



Why this newsletter:

Progress and changes are taking place in the management and operation of your water system, which has supplied our Randolph Center community since the 1800's. Your fire district is managed and operated by volunteer citizens, some of whom are descendants of earlier volunteer citizens building and supporting the water system, who take pride in serving our community. Many improvements have occurred in the past 160 plus years, with the goal of providing a sustainable, high quality water system for both drinking water and fire protection (the latter through hydrants within the Randolph Center Village). Note that the Randolph Center Volunteer Fire Department is a separate entity, which shares in the water distribution system benefits of the fire district, and who works cooperatively with us to serve our community.

What are these changes and progress? We are about to begin a system-wide asset management planning engineering evaluation to prioritize continued improvement in our infrastructure and management systems to keep up with the aging of our infrastructure, and the best-practices for providing high quality drinking water.

This asset management plan will form the basis for scheduling and budgeting infrastructure improvements to both catch-up on deferred maintenance and address normal aging of our system components. This aging of our components is showing itself through increased pipe breaks and equipment breakdowns in critical elements. Examples in the past two years are:

Four pipe breaks and detected leaks in 2017:	Repair costs of \$6900
Pump and heater failures at pumping station in 2018:	Repair costs of \$4400
Pipe break at reservoir in 2018:	Repair costs of \$6300
Fire hydrant break requiring replacement in 2018:	Repair costs of \$6400

We are also working closely with Vermont Technical College (VTC), as we share two connections with their water system, to manage what the State of Vermont now recognizes as the single entity of the Randolph Center Water System. We have been sharing storage capacity of the VTC water tower since 1968 and rely on each other for back-up water supply in emergencies. The long-standing cooperation between the Randolph Center Fire District #1 and VTC is now more formalized through this single administrative entity. We are also exploring options with VTC on joining operations duties.

What this means to our customers: The fire district prudential committee will be working with our engineering consultant, the Dufresne Group, along with Vermont Technical College, and the state of Vermont Drinking Water Division to protect our critical system elements via a priority plan to either upgrade or replace those elements ahead of when they become highly vulnerable to unexpected failure. We will be financing these upgrades in two ways:

- 1) Increasing our capital reserve fund
- 2) Eventually financing via loans, since improvements will require more than we have in our capital reserve.

Financing this requires that we increase our water rates. We have not raised our water rates to residential customers since 1994. If we had done so on a regular basis to keep up with inflation, your current average residential water rate would now be much higher. We cannot catch up at once, but we need to increase water rates to sustain our system. We are currently working on determining what those need to be, starting with the water billing cycle beginning June 1, 2019.

Your opportunity to participate: To learn more about your water system, ask any of our volunteers. You can also attend our meetings, which are held on the 3rd Thursday of each month*. These are customarily held at the Red School House in Randolph Center. *Visit the Randolph Center Fire District #1 website at http://www.rfd1.org/?page_id=226, and look under Notices: for meeting agenda including dates and times, along with other information about the fire district. The Randolph Fire District #1 Annual meeting is held on the third Tuesday in May and is open to the public, as are all the monthly meetings.

Sincerely,

The Randolph Fire District #1 Prudential Committee John Doss, Jay Hooper, and John Lens, Chair