

Minutes of South Alburgh Fire District #2 Prudential Committee December 18, 2024

Attending: John Fitzgerald, Alton Brusco, Tony Speranza, Cathy Rocheleau, Cheryl Dunn, John

Chesarek Public: Lori Bishop, Carol Yarnell

The meeting was called to order at 6:30pm. John Fitzgerald asked for any adjustments to the agenda. None noted.

Cheryl reported that the new website (SAFD@.org) is still a work in progress. The builder is responding to our requests for changes.

The minutes of the October 21<sup>st</sup> meeting were reviewed. John F felt the comment attributed to him was not quite correct. He wished it be changed from "John F. supported the position that all members of the SAFD#2 community receiving water from the water lines should shoulder the cost of the project." to "SAFD#2 is one district being built in three phases. In the end, all of the users in the district will pay one price in fairness to all." This correction was accepted and the minutes approved.

Treasurer's Report – Cathy presented the status of our four accounts. Discussion ensued concerning the M&T Bank Municipal Money Market account that contains reserve funds. Since the Money Market account makes little interest, Cathy suggested moving it to a CD at North Country Federal Credit Union for a higher rate of return, since the funds most likely will not be needed any time soon. John F moved that Cathy be directed to move the reserve funds to a NCFCU CD and that two years worth of the required annual contribution be made this year since no funds were added last year. The motion and the Treasurer's Report were approved.

New Business – John C requested the district consider adjusting the water bills to show both the amount attributable to the operations expense and the debt. Currently they are rolled together in the ERU Base Charge. He would expect to see the debt portion go down every year that new users are added. This is not evident from the current billing system. Cathy saw value in the increased transparency but felt it should be provided in a once a year report to the users. Cathy brought up the subject of delinquent assessment fees. The \$15.25 fee billed to all members of the District is not paid by all. At the present time, over \$16,000 is unpaid! Some of these funds will never be paid, as the delinquent members have moved from the district. Committee members requested Cheryl compile a list of the delinquencies for review at the next meeting. She will begin sending out notices of penalties to delinquent members. Carol Yarnell suggest filing a lien, as that seem to work for the Point of Tongue HOA.

Lori Bishop reported on her efforts to acquire more funds for the Phase 2 project. She spoke with a couple grant writers. She learned much, including that there may be a grant to help pay grant writers. The Northern Border Regional Commission may be a good source. We are on their priority list but did not make their 2024 cycle. Lori reported that we could get more money from a state loan. Tony said the larger loan amount would be unaffordable. In her research, Lori also found that there may be funds available to users to help pay for service line installations with low interest loans. Cheryl said our state representatives indicated they were willing to attend our next informational meeting to learn more about our needs.

Discussion then followed regarding the next steps in pursuing Phase 2. Tony moved that the district 1. rebid the project in three sections: Middle Road and Wagner Road, Route 2, and Poor Farm and Point of Tongue. This may incur \$20,000 in engineering fees. 2. Hire a grant writer to help in getting more grants (\$5000). 3. Hire a person to solicit more Phase 2 hookups. (\$) Rebidding the project in three sections might make the project eligible for more USDA funds. John F seconded the proposal. Alton felt the rebid process could be put off while the grants and hookup solicitations were pursued. Cathy expressed skepticism about the effectiveness of pursuing more hookups. John C said the state statute regarding municipal water systems did not appear to allow for expenditures for any of the three items. Tony and John voted aye, Alton vote nay.

Warrants – Two warrents were approved for payment.

1. \$50 Endyne – water testing
2. \$1004.02 M&T Bank – credit card bill for envelopes and website work

John F moved the meeting be adjourned at 8:21pm Tony seconded and the motioned carried.

Respectfully submitted,

John Chesarek, Clerk