

Clerk's Report for 2006 – to the 2007 Annual Meeting

The Prudential Committee met twelve times during 2006, usually with the District officers, and on three occasions with Town and Fire District No. 3 officials. Committee attendance was consistently high (92%) and meetings were usually kept to within one hour each. At the Committee's first meeting, Joseph McLaughlin, SSE, was re-elected Chairman, and Jerry Flanagan was reappointed District Manager and Thomas Van Dzura Assistant Treasurer.

Based on the District's revised Bylaws, adopted at the 2006 Annual Meeting, work progressed rapidly on upgrading other elements of the District's legal structures. In April, the Committee and the Commissioners of Champlain Water District (CWD) concluded a 'Shared Management Agreement' articulating 'the respective responsibilities of the two parties for the management of the Fire District's water distribution system'. A basic objective behind the Agreement, drafted by the Clerk with the assistance of Manager Flanagan and CWD Retail Superintendent Jay Nadeau, was to set out the ways and means by which CFD and CWD will operate our water system in a prudent, cooperative and pro-active fashion so that it reliably meets current and future needs. Also in April, the Committee adopted new 'Water Rules & Regulations', with various appendices and a supplementary ordinance. Drafted by the Clerk with the assistance of Manager Flanagan, Superintendent Nadeau, and Attorney Joseph McNeil, these superseded the water regulations that had previously been part of the District's bylaws. The 2006 Bylaws delegated their adoption to the Committee (Art. 15.1). The new 'Water Rules & Regulations', which are comprehensive in scope, reflect new State laws and best practices for operating a water system. They also support efforts towards more common standards for all five public water companies operating within the Town of Colchester and throughout CWD's regional system. Following publication, they went into full effect on 19 June 2006.

Late in 2005, District officials began exploring with CWD officials the adequacy of the District's water storage capacities as provided under the 'Interlocal Agreement' (2003). Early in 2006, it became clear that the District, Fire District 3 and the Town had similar concerns. At a joint meeting of the three entities in March, all agreed to work together to seek a possible common solution. The initial step was to enlist professional engineers to conduct a water storage facilities planning study, first, to project anticipated water demands by 2025 and, then, to propose ways to meet those demands in the areas served by the four water companies. Following a competitive bidding process the firm of Forcier, Aldrich & Associates was chosen in August to do the planning study. By year's end, the engineers' demand projections had been completed and accepted by the three entities. Early in 2007 the engineers' recommendations are expected to be received. CFD 1 has played a leading role in this project, with Manager Flanagan serving on a common coordinating subcommittee. Reaching further agreements for addressing Colchester's comprehensive water storage needs will remain a major issue for District officials in 2007.

To better inform the Prudential Committee's deliberations on the District's water needs, Treasurer Vincent and Asst Treasurer Van Dzura completed a tabulation of the District's water purchases and sales since the year 2000.

In addition to seeing that the District's water system is well-maintained (e.g., exercising all gate valves, flushing hydrants, checking meters, overseeing service line repairs, etc.), a good deal of attention in 2006 was given to the configuration of water lines in the northern part of the District in the light of both current conditions and future developments. Superintendent Nadeau has played a major role in these efforts, as has Manager Flanagan with respect to the latter.

For the first time in several years, financial budgets for the District's Water and General Funds, prepared by Asst. Treasurer Van Dzura, were adopted by the Prudential Committee. The Asst. Treasurer, in addition to his effective handling of water billings, also provided the Prudential Committee District officials with quarterly financial reports. He also sent with two of the quarterly billing copies of letters from the Chairman conveying District news.

At the beginning of May, the District launched its first website, providing the District with an effective 'virtual' public presence where District material could be readily accessed and people could easily contact District officials. Maria Rinaldi creatively constructed the site, with assistance from the Clerk, and she continues to serve as webmaster. Prudential Committee agendas and other current notices are now posted on site's 'Current Notices'.

During 2006, Manager Flanagan and Chairman McLaughlin attended and made representations on behalf of the District at various public forums: Champlain Water District, the State Water Supply Division (WSD), Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization (CCMPO; in connection with the Rt 15 Corridor Study), Town of Colchester Planning Commission (on revisions of the Town's Master Plan with respect to infrastructures).

In accordance with resolution no. 6 of the 2006 Annual Meeting, which approved total disbursements of up to \$18k for compensations to District officers and stipends to Prudential Committee members, the Committee approved the following: \$6k each for the Manager and Asst Treasurer, \$1.2k each of the Clerk and Treasurer, and \$50 per person for each officer and PC members' attendance at Prudential Committee meetings. The total disbursement for 2006 came in under the \$18k stipulated.

Resolution no. 12 of the 2006 Annual Meeting, calling for a donation of \$1k to St Michael's Fire and Rescue, was duly executed.

During 2006, a new Lime Kiln Bridge was opened and Vermont Gas Systems laid a new and larger transmission line along College Parkway. No new water connections were issued, but Saint Michael's College replaced its service line for Lyons Hall. Although CWD raised its wholesale rate by 4.84 percent in July 2006 (to \$1.30 per 1000 gals.), the Fire District's water rates to customers remained the same as set in July 2003. The Prudential Committee in April approved a comprehensive set of water fees, most at levels reflecting current District practice.

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph McLaughlin, SSE
22 January 2007