

Danville Fire District Recap and Recommendations for Consideration

10/2/25

RECAP- (Also review the Task Analysis for the Danville Fire District from 6/10/2025, copied below)

Danville Fire District #1 -Future operation, management and maintenance

- Danville's public water is a vital natural resource supplying ~214 residents and businesses, including the school, with clean, pure water from a source protection area in Danville on Kittredge road.
- The Fire District's Prudential board members as well as the state certified water sample collector are ready to step down and are seeking a plan to continue fire district operations for Danville residents and businesses utilizing Danville's public water supply
- The fire district is a self sustaining system with regard to revenue and expenses. There is a rate increase planned for the December billing. Danville rates are much lower than other fire districts. The town clerk/office currently assists with billing for the fire district which includes sending bills to customers twice a year and ensuring payment is made for the fire district's bond
- There are no current emergencies with the water infrastructure. Upgrades, mainly larger water pipe replacement will be needed at some point in the future.

Recommendations for Consideration

1. At the next December billing cycle, a letter and request could be included to seek community members to head the prudential board of the fire district and oversee governance and operations. This entails training as well as minimal fees for certification with the state. This includes a regular commitment to collect water samples and oversee the pump houses and tank.
2. The town could purchase the fire district and continue operations. Both the Town Clerk Michelle Leclerc, and the Road Foreman, Keith Gadapee have offered to receive training and certification via the state in order to hold the qualifications to collect water samples and operate the water system. The cost is low (~\$80) to register with the state and the training would take approximately a year to ensure that Michelle and Keith were properly trained to collect water samples.
3. The town could purchase the fire district and then contract with H2O Innovation, who currently manages the waste water treatment facility in Danville. The estimated contract cost, issued on July 7, 2025, by Rodger Glenn Sheldon from H2O Innovation was \$24,375 per year.
4. Private sale and purchase of the fire district/ water supply- NOGO. Fails the FAST test (FAST- Feasible, Acceptable, Suitable, Timely.) Historical precedent of disaster for water users including unsustainable costs and loss of water access. Privatization limits accountability. Primary objective becomes profit with accountability not directed to the people they serve. Loss of public input, ultimately loss of public control over essential service.
5. TBD

TASK ANALYSIS- Danville Fire District #1 -Future operation, management and maintenance

Current Prudential Board members-Tim Ide, Ken Leslie, Jerry Fontaine. are looking to step down and need a plan in place for transfer of management, operations, and maintenance of Danville Fire District #1. Certified water sample collector also seeking a replacement.

INFORMATION – Facts and Assumptions

- Natural Resource providing high quality, clean, untreated water to 214 Danville residents, businesses and commercial buildings.
- Location: 672 Kittredge Road, Danville, VT 05828 – Includes 317 acres, pump house, tank and shed
Property ID- TH014-04100
Total Property Value \$802,900
Fire Districts are exempt from property tax

Prior to 1998, Danville's public water supply was an open reservoir that then need a treatment facility. - instead a well was drilled in ~1998 and 3 phase power and a pump house were installed. Electricity is needed for pumping water into the tank and then gravity fed to users. A generator is kept at the fire station for power outage situation.

Upgraded water pipe from 4" to 8" pipe to Danville Green and Hill Street

New pipe needed on Peacham Road, Brainerd, Mountain View and Walden Hill from 4" to 8"- not urgent but will be an expensive project requiring a bond or grants if possible. A quote for this project from 2018 was just under \$3M.

The Fire District's Prudential board members as well as the state certified water sample collector are ready to step down and are seeking a plan to continue fire district operations for Danville residents and businesses utilizing Danville's public water supply. This includes management, governance, operations, and maintenance of Danville Fire District #1.

Town wells have a well protection area, a/k/a source protection area, which delineates a radius around the well that cannot be developed.

There are 317 acres surrounding the well area on Kittredge road. There is the potential for acres to be subdivided and sold to help raise money for projects and expenditures if needed.

A fire district does have the power to tax

A fire district typically has less resources than a town

Marty's First Stop will be hooking on with their expansion which will increase usage. There is capacity

MTAP grants are often available to help fund municipal projects

TASK ANALYSIS- Danville Fire District #1 -Future operation, management and maintenance

INFORMATION- Facts and Assumptions Continued

Pump house runs on average 4 hours/day

Pump House does require daily inspection to ensure no issues and check tank security. For example, and this is not the norm, usage was up and they needed to shut down a section which has a known 'tender' pipe. In this case, the fire district was not responsible for replacing this pipe because it was an add on which was disconnected and then usage was restored to average.

2024 Vermont Statute Title 24, Municipal and County Government Fund offers hardship loans in cases of emergency

Water is high quality and regularly passes testing. It does not require any treatment and currently there is no chlorine or fluoride added. Short term chlorine was needed after the last tank cleaning when it tested at higher bacterial levels. All resolved after short term treatment

Valuable natural resource providing high quality, clean and untreated water for 214 Danville residents and businesses and the Danville School

Danville Town Clerk is currently responsible for sending water bills twice a year (Due 6/30 and 12/31) and Town Clerk also makes payments from the Fire District account for the current bond

FINANCIALS -Danville Fire District #1 is a self sustaining system with current revenues and expenses of:

2024 Revenue= \$127,461.74

2024 Expenses=\$127,268.73

Current bond matures on 11/10/2038

Current rates are \$220/2x/year residential

Rates for businesses use a formula and school has a special rate

Last rate increase was “at least five years ago,” and a discussion to increase rate to \$250/2x/year and for businesses in December 2025 is in the works.

NOTE- Danville water rates are much lower than many other water districts. For example, Barnet Village Fire District #2 pays \$1000/year (\$250 quarterly) which needed to increase in order to cover bonds for fixing leaking pipe.

TASK ANALYSIS- Develop and Compare Options

1. Status Quo- Find people to replace current board members and take on management and operational responsibility. This also includes finding someone to train and become certified by the state in water sampling. Thus far no one has stepped up, offered or shown interest. In other fire districts, this has typically been taken on by another water user to keep the fire district operational and often to prevent the fire district from private purchase.

TASK ANALYSIS- Danville Fire District #1 -Future operation, management and maintenance

TASK ANALYSIS- Develop and Compare Options continued

2. Town of Danville to take over management and operations of fire district. Currently the Danville Fire District is financially self sustaining, but with very close revenue and expenses, which has resulted in a price increase discussion.

- No urgency for further spending at this time
- Seven year old quote for pipe upgrade was ~\$3M
- Current bond matures in 2038
- Land sale from fire district property would help cover costs and put property back on tax payment to town
- Town Clerk already doing billing (2X/year and financials)
- Town takes on responsible for emergency- MTAP and Hardship loans available

3. Private Sale/Privatize- NOGO- fails the FAST test. Historical precedent for disaster to water users including unsustainable costs and loss of water access. Privatization limits public accountability. Primary objective becomes profit, accountability to stockholders or bottom line not the people they serve. Loss of public input and ultimately loss of public control over essential service.