

WEST BARNSTABLE FIRE DISTRICT
PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE MINUTES – FEBRUARY 20, 2019

Present: Prudential Committee members Van Northcross and Stuart Schulman, Chief Maruca, Deputy Chief Paananen, District Treasurer Ray Pirrone, District Accountant Susan Rao, District Clerk Elaine Grace, Water Commissioners Kris Clark and Mark Wirtanen, and District Moderator Kate Mitchell.

Acting Chairman Van Northcross called the meeting to order at 4:05 PM.

Those present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

CLERK’S REPORT

Mr. Northcross motioned, Mr. Schulman seconded, and it was unanimously voted to accept the minutes of the regular January 23, 2019 Prudential Committee meeting minutes as written.

The Clerk was asked to email the draft FY2020 Warrant to the Prudential Committee members and the Moderator.

TREASURER’S REPORT

Treasurer Ray Pirrone reported that the FY2019 budget is in good shape at 58% completed. Taxes are being collected, and ambulance receipts are up 30% over last year. Salaries are on budget – regular and call payrolls are down. No problems are anticipated.

Mr. Pirrone reviewed some of the 2018 Auditor’s Recommendations and Suggestions for Improvement. The auditors recommend that cash control be limited to the “Treasurer”. Previously, the second signer was the Administrative Assistant, Jan King, who is no longer employed at Wbfd. Mr. Pirrone is concerned that in a situation where the Treasurer is suddenly incapacitated, the District could have difficulty gaining access to funds. He suggested adding a Prudential Committee member and changing the by-laws. However, Section 9 of the By-laws does state a Temporary Treasurer may be appointed. The Chief suggested adding this to the March agenda for discussion. The auditors also suggested adding a formal policy concerning the use of credit cards. A form exists, but there is no policy behind this procedure.

There was a lengthy discussion regarding OPEB liability. Mr. Pirrone will try to get an updated actuarial figure – we are currently assessed on a June 2016 valuation. While recognizing that we are underfunded, it is not possible at this time to go from \$54,000 to \$108,000. We need to continue to work toward a higher number. It was suggested that any savings in other lines could be moved to OPEB. The good news is that we are being proactive. The Town of Barnstable currently has a \$232 million unfunded liability.

The Treasurer is working on a 5-year summary regarding the District’s free cash calculations.

The Chief suggested that the Prudential Committee re-assess the use of the Bailey Fund. At the Annual District Meeting in 1997, Article 14 accepted a bequest from Kenneth and Ruth Bailey in the amount of \$76,000 and created a permanent endowment fund, restricting use to only the interest from the fund. We need to clarify how we can use the money going forward. The Chief will propose an Article at this year’s Annual District Meeting.

The proposed FY2020 budget was reviewed – there are no Special or Capital project requests on the warrant this year; however, we still need to further reduce budget requests in order to achieve the goal of a 2.5-3% tax bill increase. The budget will be finalized at the March meeting.

The Chief will include the Capital Plan in this year’s Annual Report booklet, although there are no capital requests on this year’s warrant.

Chief Maruca is still researching Fire Chief salaries. Chief Maruca has been on the job for more than 13 years and earns \$111,427. Most of the other Chiefs are fairly new to their positions and making far greater salaries. The Chief

noted there is a tighter range on Deputy Chiefs, but it's difficult getting the information. Some deputies are union, others are not. Some departments don't have a Deputy. He also advised that most other Chiefs and Deputies get stipends, vehicles, extra pay for paramedic certification, call back pay, etc.

The Chief advised that he recommends self-insuring a Critical Illness Fund after looking at various insurance policies. Coverage for a \$10,000 payout would cost \$5,000 per year. He feels the best path is to put aside \$5000 in the initial fund, followed by \$2, 5000 per year thereafter.

The following warrants were approved for payment:

PR 19-30	\$ 23,029.28
PR 19-31	\$ 12,375.81
PR 19-32	\$ 29,331.01
PR 19-33	\$ 14,457.39
AP 19-24	\$ 13,087.39
AP 19-25	\$ 8,685.00
SW 19-01	\$139,500.00
SW 19-02	\$ 3,750.00

WATER COMMISSIONERS

Kris Clark led a discussion concerning the Prudential Committee's request that the Water Commissioners explore the possibility of leasing/selling water from the District's municipal well. During the course of researching information about the well, it was discovered that our easement expires on October 20, 2022. The Water Commissioners have sent a letter to District Counsel Chuck Sabatt, asking for his assistance in resolving the issue of the easement.

FIRE DISTRICT/WEBSITE REVIEW

Kris Clark addressed the issue of the Fire District and Fire Department's website and found it lacking in user friendliness and not responsive to the citizens of the District. What information that exists on the District website is outdated. She would like to see up-to-date minutes and also have the ability to post Water Commission information and comments. The Prudential Committee and the Chief advised that they would review her suggestions and work with the web master to update and upgrade the website.

MEPA COMPLIANCE & SELF-EVALUATION (Massachusetts Pay Equity Act)

The Chief advised that the District is in compliance and that there are no issues. He advised the reviewing the Policy and Practices Review dated January 28, 2019 handout. Discussion was tabled until the March meeting.

PERSONNEL POLICY CHANGES

The Chief advised that there are some proposed amendments to the Fire District Personnel Policy that need to be reviewed and discussed. The proposed amendments will be on the March meeting agenda.

FIRE CHIEF'S ETHICS DISCLOSURE

The Chief will be attending the 2019 National Volunteer Fire Council Spring Meeting April 25-26, 2019 in Alexandria, VA. Travel expenses up to \$500.00 will be reimbursed by the Massachusetts Call/Volunteer Firefighters Association. Attendance at the conference is valuable to the Chief's professional development and information from the meeting is directly relevant to the West Barnstable Fire Department.

Mr. Northcross motioned, Mr. Schulman seconded, and it was unanimously voted to approve the Chief's attendance at the NVFC Spring Meeting in Alexandria, VA and acceptance of reimbursement of \$500 for travel expenses by the MCVFA.

FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT

1. Emergency Calls – The department was called to another fire caused by improper disposal of polyurethane materials. This is the fourth such call in West Barnstable in the past few years.
2. Community Events – The Fire Department held their annual Awards Night on February 2, 2019.

3. Staff Updates – Curtis has completed paramedic training and will be taking the test in a month; Andy Mandel will be filling Lt. Clough's position. Twelve people are in the new volunteer class. Ten members are attending the Fire Academy and will be out of action until they complete the course.
4. 1717 Meetinghouse Cistern – The 1717 Meetinghouse Foundation will be funding an upgrade and replacement of the cistern in front of the Meetinghouse on the Village Green. They are still resistant to installing a fire suppression system; however, they may be rethinking the idea. Bortolotti repaired the damage to the present cistern, damaged by a vehicle.

DEPUTY CHIEF'S REPORT

1. Apparatus Updates – A Rosenbauer technician repaired a leak caused by a loose hose clamp over last weekend. He also recalibrated the gauges.
2. Building Maintenance/Repair Updates – Cape Light Compact completed their audit and it looks promising that the present lights can be replaced with LED lighting. The Deputy is waiting to receive their proposal.

Mr. Northcross motioned, Mr. Schulman seconded, and it was unanimously voted in a roll call vote to go into Executive Session at 6:21 PM to discuss Collective Bargaining, and not to return to public session.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:39 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine L. Grace, District Clerk

WEST BARNSTABLE FIRE DISTRICT
PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE MINUTES - EXECUTIVE SESSION – FEBRUARY 20, 2019

The Chief advised that there has been no major progress, and there is no major problem with the Collective Bargaining negotiations. The Chief perceives it is more of an emotional rather than a financial issue. Two of the union members have been on staff for decades, and three have just recently become full time staff.. Although two are at the top of the scale, and the 3 newcomers are still receiving step increases that is not the real issue.

The Chief's concern is that there is a desire for a promotion to Captain on the part of the older staff - they don't want to be on the same level as the newer staff members. There is a feeling that they are not being shown enough deference given their long term service to the department. The Chief will not negotiate on the basis of promotions.

Another issue is that the full time staff is getting pushback and social pressure from the Professional Firefighters Union about the use of part-time staff . They would like to eliminate the use of part-time personnel.

The Chief and Mr. Schulman will continue negotiations.

Mr. Northcross motioned, Mr. Schulman seconded, and it was unanimously voted in a roll call vote to go out of Executive Session at 6:39 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine L. Grace, District Clerk