

# MINUTES

## Royalton Fire District #1 Prudential Committee

January 14, 2019 | *Meeting called to order by* Keith Grimes

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### In Attendance

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Keith Grimes – Prudential Committee Chair  
Don Lovejoy- Prudential Committee Clerk  
Theron Manning- Moderator  
Wayne Manning- Water Superintendent  
Becky Owens- Deputy Administrator SRRS

Kyle Jones- Prudential Committee Vice Chair  
Victoria Paquin- Administrative Assistant  
Paul Brock- Fire Chief  
Steve Belmont- Administrator SRRS  
Rhonda Murphy (General Public)

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### Approval of Minutes

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1. A motion was made by Paul to accept the minutes from January 8, 2018 as written. Don seconded, and the motion carried with no dissent.

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### District Business

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2. Paul moved to elect Don to the three-year position. Kyle seconded, and the motion carried with no dissent.
3. Don moved to elect Rhonda Murphy to the one-year position. Kyle seconded, and the motion carried with no dissent.
4. No additional candidate was present to fill the remaining one-year position. Discussion ensued regarding finding an additional member and how vacancies can be filled- by a special meeting or appointment by the select board.
5. Paul moved to elect Theron as the moderator for a term of one year. Keith seconded, and the motion carried with no dissent.
6. Keith moved to elect Don as the clerk for a term of one year. Paul seconded, and the motion carried with no dissent.
7. There was discussion regarding leaving the position of treasurer vacant as had been done in past years. It was determined that the position must be filled and could be filled by a member of the Prudential Committee. Keith moved to elect Kyle as the treasurer for a term of one year. Don seconded, and the motion passed with no dissent.
8. A collector of Taxes was not elected.
9. Don motioned to elect Paul as the chief engineer for a term of one year. Keith seconded, and the motion passed with no dissent.
10. RHR Smith is contracted by the district to provide auditing services.
11.
  - A. **Fire Department** – Paul Brock reports that call volume is back up to the historical average, with 90 calls this year compared to 54 last year. The department has seen an increase in alarm activations as well as vehicle accidents. Paul reports that the department has worked with dispatch to reduce the number of calls that are received to

respond to downed or dangerous utility wires. The department now responds only to calls where fire is eminent or likely, as well as wires that are down across a road. Less serious utility wire calls are handled by the power companies. Royalton has partnered with Barnard and Bethel to create a swift water rescue team. In total, 28 firefighters are trained for swift water rescue. Each town has a utility trailer with needed equipment and is able to respond to emergencies statewide if necessary. Paul reports that the department is focused on upgrading and replacing the gear for the volunteers as well as taking other preventative measures to keep the firefighters as safe and healthy as possible. As a result of these efforts, the Fire Department's budget has increased slightly to cover the increased costs. (See Supplemental Information) Kyle moved to accept the report and budget as presented. Keith seconded, and the motion carried with no dissent. Paul wanted to add that there are 10-12 volunteers with 30+ years of service. Notably, David Whitney and Randy Caron both have 40 years of service with the Fire Department.

- B. **Water Department** – Wayne reports that the budget was made by Victoria based on what was spent by the water department. He is waiting for the plant remodel. After 28 years in service the plant needs an upgrade but is running well at this point despite needing extra care and maintenance. Theron asked about the status of the water system projects, the dam and the plant. Victoria reports that the Lake John Dam project is awaiting permission from the USDA to go to bid, however, the USDA is currently on furlough due to the federal government shutdown. Similarly, the water plant project is awaiting comments from the Department of Environmental Conservation on the draft Preliminary Engineering Report. Once those comments have been received a final PER will be created and the Prudential Committee may move the project to the bond vote stage at that time. Victoria reports that the water department is doing well with the budget and that the water rate can remain at \$1.94/100 gallons. (See Supplemental Information) Paul moved to accept the report and budget as presented. Kyle seconded, and the motion passed with no dissent.
- C. **Rescue Department**- Steve reports that the Rescue Squad is looking to be a little under budget and that they have been able to reduce the appropriations required. This is largely because calls have increased, and the amount being reimbursed per call has also gone up. In addition to increased revenue the squad has increased the number of employees from 17 to 25 which significantly cut down on the amount of overtime needed. Steve also reports that he has spent time focusing on training and developing policies to help reduce worker's compensation costs. The Rescue Squad is expecting to have the final contract for the new ambulance on January 21<sup>st</sup>, with delivery expected 120 days later. Many donations have been received to help cover the costs of the new ambulance. Notably, a letter writing campaign generated approximately \$6,000 in donations from the townspeople. The Rescue Squad is incredibly grateful for this support. Steve reports that the appropriation requested from the Town of Royalton is \$151,906 which is a decrease from last year's appropriation. (See Supplemental Information). Don moved to accept the report and the budget as written. Paul seconded, and the motion carried with no dissent.
13. Keith motioned to keep the water rate at \$1.94 per 100 gallons. Paul seconded, and the motion carried with no dissent.

14. Keith reports that the water department currently assesses an interest rate of 1% on delinquent water accounts. However, the fee charged by the collector of delinquent accounts is 6%. In some cases, particularly when the overdue balance is large, the water department loses approximate 3% on delinquent accounts. Keith reports that the Fire District's attorney has investigated and said that the district may assess an 8% penalty on delinquent accounts, similar to the penalty for delinquent taxes. The district would like to begin assessing this fee on delinquent water accounts. Theron asked how many accounts are delinquent. Victoria reports that the balance of delinquent accounts is currently \$20,000, spread across approximately eight customers. Paul motioned to allow the district to impose an 8% penalty on delinquent accounts. Kyle seconded, and the motion carried with no dissent.
15. Paul moved to set the tax rate at zero and the motion carried with no dissent.
16. Don extended his thanks to Rhonda for coming on board.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:50pm

Respectfully submitted

Victoria Paquin

Administrative Assistant