

WEST BARNSTABLE FIRE DISTRICT
PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE – REGULAR MINUTES
JANUARY 17, 2018

Present: Prudential Committee members Ed Smith, Van Northcross, and Crystal LaPine; Chief Joe Maruca, Deputy Chief Dave Paananen, District Accountant Susan Rao, District Treasurer Ray Pirrone, District Moderator Kate Mitchell, and District Clerk Elaine Grace.

Chairman Ed Smith called the meeting to order at 4:02 PM.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all.

The Chief suggested and it was agreed to invite the Water Commissioners and the District Moderator to the February Prudential Committee meeting.

Clerk's Report:

The minutes of the December 20, 2017 meeting were accepted as written.

Treasurer's Report:

The following warrants have been approved for payment:

PR 18-26	\$16,022.50
PR 18-27	\$13,113.61

Treasurer Ray Pirrone advised that the auditors have not completed the 2017 audit due to failure to receive the formal 2017 actuarial report from the actuarial firm. The auditors have asked to delay their report presentation until the February Prudential Committee meeting. This the first year that the actuarial results of the District's liability for unfunded current and post-retirement health benefits will be incorporated into the District's GAAP financial results and will have a significant impact on the report.

No statements are available – Kathleen has been ill – she and Susan are meeting this Friday to go over accounts.

The DOR has certified the District's "free cash" in the amount of \$174,350.

Treasurer Pirrone provided a summary of the 2019 budget to date:

- \$30,000 from Stabilization will be allocated to long term debt to make the first payment on the new engine.
- Free cash will be utilized to pay for special articles – library, personal protective equipment, stabilization funds, and the pickup truck.
- Article 6 Legal will be decreased by \$6500, and those funds will be added to Article 7 to better represent legal expenses.
- The District's County retirement assessment will be less this year due to 7 rather than 8 fulltime employees.

- The OPEB contribution has been increased from \$30,000 to \$60,000 to account for Chris Greim; the amount the OPEB trust fund contributes to the budget will be \$25,000 to pay for Chris Greim's health insurance payments.
- A new account, Building Safety Improvement has been added to cover the cost of replacement flooring.

Treasurer Pirrone is keeping a close eye on ambulance revenue which is a concern and the District is over budget in the Treasurer's wages; however, overall, the FY2018 budget is in fine shape.

Discussion was held regarding two proposals for not hiring additional staff which would increase the tax bill by 4.78% and for hiring five part-time staff which would call for an 8.42% tax bill increase. Both proposals call for permanent tax increases.

Mr. Northcross felt that an 8% tax increase would be a hard sell; he is more comfortable with the 4.78% or even a 5-6% increase. The Chief advised that hiring 5 part-time staff would create some stability in staffing, allow for more value in training, and add to the staff experience and knowledge base. The Department is verging on a superior rate of service; however, the reality is the District's tax base is stagnant. The Chief will continue to work on the proposals, and attempt to pull down the percentages.

New District Accountant:

Susan Rao was introduced and welcomed. She has been on the job for only 2 days. Susan has been retired for 4 years, after working for 30+ years at publishing firms Harcourt Brace, and Houghton Mifflin. She received her accounting degree from Babson College.

Career Firefighter Hiring Process:

The Chief reported that the Career Firefighter hiring process has begun. The position has been posted as a Tuesday-Friday, 8AM to 6 PM shift. It has been posted internally and sent to former volunteer members of the department. Twelve to thirteen applications have been received. Chief Maruca noted that he is adding a psychological component to the testing. He would like a member of the Prudential Committee to sit on the Hiring Committee as he feels it would add less bias and a community aspect to the process. He also feels that the Prudential Committee would gain a better understanding of the process. It does require a commitment of time. The process will begin in February and the final decision will be made in March. The Chief reported that there are three members of the current volunteer staff who are technically qualified and competent, and would be the best fit, moving forward.

Retiree Health Insurance Policies:

The Chief and the Prudential Committee reviewed the proposed West Barnstable Fire District Retiree Health Insurance Policies revised as of January 17, 2018. It was noted the under policy #2, the Prudential Committee would recommend reducing the District's percentage of the premium payment to 50% going forward. This issue will be revisited in July 2018 when the state law moratorium preventing such changes is due to expire. Under #4, no "pop-up" participants would be covered.

Mr. Northcross motioned, MS. LaPine seconded, and it was unanimously voted that the West Barnstable Fire District will provide health insurance to its retirees and the spouse of its retirees in accordance with the policies as presented at the January 17, 2018 meeting of the Prudential Committee.

Ambulance Billing Rates:

The Prudential Committee discussed increasing ambulance rates. The Chief proposed an increase of 2.5% from \$2725 to \$2795. He advised there were 8 less transports in 2017 than in 2016.

Mr. Northcross motioned, Ms. LaPine seconded, and it was unanimously voted to set the 2018 ambulance billing rate at \$2795, as presented at the January 17, 2018 Prudential Committee meeting, effective February 1, 2018.

Fire Chief's Report:

- a. **Staff Behavior Rumor – Fake News:** The Chief advised there is nothing to the rumor about staff behavior, disregard anything you may hear.
- b. **Grants:** AFG and VFG grants have been filed. One for additional forestry hose; a 3rd try for radio replacements; and a long shot for a replacement tanker.
- c. **Winter Storm Grayson:** Coastal flooding was extreme during this storm. Sandwich, Barnstable and West Barnstable were especially affected and several residents needed to be rescued and evacuated from their homes. The Chief is collecting and reviewing storm data for possible MEMA/FEMA storm reimbursement.
- d. **New Engine Status/Old Engine Status:** The new engine should be arriving in 10-14 days; 4500 hits on the old engine, but no bids. The Chief will re-auction.
- e. **New Ambulance Status/Old Ambulance Status:** The ambulance delivery is on schedule; the old ambulance auction will open next week.
- f. **Staff Updates:** 8 Recruits will start the Fire Academy on January 29th; 2 recruits have been promoted to probationary status (smallest number in a long time); 2 probationary firefighters have been promoted to Firefighter status. Mike Demoracski will leave for Dennis Fire as of January 18th.

Chief Maruca noted that the last Quarterly Performance Report statistics show that West Barnstable Fire meets emergency response in 8 minutes or less, 95% of the time.

There have been no significant events during the last quarter in regard to emergency call activity.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine L. Grace
District Clerk