

Dorset Fire District Special Meeting Minutes
January 20, 2021

Members Present: Ben Weiss, Abbott de Rham, Roger Squire, Lee Fox, Milton McWayne

Others Present: Rob Gaiotti (Town Manager), Greg Kepler (Engineer), Robert Clark (Engineer), Justine Cook, Mary Stevenson, Tanya Gabrielle, Patti Campbell, John Rodenburg, Andy Longacre, Ginny Longacre.

Ben Weiss called the meeting to order at 7:01pm. He outlined the agenda:

1. Maximum Bond Amount
2. % Cost Share
3. Adopt Resolution
4. Bond Vote Letter

He noted that the Vermont Drinking Water State Revolving Fund had verbally committed at a recent meeting that DFD would be eligible for subsidy and 0% financing for up to \$5 million total. This is promising news as total project costs for the items DFD has been pursuing add up to over \$5 million. Generally if DFD were to spend the full bond amount, the total grant would be \$1.75 million and the bonded amount would be \$3.25 million over 30 years at 0% interest. Ben Weiss further explained that the project items included in the \$5 million bond would be:

System Wide Service Line Replacement
Small Main/ Shared Service Replacement
System Wide Metering
Emergency Source Connection

These items were all outlined in the Otter Creek Engineering Preliminary Engineering Report and then put into Project Design for the permit to construct that was submitted on December 1st. The next milestone for State Financing is to hold a bond vote prior to March 31st. At the meeting this evening the Prudential Committee would be reviewing and approving the required documents for the bond vote.

Ben Weiss noted that when the figures were run with the bond payment and a 30/70 cost share for individual users, the payments were all over the map. Upon reviewing this information the recommendation to simply share the bond payment costs equally was approved. This allows for easier administration and is more understandable for users. Discussion ensued about the cost share % and project approaches.

As additional audience members joined the meeting, the Prudential Committee reviewed the above information again and fielded questions from the public. Justine Cook asked about directional drilling, metering, project costs and use of copper vs. plastic for service lines. It was noted that directional drilling will be pursued where feasible, project costs included the four main categories listed above, and that copper was much more expensive than plastic (\$37 per foot

vs. \$3 per foot for plastic). Discussion ensued about metering and the positive aspects: better knowledge of system use, identifying leaks or wasted water, and equity in billing. Costs for each facet of the various projects were discussed with Robert Clark from Otter Creek Engineering. John Rodenburg inquired about the status of Fire Hydrants and whether they would be part of the projects. Ben Weiss answered that Fire Flows and Hydrant/ main upgrades were not part of these projects. He also noted that as part of the preliminary engineering Otter Creek identified 4 additional hydrants that could be put back online for Fire Protection use, but the State has to allow this under the permit to operate. Rob Gaiotti noted that DFD had done a lot of early work outlining options for second phase projects like main upgrades, additional storage etc. He noted that if DFD made it through the phase 1 projects without an overly burdensome amount of debt, it's possible they might be able to look at these items sooner than expected. Additional discussion was had about costs, user easements, expected participation rates etc. Ben Weiss noted that 10% of the service lines were already new and that DFD was using an 80% participation rate as a benchmark. He noted that if all projects were completed and the service line participation rate was 80% the quarterly bond payment per user would be around \$87. It was again noted that \$5,000,000 would be the maximum amount of the bond, but DFD would work to maximize the State Grant and it's likely the actual projects would come in under the maximum.

Approve Bond Amount:

Abbott de Rham moved and Milton McWayne seconded to approve the maximum bond amount of \$5 million for the projects outlined in the proposal. Lee Fox moved and Roger Squire seconded amendment to the motion stating that the cost share would be removed and the bond payment would be spread out equally over the 178 users, amendment approved 5-0. Amendment was added to the original motion, motion approved 5-0.

Approve Bond Certificate, Resolution & Warning:

Roger Squire noted some small typos in the Certificate and Warning. Rob Gaiotti will make the edits. It was noted that the physical location of voting will be the Town Offices at 112 Mad Tom Road, every voter in the District will receive a bond vote ballot with the Town and School ballots and can return the ballots by mail or drop them off. The bond vote letter will be included with the ballots to inform voters of the projects and process. Lee Fox moved and Abbott de Rham seconded to approve the Bond Certificate, Resolution and Warning as amended, motion passed 5-0.

Approve Bond Vote Letter:

Ben Weiss presented the bond vote letter. It was noted that the letter explains the projects and gives information about the DWSRF financing opportunity with the eventual bond payment amount for users. The letter is important because voters will be mostly voting by mail and the letter helps outline the effort. Ben Weiss noted that DFD will have informational meetings about the projects and with individual users each Tuesday in February at 7pm. This is in addition to the informational meeting on March 1st at 4pm. Lee Fox moved and Roger Squire seconded to approve the bond vote letter as presented, motion passed 5-0.

A few follow up questions were answered and the Board reminded the group about the Tuesday meetings in February for information. Tanya Gabrielle thanked the DFD Board for all their hard work, and efforts.

Lee Fox moved and Abbott de Rham seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:35pm, motion passed 5-0.

Respectfully Submitted

Rob Gaiotti - Town Manager