

**MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE AND FIREWISE BOARD MEETING
FOR THE VILLAGE OF TAOS SKI VALLEY, NEW MEXICO
HELD ON FEBRUARY 6, 2023 (VIA ZOOM) at 10:00 AM**

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 AM and notice of meeting announced.

Members present included Trudy DiLeo, Jim Woodard, Henry Caldwell and Ben Pitz.

Regarding the recent major water outage in the village, Ann Marie Wooldridge gave a brief explanation of how the Village will give homeowners who lost water service over the holidays a credit on their water bill in February. Forms were mailed out with the current water bill explaining how each resident can figure out how much credit they will get, along with instructions on how to communicate that to the village.

Trudy DiLeo brought up the possibility of creating an ordinance in the Village requiring homeowners to install water turn off valves in their homes. Installation of water monitors was also discussed. She also questioned the past practice of the village negating or discounting large water bills for residents who had water leaks that were not discovered right away.

John Avila noted that in the past there has been some discussion about requiring homeowners to have a meter installed on the 'homeowner's side' of the meter that the village uses for water bill reading, in order to be able to apply for a credit from the village after a water loss. These meters will notify the homeowner of an increased water usage (as with a leak), and some higher end meters allow the homeowner to shut the water off remotely. He said that even if the homeowner got the cheaper version with no remote turn-off, that the homeowner could ask the Public Works team to make an attempt to turn their water off. No final decision was made in the past about this idea.

Renato Frimm suggested sending a letter to homeowners that simply recommended installing a water monitor in their homes, instead of creating an ordinance requiring turn-off valves.

Trudy DiLeo responded that, after the water disaster we have all just experienced, we were past the point of simply asking homeowners to take actions.

Henry Caldwell said that we should include a 'heads up' in the letter that Renato mentioned. We should state that the committee will be recommending an ordinance to the council that a water monitoring system and/or turn-off valve will be mandated in the not-too-distant future. Renato agreed. Henry mentioned that there will always be a 'weak link' between the village meter (which is deep underground) and the meter / turn-off valve in the home.

Jim Woodard mentioned that turn-off valves need to be inside, or they would freeze.

Anthony Martinez, Director of Public Works, said that some of the village meters have frozen at times. They are usually about 4 to 6 feet deep. He has worked with some homeowners to have meters placed inside the homeowners' garages. He said that this would be the ultimate solution for this problem.

Jim Woodard suggested making installation of a turn-off valve and a place to drain the pipes required in all new construction.

When asked about requirements for new construction, Jalmar Bowden, the village building inspector, said that plumbing and mechanical codes are under state jurisdiction. The village does not have the jurisdiction for plumbing. He offered to call the state chief inspector to ask what requirements are in place for turn-off valves.

Henry asked Anthony to clarify that meters placed in homes/garages are read electronically by the public works team. Anthony agreed and said only about 6 meters in the village have to be read manually.

Trudy asked Anthony about a village-wide system in each home that would identify where a turn-off valve was located in each home. This would be used in case the homeowner was notified by a water monitoring system that a leak has occurred, and the public works team was asked to go into the home to

turn the water off. Anthony said it would be a good idea, but there are confidentiality concerns to be taken into consideration. He also said that some homeowners, for various reasons, don't know where their plumbing is located.

John Avila spoke about the liability and security concerns that the village has to consider as well. He has drafted a 'release form' in the past that a homeowner would need to sign before public works personnel would enter a home. He is also concerned that if the village were to keep garage codes, etc. on file, that there may be a criminal element in the village that would use that information to enter a home illegally.

Henry stated that through the years there has been, basically, very little problems with crime in the village. He said that most of the property managers in the village would say the same. One idea would be to have a key-code to a locked door on the side of the house that would house the turn-off valve.

Trudy asked John and Anthony if they thought having a sign outside each home with a map to the turn-off valve would be beneficial. John said that would be great, as with information during an evacuation that the homeowner would want emergency workers to know about the home.

Michael Chandler asked questions about where the major leaks were found in the last outage (inside or outside the homes). Anthony said most were inside the homes. Michael said that most of the village meters were not placed below the frost line in the ground and would continue to have problems, as they were not placed deep enough. He touted the benefits of having meters inside the home. They would be easily read with easy access. He also questioned that since residents were already paying their water bills, they shouldn't be required to pay for installation of meters inside the garage / home. The inside meter serves to the village's interest and should be paid for by the village, if deemed necessary. The cost should not be put off to the taxpayer.

Anthony agreed to some of the problems Michael spoke to. He said that the water lines need to be at least 6 feet deep. Michael added that frost lines vary in different areas, but all building has to be below the frost line in that area. He said that the issue of installing new metering in each home is separate from the freezing water lines in the village. He said that the village needs to know where all the turn-off valves and meters are located before the next major leak occurs.

Henry reported that the post office package lockers were at the post office in boxes. The installation will, hopefully, take place in the not-too-distant future.

An update was given by Henry about the effort to bury the power lines in Amizette. He stated that there will, hopefully, be a meeting with Kit Carson in the next couple of weeks. Trudy said she had been in contact with Raul Hurtado, with the Forest Service. She had requested a meeting, but he hasn't given her a date yet.

Trudy asked Anthony about snow plowing around the beaver pond and the steep part of Twining going up to the beaver pond. After the snow is plowed off farther than the edge of the road, it is impossible to see where the edge of the road is. At least 2 cars that Trudy knew of had driven off the road onto the flat snow. Neither got stuck, but it makes for a potential hazardous condition. Anthony said he would look into that.

Trudy said that she would speak to Mitch Daniels (who was absent from the meeting) about eliminating language in the CWPP that does not pertain to the role of Firewise in Taos Ski Valley.

Jalmar Bowden gave an update on the NFL grant. He said that he should be able to submit his information to the state in the next week or so and it would probably be 3-6 weeks until he heard back from the state about the grant.

Trudy said the next meeting will be March 6, 2023 at 10:00 via zoom.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:00 AM.