

DORSET FIRE DISTRICT #1
2016 Annual Meeting at Dorset Firehouse, Route 30, Dorset, VT
Monday, May 9, 2016– 7:30 PM

The 105th annual meeting the Dorset Fire District/Dorset Water Company was held at the Dorset Firehouse on Monday May 9 at 7:30pm. There were about 65 people in attendance. The meeting was called to order by Moderator Jack Towsley.

ARTICLE I: 2015 ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

A motion was made by Linda O’Leary and seconded by Mary Beth Hartfield to approve the minutes of the 2015 annual meeting. The motion passed.

ARTICLE II: REPORTS FROM PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE, FIRE DEPARTMENT AND WATER CO.

Ben Weiss (committee member) gave a report from the prudential committee. The committee thanked the Dorset firefighters, former prudential board members Jack Stannard and Jean Kingston and Dorset Town Manager Rob Gaiotti for their service and help to the district. The accomplishments of the committee included the commencement of an engineering study of the water system and a series of meetings with East Dorset prudential committee and town officials to discuss tax equalization and consolidation. The 5 major challenges of the district were reported: 1) water shortages in dry seasons, 2) fire tax inequity with East Dorset, 3) sub-par ISO firefighting rating, 4) water fees not linked to usage and 5) antiquated communication with water users. Potential solutions for each of these challenges were presented.

Fire Chief Alan Casey gave the report from the fire department. The department responded to 100 calls. 2 firefighters have taken Firefighter-1 training and are awaiting the results of their final exams. The department had over 1000 hours of training last year. 5 firefighters left the department, 2 moved and 3 left for medical issues. 1 firefighter and 1 junior firefighter joined the department. The department currently consists of 10 firefighters, of which 3 live in Dorset. 1 town resident has agreed to the installation of a dry hydrant. The chief also asked the attendees if anyone has land available for firefighter training.

Water Operator Jim McGinnis gave the report from the water company. 12 leaks were fixed on the system, 5 of which were on district lines – including 2 valve gates and 2 leaks on 4” mains. 4 possible leaks exist. The reservoir cover, installed in 2013, is made of galvalume and has a 35 year guarantee. The water mains are in excellent condition, despite their age. The spring houses were replaced in 2007/2008 with stainless steel covers and have more than 35 years of service remaining. 1 animal incursion into a spring house occurred and has been resolved. The chlorinator was installed in 1994 and a module failed in December. Problem was fixed and 3 backup modules were purchased. A local machinist made 4 sets of parts that wear-out in 5 years, so chlorinator is good for another 20 years. The chlorinator runs off of water flow (no electrical service exists at the reservoir) and a unit of this size no longer exists on the market. 3 low-volume units could be purchased, but we need to build cash reserves to cover this eventual purchase. August 22 2015, the reservoir was down 2 feet. Water level continued to drop until mid Sept. Overnight, the reservoir would fill to 3-4 feet, but empty during day. Reasons – increased water usage and leaks. The planning with an engineer is underway to evaluate supplemental water systems. A study conducted by the state in 2009 lists all water assets and springs in town of Dorset. \$10,000 has been set aside for the engineering study. The grant decision will be made on the 17th of May. Gilbert springs (possible supplemental supply)

production will be down if the Kellogg springs production is down, therefore not a reliable supplemental supply.

ARTICLE III: ELECTION OF PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The moderator reported that 4 seats are up for election on the prudential committee – one 3-year term, two 1-year terms and one 3-year term with 1 year remaining.

Chris Brooks and Mark Putnam were nominated for the 3-year term. Putnam spoke of his qualifications - having served on the committee in the past, including 3 years as board chair, was a fire marshall for 2 years at Northeastern University. He was also employed as a fire safety engineer by an engineering firm. Brooks spoke of his qualifications – former Dorset select board chair, works in an industry subject to fires and has been effective in business and civic ventures. The initial vote was a tie. A second vote was held by secret ballot and Putnam was elected, 34 to 31.

Three people were nominated for the two 1-year seats – Ben Weiss and Abbott DeRham (both current members) and Harvey Watkins. The election was held by secret ballot and Weiss and DeRham were elected.

Three people were nominated for the 3-year seat with 1 year remaining – Roger Squire, Jim Kingston and Harvey Watkins. Roger Squire was elected.

ARTICLE IV: ELECTION OF CLERK/TREASURER, DELINQUENT TAX COLLECTOR, MODERATOR

Ben Weiss made a motion to postpone the vote on clerk/treasurer in order to give prudential committee time to receive and evaluate a pending proposal from the Town of Dorset to assume these responsibilities. The motion was seconded and passed. Jim McGinniss was nominated and elected as Delinquent Tax Collector. Chris Brooks was nominated and elected as moderator.

ARTICLE V: FIRE DEPT. BUDGET

A motion was made and seconded to accept the Fire Department budget as proposed. The motion was approved.

ARTICLE VI: WATER COMPANY BUDGET

A motion was made and seconded to accept the Water Company budget as proposed. The motion was approved.

ARTICLE VII: AUTHORIZATION OF FIRE DISTRICT TO BORROW MONEY

A motion was made and seconded to approve this article. Discussion ensued on limits to the borrowing. Milt McWayne stated that any borrowing would be limited to cover approved expenses. The motion was approved.

ARTICLE VIII: INTERLOCAL CONTRACTS

Shall the Prudential Committee of the Dorset Fire District No. 1 explore entering into inter-local contracts or other similar contract with the Town of Dorset to provide fire services, emergency aid, and search and rescue services as a means of raising funds for the Fire District in lieu of levying a tax on the Fire District?

A motion was made and seconded to approve this article. Discussion then ensued on the purpose of this article. Ben Weiss stated that the article was proposed to provide a means for tax equity with East Dorset. He also clarified that the article was not the approval of a contract with the town, but permission for the committee to pursue a contract. The district's ISO rating was discussed. Alan Casey stated that the 1994 ISO rating of the department was 7/9 – 7 inside the water district and 9 outside of the water district. Discussion also included the potential use of water meters. The moderator called for a vote and the article passed.

ARTICLE IX: EXPLORATION TOWN MANAGEMENT OF WATER SYSTEM

Shall the Prudential Committee of the Dorset Fire District No. 1 explore turning over the management and/or the entire water system of the fire district to the Town of Dorset?

A motion was made and seconded to approve this article. Jim McGinniss stated that exploring town management of the water system was not discussed at prudential committee meetings. Ben Weiss and Milt McWayne both stated that in-fact this was discussed in committee, albeit briefly. Discussion continued with some fear of loss of control if the system is run by the town. Ben Weiss stated some of the advantages of town control, including experience in grant writing and coordination of road and water construction. The moderator called for a vote and the motion passed.

ARTICLE XI: BY LAW CHANGE, SECTION 2

Shall Section 2 of the Bylaws of Dorset Fire District No. 1 be amended to read:

2. The Fire District shall have all of the powers, so far as the same may be applicable, now given by ~~Sections 2601-2607 and 2671-2675~~ Chapter 171 of Title 20, ~~§3301~~ Vermont Statutes Annotated and Chapters 89 and 129 of Title 24 of Vermont Statutes Annotated. These include but are not limited to: asset management of the Fire Department and water Company; providing efficient fire protection; insuring a pure and adequate water supply; *entering into inter-local contracts or other similar private contracts to provide fire services, emergency aid, and search and rescue services to others*; and levying a tax and assessing annual water use fees, subject to a vote at annual or special meetings of the Fire District. It shall be governed by a Prudential Committee.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the article. Jim Kingston made a motion to amend the by-law to exclude "insuring an adequate water supply". The motion was seconded, but the vote to amend the article did not pass. The moderator then called for a vote on the original motion to accept the by-law change, and this motion was approved.

ARTICLE XII: BY LAW CHANGE, SECTION 21

Shall Section 21 of the Bylaws of Dorset Fire District No. 1 be amended to read:

21. Meetings: The Prudential Committee shall meet monthly on the second Monday except in May when it will be the first Monday to allow for the annual meeting. The time of the meetings will be 7:30 pm and are open to the public, except such portions of said meetings as may be deemed "executive session" under Vermont law. *Special or emergency meetings of the Prudential Committee may be called in accordance with the requirements of other municipal boards as set forth in 1 VSA §312(c) and (d).*

Jack Stannard made a motion to accept the article, with an amendment to change the time of

the meetings to 7pm. The motion was seconded and approved.

ARTICLE XIII: BY LAW CHANGE, SECTION 22

Shall Section 22 of the Bylaws of Dorset Fire District No. 1 be amended to read:

22. Special Meetings: *Special Meetings of the Fire District may be called upon application in writing of five percent of the voters of the district and shall be warned by the clerk, or, in the clerk's absence or neglect, by one of the prudential committee. A warning for a special fire district meeting shall state the business to be transacted. The time and place of holding the meeting shall be posted in two or more public places in the district not more than 40 days nor less than 30 days before the meeting and recorded in the office of the clerk before the same is posted..and duly warned by the Chairperson, or upon 10 or more of the legal voters of the Fire District, upon written notice stating the objects(s) for the meeting and given 15 days in advance of said meeting. Eligible voters present at this meeting shall constitute a quorum*

A motion was made and seconded to accept the article. The motion was approved.

ARTICLE XIV: OTHER BUSINESS

Chris Brooks made a motion that the district should be audited on an annual basis. Motion was seconded. Ben Weiss presented an estimate of \$7000 that the prudential committee has acquired. The motion passed.

MEETING ADJOURNED

With no other business pending, the meeting was adjourned by the moderator.

The minutes were taken by Ben Weiss, prudential committee member.