aquifer
- add additional springs to existing system

2. Fire Tax Inequity with East Dorset

Dorset and East Dorset fire departments serve entire town
Fire tax rate per \$100 of property value...

- Dorset: \$0.0409 (\$122 tax on a \$300,000 property)
- East Dorset: \$0.08 (\$240 tax on a \$300,000 property)

Fire tax differences due to sizes of grand lists, not budgets

- East Dorset's fire budget is generally 60-65% of Dorset's

Proposal: Contract Services with Town

Town would contract with both districts for fire services

Fire taxes would be incorporated in property taxes

Joint budgeting process between both departments

- will allow coordination of major purchases, such as firetrucks

Increase \$0.01/\$100 (*rough estimate*) to district tax payers

- \$30 for \$300,000 property

Benefits on contracting fire services with town...

- savings in administration costs
- fire tax portion of property tax bill spread over two payments

3. Subpar ISO Protection Rating

Insurance Service Office (ISO) rates fire safety

- Public protection ratings from 10 to 1 (1 being the best)

Based 50% on fire department, 40% water supply, 10% dispatch

Dorset has not requested ISO testing for many years

Hydrants painted black due to state's requirement for larger mains

- Vermont requires 8 inch water mains (currently 4 and 6 inch)
- mains are otherwise in good operating condition (pig iron)

Increases in homeowner insurance should be expected

- local agent has reported one company has “discovered” black hydrants

Proposal: Portable Water Tanks

Black hydrants can be used through an indirect system

- hydrants fill portable water tanks
- firetrucks pump water out of portable tanks

System needs to be demonstrated to ISO to improve rating

Disadvantages of upgrading main supply lines...

- multi-million dollar project
- direct usage of upgraded system could still cause backflow issues

Portable Water Tank



Proposal: Dry Hydrants

Non-pressurized pipe system installed in ponds and streams

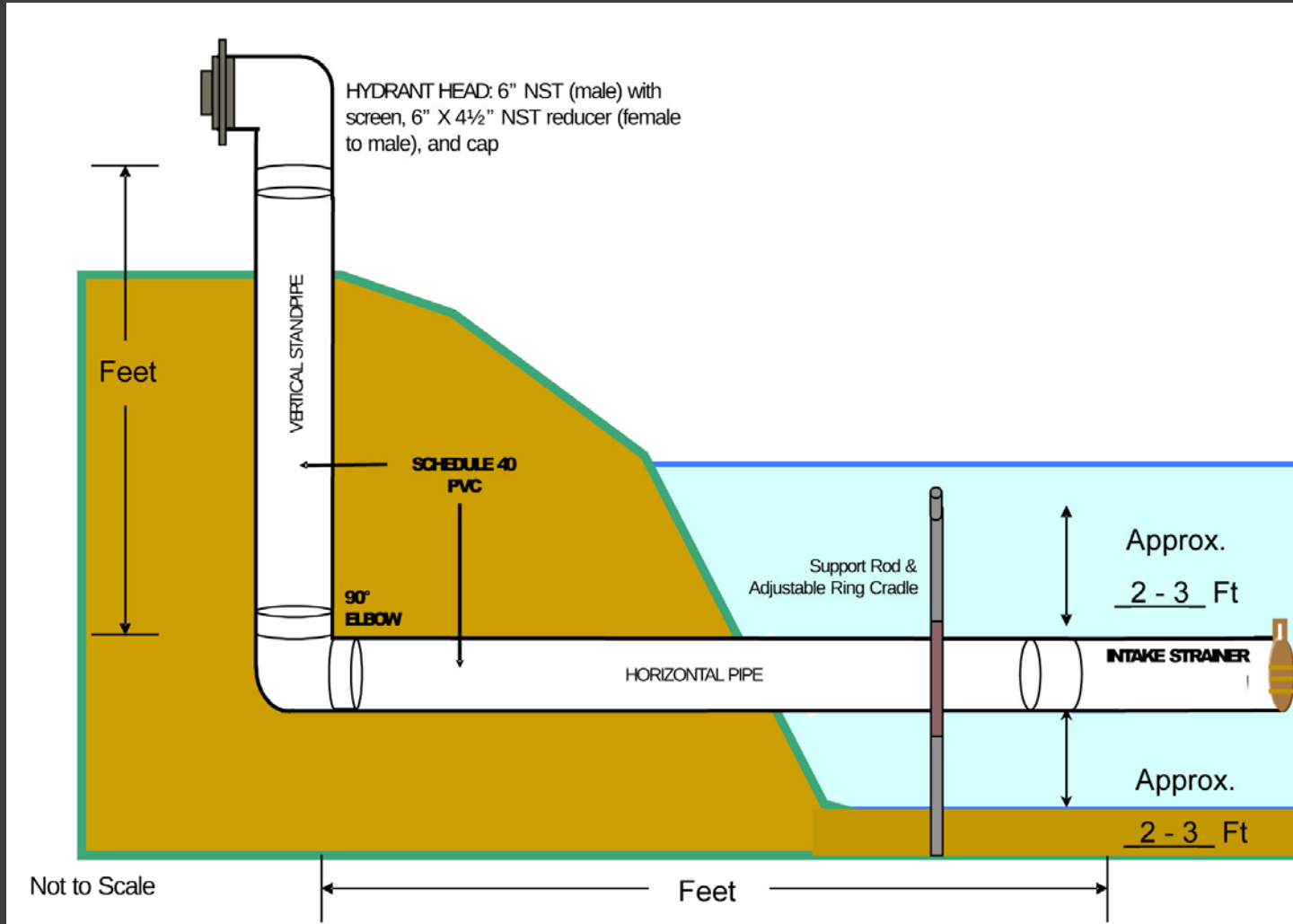
District would cover cost, but permission needed from land owner

ISO testing of dry hydrants needed to improve rating

Benefits of dry hydrants...

- greatly improve fire safety throughout entire district
- simple, cost effective, easy maintenance
- state grants available annually to cover some of cost
- can improve ISO rating (inside and outside water district)

Dry Hydrant Schematic



4. Water Fees Not Linked to Water Usage

Water fees are based on number of fixtures per home

Fixtures are reported by each property owner

- census conducted every 3 years

Same per-fixture rate for commercial and residential users

- commercial usage (in many instances) is significantly higher

Proposal: Install Water Meters

Install meters at every residence and business on system

Wireless meters (RF) for lower administration costs

Benefits of meters...

- fair cost system for residential and commercial users
- promote water conservation
- aid in system leak detection
- can detect residential problems (burst pipes, leaking toilets)

Subject to costs, which have not yet been estimated

Ultrasonic Wireless Water Meter



5. Antiquated Communications

Water restrictions and boiler orders communicated by...

- sign on town green
- sign outside HN Williams
- sign in post office

Many users may not happen to see these signs

Proactive communication methods are also needed

Proposal: Website & Email Broadcasts

District needs a website to post critical information to

- water restrictions and boil orders
- before water turned off for system repairs
- district meeting agendas and minutes

Critical info will also be emailed to all registered users

- email addresses will be solicited with next water bill
- renters can register on website to receive email notices
- contact info concerning fire and water issues

CLERK/TREASURER POSITION

Position of Clerk/Treasurer voted on at annual meeting

Denise Tuttle has resigned from her position

Town of Dorset has proposed taking on these responsibilities

- they estimate a cost savings of at least \$10,000 to the district

We advise postponing this vote

- until we receive and evaluate the town's proposal

FIREFIGHTERS NEEDED

We need volunteers to join the Dorset Fire Department

If you are interested, please contact Alan Casey (fire chief)

- alancasey513@aol.com

The fire chief will provide you with details...

- firefighter benefits
- training provided
- commitment required