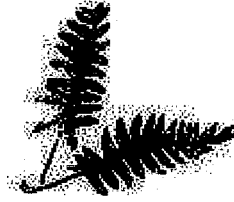


# Dorset Fire District # 1



**Mailing Address:**  
PO Box 341  
Dorset, VT 05251

**Physical Address:**  
Dorset Town Offices  
112 Mad Tom Road  
East Dorset, VT 05253

**Fire District Bookkeeper**  
Phone: 802-362-4571  
Fax: 802-362-5156  
Email: dorsetfire341@comcast.net

=====Chartered 1911=====

## **Prudential Committee Meeting**

**April 10, 2017**

**Present:** Ben Weiss, Chair, Abbott de Rahm, Mark Putnam, Roger Squire, Milt McWayne, Jim McGinnis (Water Operator), Shawn Hazelton (Fire Chief), Rob Gaiotti (Town Manager), Greg Kepler (Kepler Engineering)

**Absent:**

**Others Present:** Justine Cook, Ginny Longacre, Andy Longacre

### **Approval of March Minutes**

A. De Rham moved and B. Weiss seconded to approve the March 13, 2017 minutes as amended. Motion carried 3-0.

### **Fire and Water Financials (Gaiotti)**

R. Gaiotti reviewed the financial reports giving the balances for the water and fire bank accounts; status of accounts payables and delinquent taxes. R. Gaiotti brought the Board's attention the expense side of the water budget and noted that DFD should come up with a breakout for what expense was reimburseable under the Assessment Grant. In addition the expense side of maintenance is a good bit over budget, this is attributed to fixing leaking valves which had to be fixed. A. De Rham stated that between \$3,500 and \$4,000 will be reimbursable by the Grant. R. Gaiotti then explained the auditors findings relative to old Fire Tax dating back to 2003. The tentative total for Delinquent Fire Tax all years is around \$32,000. R. Squire moved and M. Putnam seconded to approve the financial report as presented. Motion carried 4-0.

### **Water Operator's Report (McGinnis)**

J. McGinnis reported that his highest priority was a leak on the main line below the reservoir, and he will work on this and update the Board as things progress. He also noted a possible service line leak off the western side of Dorset West Road is another item being dealt with. Discussion ensued about the timing of the required reservoir cleaning that must be done every five years. It was the

consensus of the group to schedule the cleaning for around November 15<sup>th</sup> after the peak seasons are done. Further discussion was had about possible vendors and cost, and any State requirements. A. de Rham moved and M. Putname seconded to approve the Water Operator's report as presented. Motion carried 4-0.

### **Fire Chief's Report (Hazelton)**

S. Hazelton read his fire call list which included seven events. A. De Rham asked about any planned trainings in the future for Dorset fire fighters. S. Hazelton explained the types of trainings he was lining up, which included a joint training with the Vermont State Police, East Dorset Fire Department, and Manchester Rescue Squad at the Dorset Quarry. S. Hazelton also brought up the concept of a joint dinner for the fire fighters in both Dorset & East Dorset. Discussion ensued about the best options to save costs. It was the consensus of the Board to allow S. Hazelton to coordinate a joint BBQ dinner for both Fire Departments. M. McWayne noted that this was a great idea and had been done in the past during the summers. M. Putnam moved and A de Rham seconded to approve the Fire Chief's report as presented. Motion carried 4-0.

### **Engineers Report (Kepler)**

- G. Kepler provided a review/update of the services provided to date for DFD. It included eight items or "tasks" that have been worked on or accomplished, from Base Mapping to Funding Assistance.
- Discussion ensued about the water source exploration process and the fact that the water shortage of the past two seasons pushed DFD to really focus on this problem to come up with both a short term and long term solution to the lack of water.
- Data Logger at Reservoir (metering of total consumption) ~ Discussion of data logger installation included accessibility, location, easements or right-of-ways, homeowner permission (if necessary) and size. A. De Rham asked if DFD could approve G. Kepler moving forward to create a spec. sheet for this set up. Discussion ensued about the type of arrangement needed and the required daily readings the State is looking for as noted in the Sanitary Survey. J. McGinnis noted that he had checked on the information daily since March 1<sup>st</sup> and is arranging a fill in during his vacation toward the end of April. Further discussion about the location of the vault or building and the possible legal restrictions related to the water easement and how much of this project would be supported or covered by the easement. B. Weiss asked if it made sense to wait for the Planning Loan to design and implement this project or does DFD want to do the research and install on their own. B. Weiss then asked what would be involved in the design for the engineer. G. Kepler replied that \$2,000 would provide adequate funds for design, as this was a figure to be used in the possible Planning Loan. A. De Rham noted that having G. Kepler due a preliminary design will help with final decisions. Further discussion ensued about access to power and other items that may come up. It was the consensus of the Board to allow G. Kepler to move forward with the \$2,000 for the design for the data logger/chlorinator set up.

### **Review Sanitary Survey from State (Weiss)**

B. Weiss explained that the State had done a Sanitary Survey as required every 3 years. Items reviewed included lack of daily reporting, J. McGinnis noted that this has been adhered to. Other issues included a needed response as to the status of water source exploration and upgrading the hydrants pipes for Fire Service or changing them over to flushing hydrants as suggested in the Survey. A. De Rham noted that many of these items will take years for DFD to work through and that a letter should be composed to respond to the points brought up by the State. R. Gaiotti stated that the context for the State is that DFD hasn't always responded in a timely manner with the State and it would be good to get information back to them. He also noted that it's also possible the State sees the new management and activity at DFD as a good sign and they are pushing to get as many of these items dealt with as possible. G. Kepler stated that he agreed this could likely be the case and that most of the items all stem from state drinking water requirements for public water systems. Discussion ensued about the requirement for firefighting as it relates to the water system. J. Cook asked about how things work if the water system can't be used to fight fires. S. Hazelton explained the dynamics around having 6 trucks in Dorset that can haul water and 1 mile of 5" hose to supply water as well. He noted that in reality with the use of these methods would/could produce a much larger volume of water per minute than the water system. M. McWayne noted that the Dorset Fire Department had worked for 30 years to get things set up so that they would have adequate equipment to handle this issue. A. De Rham noted that this approach was much more cost effective when it came to providing fire services vs. upgrading many feet of pipe that is fixed in one location. Further discussion ensued about cost benefit analysis on this issue and that the water system in Dorset is a potable system only and it will take many years of planning and construction to change this.

### **Water Projects Committee Report:**

- Alternate source exploration and location: A. De Rham gave an update about the District working on site control for locations for a new well that are in the Village. Information has been sent to property owners and the response has been very good. B. Weiss noted that DFD is still waiting for information from The Nature Conservancy as it relates to allowing a road and small building on the strip of land owned by the Fire District with deed restrictions held by The Nature Conservancy. R. Squire asked what types of information DFD would be able to give ratepayers at the annual meeting. Discussion ensued about how much information could or should be disclosed about specifics of the project. It was noted that DFD could give an overview of progress to date.
- Water Census Update: A. De Rham noted explained the work he has done around gathering and using of different types of data. He stated that using a census of bedrooms is a better predictor of water use and can be balanced against the Lister Card property information in the Town Office if something seems wrong with a particular census. B. Weiss asked that this information get set in advance of the new census surveys going out in May 2017 for use in the 2018-2019 year.
- Water Metering: Discussion ensued about the use of water meters both for residential and commercial customers. J. Cook inquired about the use of wifi remote water meters and suggested that the DFD allow customers to

opt for the installation of a non-wifi meter if possible. G. Kepler noted that meters are likely to be a future item for DFD; A. De Rham noted that meters individually likely won't be terribly expensive, but it is a process. R. Gaiotti noted that the residents living on the water system should likely be advocating for commercial meters because the current set up is not likely that fair for residential customers vs. commercial based on use.

- Amending Construction Loan place holder information: It was the consensus of the Board to have G. Kepler amend the information for the place holder in the Construction Loan program. The new figure would be \$3.5 million. It was noted that this is simply a place holder and does not obligate or cost the Town anything, but gets them onto the eligible list for funding.

### **Fire Committee:**

- M. McWayne reported that he was making progress with getting a quote from a couple vendors for a fire/CO2/low temp alarm to be placed in the Fire House and will report developments as they come.
- S. Hazelton noted that he has met with the East Dorset Chief on creating equipment lists and will likely have another meeting soon.

### **Engineering:**

B. Weiss stated that it might make sense for DFD to review options for a larger engineering firm to come in and work on all phases of projects for DFD. A. De Rham noted that DFD would need someone to write a bid document that gets sent to the larger engineering firms and suggested that G. Kepler could do this. Discussion ensued about RFPs vs. bids for larger firms and what would be needed to work through this process for DFD. B. Weiss noted that the water subcommittee could review this item.

### **Water Fixture Rates:**

B. Weiss presented a spreadsheet with new fixture rates and explained how things were arrived at and what was done in the past. J. McGinnis noted that \$300.00 for a water cooled compressor might not be enough. A. De Rham stated that often these units have an automatic shutoff but DFD doesn't know if that is the case at Barrows House. Discussion ensued about water cooled compressors used additionally in commercial ice makers. A. De Rham noted that many water systems have outright bans on these compressors if they use water non-stop. Further discussion ensued about restricting uses/conserving water in different situations. J. Cook asked about what the Board would end up charging the average ratepayer. B. Weiss noted that DFD now would charge a user fee and then a fixture fee based on the census data for each customer. Further discussion ensued about what types of rates were reasonable and how much the rates might actually rise in Dorset. R. Gaiotti noted that J. Cook could look at average rates paid by users on similar systems (rural with under 200 users) and that might give a better idea of where DFD would end up. A. De Rham noted that rates and investment in the system had been put off for decades and things have to be brought up to speed just for day to day maintenance and planning and

next would come larger capital improvements etc. Further discussion ensued about the bigger picture of where the water system was headed and how that could be communicated to the ratepayers in advance of rate increases etc. S. Hazleton referenced what users in Stowe pay on average for water service. G. Kepler noted that often \$850 to \$1,000 annually for water is a common average in Vermont, but there are water systems that charge less and more as well. M. Putnam asked about the charge for sprinkler systems. Discussion ensued about the need to be able to provide adequate water should the systems need to be used, even though they are dry and waiting to be used etc.

**Misc/ Old Business:**

B. Weiss brought up the issue of terms for Prudential Committee members as it relates to the May annual Meeting. Discussion was had about which terms were up and who would continue to serve.

J. McGinnis will work with A. De Rham to get a digital copy of the OEM.

**Executive Session:** A. De Rham moved and M. McWayne seconded to enter into executive session for contracts at 10:00pm

B. Weiss presented a letter (attached) that he submitted earlier to Dorset Town Manager Rob Gaiotti and selectboard chair Henry Chandler concerning the need for sustainable management of the Dorset Water Co. The contents of the letter were discussed at length.

Motion by M. Putnam - to pursue the details of entering into an intralocal contract with the Town of Dorset for the management of the water system of the Dorset Fire District #1. The motion was seconded by A. De Rham. The motion passed unanimously.

The being no further business to discuss the meeting was adjourned at 10:17pm

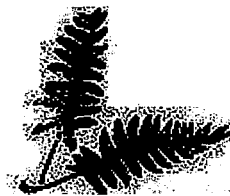
Respectfully submitted,

Rob Gaiotti

DFD MINUTES APRIL 10, 2017

<u>NAME</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>	<u>TESTIFY</u>
Penny Longacre	2533 Route 30	no
ANDY LONGACRE	2533 Route 30	no
GREG KEPEL	Kensley - Manchester	
Justine Coole	2835 Rte 30, Dover	NO

# Dorset Fire District # 1

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**Fire District Bookkeeper**

Phone: 802-362-4571

Fax: 802-362-5156

Email: dorsetfire341@comcast.net

=====*Chartered 1911*=====

## DORSET FIRE DISTRICT # 1 FINANCE REPORT APRIL 10, 2017:

**Expense and revenue reports are attached, highlights below:**

**Water District:**

Cash on hand:

Checking balance:	\$2,100
Money Market balance:	\$44,069
Net position:	\$46,322

- Water payments with penalty and interest assessed continue to come in, down to 11 accounts total unpaid.
- Expenses Water District: It might make sense to get an idea of what is expected as reimbursable from the State for the water assessment and attempt to recoup some of these funds.
- Many of the Water District budget lines have exceeded budgeted figures (much to do with leaks etc.) but DFD should still be aware of being 125% over expected budget (barring a large reimbursement from the State for the Grant).

**DQ FY16 water fees still due:** \$5,689.06; the auditor will begin to look at any possible DQ water fees in FY15 and prior this week. Will update this for next month.

Water Service Leak Debt (2015): \$4,741 (Melahdo), \$1,201.23 (LaBranche)

**Fire District:**

- Expenses to be paid include: fire house maintenance and fire house utilities.
- Mudgett is still working the FY16 audit, some field work has been done. Audit will be complete in advance of the DFD annual meeting in May.

**Delinquent Fire Taxes:** \$5,310 (includes penalty and interest), April DQ tax notices will go out this week. The audit firm has reviewed and tested FY15 delinquent fire: \$15,127.01

Dating back to 2003, the delinquent amount of \$12,169.37 is shown. This amount still needs to be reviewed and tested, but it's likely the figure is close to what is shown. It's also likely that some of the smaller/ older accounts that have changed ownership might have to be waived.

Overall Delinquent amount: \$32,606.38

Cash on hand:

Education Retention Fund:	\$22,053 (restricted)
General Checking:	\$100,474
Truck Escrow:	\$154,794 (restricted)
Net Position:	\$277,321

## Calls for March 2017

- 1) 3/14/2017 at 3518 Route 30 tree wires down Dorset
- 2) 3/16/2017 at Route 7 & 7a accident East Dorset
- 3) 3/18/2017 at 4171 Route 315 Electrical problem in house Rupert
- 4) 3/19/2017 at 102 Church street "False Alarm" first verbal warning given Dorset
- 5) 3/21/2017 at 3567 Main street Dryer fire Equinox hotel Manchester
- 6) 3/27/2017 at 121 Nichols hill road Fire alarm smoke from cooking Dorset
- 7) 4/9/2017 at Peel road & Scottsdale road Accident Danby



April 5, 2017

To: Dorset Fire District #1

Re: Report on Status of Dorset Water

This report covers the period from March 13 to April 6, 2017.

**Water Test:** The monthly coliform test was conducted on 3/13/2017 and we passed.

**Chlorinator:** The chlorinator is working fine.

**Reservoir Building:** Our Have a Heart trap caught a critter inside the chlorinator room on The bait took care of it.

**Spring Houses:** Are tight.

**Reservoir Overflow System:** I was able to recovered the two windows on the chlorinator room side of the reservoir building. I also covered the east door of the reservoir building with plastic. The problem this winter was not the extreme cold it was the extreme winds pushing frigid air into the reservoir. Obviously we are going to have to make out windows wind proof. Abbott's suggestion about Styrofoam covers is probably a good solution.

**Reservoir Bypass System:** Is working and will continue to be used until spring production drops drastically.

**Reservoir Levels:** Are normal.

**Mapping the System:** Paul has given me a copy of his work to date. This is about 60% of the water system. I have reviewed it and found several discrepancies between my markings and his surveying of these. All of the discrepancies are easily corrected. I will remark these area over the weekend. On Monday I will be with him when he does the surveying. Once these are corrected I will mark Barrows Height service line and remark the lines from the springs, reservoir and transmission line. Hopefully they will be completed before I go on vacation. April 18.

**Leaks Status:**

**Suspected Leaks at Green - Leaking 6 inch Valve at Intersection of Church St and Rt 30 South:** There is a leak here. It is a low volume leak that concerns the 6 inch valve that controls the flow of water South on Rt 30. I have spoken to Noel Dydo about this.

**Suspected Leaks at the Green - Leaking 6 inch Valve at the Intersection of Church St and Rt 30 North:** This leak can be controlled by insuring the valve is fully opened. The problem though controlled right now is another 6 inch valve.

**Service Line Leak on the West side of Dorset West Rd:** I have not spent any further time on this leak. This will be followed up on as the ground thaws so the probe can be used. I have not done anything since December because of the frozen pipes at the reservoir and the mapping.

**Leak in the 8 inch main adjacent the access road to the reservoir.** After the snow storm of 3/14/2017, I noticed the snow was melting very quickly as the cold weather moderated on the access road about 400 feet from West Rd. On March 31<sup>st</sup> the snow was gone at this spot and water was seeping out of the ground. I dug a small hole for the water to run in and let the mud settle out. On April 1, I checked the water for chlorine and found it was chlorinated. The amount of total chlorine from this area was only ½ the level as the chlorine by the blow off at

## DFD #1- Summary Current work Status thru March 2017

1. **Base Mapping-** Have had minimal involvement and no requests for assistance since January. Can review base-mapping work products and provide input if additional information is recommended?
2. **Fire Flow testing-** No additional work required → **WRIGHT ENGINEERING SURVEY**
3. **Capital Improvement Planning-** 95% complete; Need to prepare summary for grant deliverable (~\$1,200 to complete- including March invoice)
4. **Dry Hydrant Assistance-** No work done on this task as suspected task is not grant eligible
5. **Water source Investigations-** Work on-hold unless additional work requested. Planning to prepare summary of work completed for submittal with Grant deliverable if desired (~\$500-\$1000 to complete –including March Invoice)
6. **Mtgs & Requested assist.** (DFD#1, State, & as requested)- Complete unless additional mtgs scheduled and requested to attend ( ~\$500 to complete including March invoice)
7. **Asset Inventory & Assessment-** Complete; no additional work required
8. **Funding Assistance-** On-hold pending decision on Planning loan application. ( ?)
9. **Other- Extra-** \$150 to be invoiced in March Invoice for Sanitary Survey

# **FUTURE MANAGEMENT OF THE DORSET WATER CO.**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Dorset Water Co. is facing significant near-term and long-term challenges, including inadequate water supply, aging supply lines and fire hydrants not available for firefighting. The planning, financing and management of the improvements needed to address these issues currently falls on the shoulders of a 5-person volunteer board. As chairman of this board, I have created this document to summarize the need for sustainable management of this water system, so that system improvements can be delivered in a timely and cost-effective manner.

## **DORSET WATER SYSTEM**

The Dorset Water Co. provides public water to approximately 200 homes and businesses in the village of Dorset. The Kellogg Springs, located 250 feet above the village, are the sole source of water for the system. These natural springs feed water into a reservoir, located just downhill of the springs. The reservoir is a fully enclosed structure, with a capacity of 225,000 gallons and houses chlorination equipment and water production gauges. 2200 ft. of 8-in. pipe leaves the reservoir and supplies water to the distribution system.

The distribution system consists of 12,000 feet of 6-in. and 4-in. pipe, which supplies the service connections. About 90% of these connections are residential and 10% are commercial. The entire system is gravity fed and does not use pumps or other apparatus that require electricity.

Portions of this system are over 100 years old. Although the main distribution system, primarily pig iron pipe, is generally in good condition, the supply lines, much of which are galvanized pipe, are reaching the end of their expected lifespan.

## **PERSONNEL**

The prudential committee of Dorset Fire District #1 is responsible for the water system. This committee is elected by property owners within the district at our annual meeting in May. The district employs a part-time water operator, who is responsible for the daily operations of the system. For the past year the district has contracted with the Town of Dorset to administer our finances, including invoicing, bill paying, collections and monthly report. In addition, the Dorset Town Manager has been very helpful assisting the prudential committee in a number of areas.

## **FINANCES**

Past prudential boards kept water fees low, with an average annual of cost around \$150 per user. With annual budgets around \$30K, little money was available to fix leaks, and no money was available to plan system improvements.

The fiscal year 2017 budget added a \$20,000 maintenance charge to cover the cost of aggressively fixing and diagnosing leaks and to begin planning of system improvements, with the focus on finding a supplemental water source.

The FY-18 budget will more than double last year's budget, with revisions to the fee structure to address disproportional commercial usage and laying the groundwork for continuing to charge property owners who leave the water system (pending a bylaw change). The sharp budget increase was necessary to cover increasing costs in system operations, continued planning of system improvements, scheduled maintenance (3 new values) and mandated sanitary maintenance (reservoir cleaning).

Pending district voter approval of major system improvements, the FY-19 budget will be the first budget to start funding of these improvements.

### **SYSTEM ISSUES**

For the past two years, the water company has focused its attention on diagnosing and fixing leaks throughout the system. In general, we have been able to keep up with this work, although this task is becoming more difficult and expensive each year, due to the aging infrastructure.

The system has experienced water shortages during late summer and early fall of 2015 and 2016. These shortages resulted in water usage restrictions and periodic system shutdowns during late-night hours.

By rule of the state of Vermont, the fire hydrants, which are part of the distribution system, cannot be used for firefighting purposes. I do not know the exact date of when this prohibition occurred, but I believe it was sometime during the 1990's. Regardless, results from the state's latest Sanitary Survey (conducted in March 2017), reinforce the requirements for functional hydrants - 500 gallons per minute for 2 hours with 20 psi residual pressure throughout the distribution system. To achieve these requirements, larger distribution pipe throughout the system and additional water storage on the east side of the system will most likely be necessary.

The current water fee structure is based on a voluntary census, conducted every 3 years, and invoiced on a per-fixture rate, based on this census. Since these fees have no direct relation to consumption, there is no financial incentive for users to conserve water. Furthermore, water fees paid by businesses may not reflect a suspected disproportionate usage of water. The installation of water meters may be the only way to rectify these issues.

The state's latest Sanitary Survey requires our monthly reports to include daily water production readings and daily chlorine residual readings. Since these readings currently require personal to hike or drive an off-road vehicle to the reservoir, there is pressing need for data loggers to measure chlorine and water usage at the base of the distribution system. The water usage meter will have the additional benefit of being able to measure the extent of leakage in the system, by logging water consumption at different times of day (consistent consumption at late night hours will indicate leaks).

**SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS**

To address these issues, the prudential committee has proposed and, in some cases, initiated work on a series of projects, outlined in the table below:

PROJECT	STATUS
mapping of system assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> state grant obtained to cover \$20K of cost</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> surveyor and water operator are actively mapping the system</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 2-month extension obtained to complete mapping</li> </ul>
supplemental water source	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> initial source exploration completed</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> primary well site identified (Cheney Rd.)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> preliminary negotiations with property owners completed</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> pending permission from The Nature Conservancy</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> permitting process with state has not been initiated</li> </ul>
chlorine and water consumption data loggers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> site determined</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> pending research of equipment</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> pending permission from property owner with easement</li> </ul>
water meters	work planned under state construction loan
new distribution system	work planned under state construction loan
new supply lines	work planned under state construction loan
east-side water storage	work planned under state construction loan

**PLANNING AND CONSTRUCTION LOANS**

The state of Vermont has loan programs available for municipal water systems. The prudential committee has begun the process of utilizing this funding source by applying for inclusion in a prioritized list of loan applicants, with a requested loan amount of \$5 million. This list has been recently published for public review and the district is currently 16<sup>th</sup> in the list, which translates into very good chance of receiving planning and construction loans. The next step in this process is the submission of a planning loan, which is nearing completion.

**NEED FOR SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT**

Another significant challenge faced by the district is finding resources necessary to manage the system improvement projects. With no training and very little expertise, the five prudential board members are currently responsible for all phases of these projects, including:

- evaluating, hiring and overseeing engineers
- negotiating with property owners for easements
- requesting easements from land trust organizations
- financial planning for the repayment of large loans
- loan and grant applications
- documenting procedures and policies necessary during the loan and grant process

This work is in addition to our normal responsibilities of overseeing the daily operations of the water system, setting annual budgets and hosting monthly meetings. These efforts are essentially doubled, since we are also responsible for the Dorset Fire Department.

The combination of a heavy workload and the critical nature of these projects has made it difficult to recruit new members to the prudential committee. I fear these factors may also lead to attrition on the committee. Therefore, I believe its imperative that the district pursue immediate professional help with the management of the water company.

The committee has discussed the possibility of hiring a water company manager, but we do not believe this is a full-time position, and we are skeptical we could find a part-time person with the proper training and experience for this important roll.

Based on our success with our financial contract with the town of Dorset and based on the volunteer help that the Dorset Town Manager has been providing the prudential committee for the past two years, I believe that exploring a formal arrangement with the town to help run the water system operations and projects is warranted.

### **PRELIMINARY DISCUSSIONS**

On two occasions, I have met with Selectboard Chair Henry Chandler and Town Manager Rob Gaiotti, to discuss the possibilities of a contract agreement, with the town assuming the primary role of running the Dorset Water Co. and the district taxpayers compensating the town for these services. These meetings have been productive and all parties involved have shown interest in pursuing such as agreement, pending approval from our respective boards.

The details of responsibilities and compensation have not been discussed and would need to be established as part of the potential contract. In addition, it is my understanding that the town has three requirements that would need to be met before or soon after such as arrangement takes place:

1. The district's water operator has expressed interest in retiring in the near future. With much knowledge of the water system existing only in his head, the district would need to hire his eventual replacement soon, so the current and new water operators could work in parallel until the new operator acquires all this knowledge. The district and town agree that using a water operations contractor may be the best approach, at least in the short term.
2. The district has engaged an engineer who runs a local solo operation. Although the engineer has functioned well as a resource for the committee and water operator with smaller projects, it is acknowledged by both parties, that a larger firm, who can handle multiple phases of project management, would be necessary before proceeding with the larger system improvements.
3. With the prudential committee meeting only once a month, the town manager would need to be granted a significant level of autonomy in running the water company.

## **BENEFITS OF THE TOWN MANAGING THE WATER CO.**

A potential management contract with the town has significant benefits for the taxpayers of the district:

- Daily oversight of water system
- Professional management of engineers and construction firms
- Experience in procuring loans and grants
- Potential cost savings, using town crew to fix water leaks
- Coordination of water and road projects

I also believe that professional management of the water system will have tangible benefits for all residents of Dorset. Efficient and timely improvements to the water system will help preserve property values throughout Dorset and help the growth of a sustainable economy in Dorset.

## **NEXT STEPS**

I see the next steps in as follows:

- This document is reviewed by the prudential committee at our next meeting, on April 10.
- If approved in principal by the prudential committee, this document is presented by the prudential committee representatives at the next selectboard meeting
- If approved in principle by the selectboard, representatives from the selectboard, prudential committee and the town manager meet to create the details of a contract.
- Both boards vote on the approval of this contract

Ben Weiss  
Chairman, Prudential Committee  
Dorset Fire District #1

