

Prudence Island Water District

Minutes of meeting: March 28, 2009

Meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. Present were David Buffum, moderator; Patricia Richard, clerk; Phillip Brooks and Robert Hanson. Absent was Richard Brooks.

Approval of minutes of meeting for March 14, 2009: Motion to approve minutes of the meeting by Mr. Hanson, seconded by Mr. Buffum, approved unanimously.

Purchasing/treasury

\$7,462.49 in deposits in March

Still haven't received RIDOH lab bill.

Federal and RI Employer taxes due in April

Requested invoice for backhoe rental for 1st quarter 2009

Received approval for credit account Seekonk Supply. Must take delivery in RI to get tax benefit.

Vellano Bros credit application has too many caveats. Will talk with credit manager, but probably best to pay at time of purchase with company check.

Customer accounts:

Outstanding invoices totaled \$5193.85. Still trying to obtain information regarding foreclosed property owner of record Deutsche Bank, who disavows responsibility. Will try to establish if property has in fact been sold.

Customer account on vacant land, current owner has never paid bill, probably water on demand account, certified letter to customer saying in danger of losing right to water on demand.

Ms. Richard said she should meet with Mr. Buffum regarding discrepancies in some accounts

Waiting list needs to be updated; some properties have changed hands and houses built with private wells. Lot descriptions for William Silvia appear to be inaccurate. Mr. Silvia stated that he had several requests from property owners regarding installing private wells, wants to know if the district plans to bring on any new connections in near future. Said several property owners would prefer community water rather than installing well. Ms. Richard said she will contact property holders on current waiting list and determine who still wants a connection. Also need to contact PUC about moratorium to determine status of order and procedure to lift moratorium if district determines that it can responsibly bring on new connections. Mr. Buffum said that he would contact PUC; says he is concerned that if moratorium remains in place, more and more private wells will be installed and district will not be able to compel conservation measures. Mr. Brooks stated that he is concerned about more private wells because most will be located within Mill Creek watershed in areas that are sensitive to salt water intrusion. Ms. Richard said that aggressive water management would be key to bringing on new connections. Mr. Brooks said that metering is the best way to control water demand. Mr. Hanson asked Will Capron, system manager, if he thought the system would support new connections. Mr. Capron said that judging by pumping records, and with a decrease in leaks on Narragansett Ave, a limited number of connections might be possible. He said that he was concerned about drought years, but was in favor of lifting the moratorium. Mr. Brooks said that the data currently being gathered on streamflow and well levels should ultimately prove helpful in determining the number of connections it's possible to add to the system.

Discussion of "water on demand" customer who requested 2 connections over the winter. Ms. Richard said that she had advised the customer to contact the district in spring to install the connections; so far they have not done so.

Mr. Buffum presented the board with a proposed third notice for open invoices with warning of imminent water shutoff. Ms. Richard gave Mr. Buffum a listing of open invoices.

Bylaws:

Changes discussed at March 14 meeting "Application for Service" and "Payment for Service" were made. Mr. Buffum asked if penalty for late invoices should be a set amount per month rather than a percentage; \$5 per month was suggested as an appropriate late fee.

Ms. Richard questioned references to plumbing code and who would be responsible for inspection of plumbing. Mr. Brooks said that the Portsmouth building inspector would be responsible for certifying a house for occupancy, but that if water system manager saw something that he felt was unacceptable he should not connect the service. Mr. Capron pointed out that when a house was under construction there would sometimes be no plumbing to inspect. Discussion ensued of appropriate method of installing service connections; state law requires compression fittings to be used. District should obtain copies of plumbing code.

Ms. Richard asked if a time frame should be set to take up all of the issues that the bylaws say should be considered annually. She said that particularly in regard to rates and fees, a date should be set that would allow the public to be heard on the issues.

Ms. Richard questioned Payment for Service bylaws state that due on receipt, then states 15-day grace period from due date. She pointed out that there is no "due date" if payable on receipt, so the bylaws give customer only 15 days to pay without penalty.

Ms. Richard questioned the order in which bylaws regarding billing inquiries were constructed; said they should be constructed chronologically.

Further work needs be done regarding the definition of vacancy in some of the bylaws 2(F)

Other:

DOH Richard Amirault called asking if the district would like a copy of 1974 documentation of investigation of water sources on north end of the island. Ms. Richard said she had filed a request for information form and the documents were coming.

Project priority list - Discussion of bringing on new water sources and where that fits on project priority list. Gary Chobanian of RI DOH advised that district did not yet have enough experience to take on big projects, said push current projects back a couple of years. Also advised that the district rethink its need for auxiliary storage before putting in an application. Mr. Capron said he would like to have the extra storage for daily use rather than emergency use, cited maintenance of big blue and pressure problems associated with running the system without a place in the system for the water to go.

Systems manager's report: System flushed on March 17 and 18. Received customer complaint; person became ill shortly after drinking water. Water sampling was done at customer tap and at houses on either side of customer for bacteria tests and brought to RIDOH lab; no result yet but would have been informed if result was positive. No curb stop at street, suggests putting curb stop in to allow system manager to shut off customer during flushing. Mr. Brooks asked if customers were informed in advance of flushing. Mr. Capron said flushing notices were posted. Mr. Capron stated further that he had inspected property and that septic system was downstream from water connection, so no problem there. Ms. Richard said that when speaking to customer, she got the distinct impression that it was a chronic problem, and suggested that the district continue to investigate the problem and encourage the customer to communicate with the district when the water is bad. Mr. Hanson said that perhaps the customer should consider a filtering system. Mr. Brooks said that customers did not maintain filters and that they were often a source of water quality problems.

Discussion of water quality problems associated with Indian Springs #4. Mr. Buffum said that when finances were stabilized, district might consider efficacy of installing a Jaswell(?) seal in the well to prevent rust from being drawn from the deepest part of the well.

Dewitt well has been rewired and submersible pump was field tested before installation, extra charge. now operating properly, well has been decontaminated and flushed, slow recovery rate but improving.

Repaired leak at 422 Narragansett, pipe split.

Estimate for customer repairs.

Greer tank evaluation a failure.

Valve key loaned out and not returned. New policy not to loan tools.

Direct flushing of south end of system.

New Business:

Correspondence: E-mail from Sen Whitehouse's office with request for appropriations grant form. Mr. Capron and Ms. Richard will work together to request funds for remediation of Governor Paine Ave line, due April 1.

Other: no other business

Motion to adjourn by Mr. Buffum, seconded by Ms. Richard, approved unanimously. Meeting adjourned 2:50 p.m.

Patricia Richard, Clerk