

WEST BARNSTABLE FIRE DISTRICT
PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE MINUTES
NOVEMBER 20, 2019

Present:

Chief Joseph Maruca, Deputy Chief David Paananen; Prudential Committee members Edward Smith, Van Northcross, and Stuart Schulman; District Treasurer Raymond Pirrone; District Accountant Susan Rao; District Clerk Elaine Grace; Edward O’Neill, Barnstable Town Assessor and Kris Clark, Water Commissioner and Town Councilor.

Call to Order:

Chairman Northcross called the meeting to order at 4:05 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was recited by all present.

Tax Classification Hearing:

Mr. Northcross motioned, Mr. Smith seconded, and it was unanimously voted to call the Tax Classification Hearing to order at 4:10 PM.

Director of Assessing for the Town of Barnstable Edward O’Neil gave an overview of the tax rate recapitulation for FY2020 and explained the tax rate options available for the District. According to Mr. O’Neil, there are 1513 residential properties and 35 commercial properties in West Barnstable. The median house value went from \$423,950 to \$443,500. Overall, there is a healthy real estate market, and the biggest increase town wide is new construction. Mr. O’Neil explained that when values go up, taxes go down. Last year’s tax rate was 2.78% - this year’s will be 2.75%.

Mr. Northcross motioned, Mr. Smith seconded and it was unanimously voted to retain a single tax factor of 1, with no exemptions.

Mr. Smith motioned, Mr. Northcross seconded, and it was unanimously voted to return to the regular Prudential Committee meeting at 4:25 PM.

Treasurer’s Report:

Mr. Pirrone advised that the October reconciliation has not been completed but will be done within the week. Tax revenue is up more than substantially due to more efficiency and cooperation in the Tax Collector’s office. Assistant Tax Collector Gislaine Morse has been very helpful with day to day information. Ambulance revenue is also ahead of budget, with a similar volume and revenue as last year. As far as expenditures go, street lights are well below budget, and Prudential Committee salaries are below budget. Mr. Pirrone gave kudos to Susan Rao, District Accountant, for doing a great job getting things done. Mr. Pirrone noted that the District is in a good position at this point in the fiscal year; however, he felt three areas bear watching as far as expenditures – training, new equipment and rescue squad supplies.

As far as the audit goes, one of the auditors is out on leave until December 2nd; Mr. Pirrone will push them for a date to meet with the Prudential Committee to review the audit.

Ambulance rate setting for next year will take place at the December 18, 2019 Prudential Committee meeting. Chief Maruca noted there have been no significant rate changes in the last 4-5 years, so it may be time to reevaluate.

Warrants:

The following warrants were approved for payment:

PR 20-18	\$ 20,310.54
PR 20-19	\$ 22,787.85
PR 20-20	\$ 19,214.44
AP 20-12	\$ 19,324.53

Clerk's Report:

Mr. Smith motioned, Mr. Schulman seconded and the minutes of October 30, 2019 were unanimously accepted as written.

The Clerk, with the help of Town Clerk Ann Quirk, is researching the best way to ensure receipt of the Annual District Report by all registered voters of the District. Reports from the Water Commissioners, the Fire Chief and the Prudential Committee for the Annual District Report should be submitted to the Clerk on or before March 1, 2020.

Public Comment:

Water Commissioner Kris Clark advised that Mark Wirtanen attended a Water Purveyors meeting held today regarding potential well water resources within the Town of Barnstable. The two parcels selected in the Weston and Sampson, Inc. March 2019 "New Sources Alternatives Evaluation Report" cited Site C, the Bridge Creek Conservation Area and Site D, the West Barnstable Conservation Area. Bridge Creek contains about 90 acres, and the West Barnstable Conservation Area about 1100 acres, both on high ground and suitable for several wells. Ms. Clark advised test wells could be installed by late fall. The study only looked at town-owned properties. Further information can be found in the March 2019 report by Weston and Sampson online on the Town of Barnstable website.

Chief Maruca advised he had nothing new to report regarding the well behind the West Barnstable Fire Station from legal counsel.

FY2021 Proposed Budget:

Chief Maruca advised that the proposed draft budget for FY2021 stands as is as of today. The Chief and the Deputy are focusing on capital expenditures. One bid was received from Pierce to repair/overhaul the ladder truck in the amount of \$173,000. Pierce also advised the frame rails need repair for an additional \$11,240 and the aerial ladder needs an overhaul in the amount of \$114,975. Total cost to repair is almost \$300,000 and Pierce will offer a one year warranty. The ladder truck would be out of service for 6-8 months. The Chief advised he and the Deputy are looking at other, more affordable options. Sandwich Fire just bought a new, no frills truck for \$850,000. The Deputy is looking at used vehicles, particularly from the south and southwest. The ladder truck has no trade-in value.

Draft Meeting Room Policy:

Chief Maruca presented the draft Meeting Room Policy for review. There will be no meeting space available to the public on the second floor. Fire Department use of the Training Room will take priority. All reservations for room use will require a written request, and the form and the policy will outline clear expectations for use of the meeting room. The Chief would like any input regarding the policy from the Prudential Committee prior to December's meeting.

Strategic Planning Committee:

Mr. Northcross motioned, Mr. Schulman seconded, and it was unanimously voted to change the starting time of the December 18, 2019 Prudential Committee meeting from 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM to accommodate members of the Strategic Planning Committee.

The Strategic Planning Committee will be meeting with the Prudential Committee members and District officials, including the Water Commissioners, on December 18, 2019 at 7:00 PM. They plan to meet with West Barnstable Fire Department officers and Deputy Chief Paananen this coming Sunday.

Fire Chief's Annual Review:

The Prudential Committee individually discussed their Annual Review of Fire Chief Joe Maruca in open session. All three Prudential Committee members gave Chief Maruca an excellent (Outstanding performance, consistently exceeds job requirements and expectations) score in Scope of Work, Leadership, Essential Duties & Responsibilities, Additional Duties, and Key Relationships. Comments included "Excellent work", "Excellent commitment and service to the citizens of West Barnstable", "Always keeps the Prudential Committee and staff well informed", "Securing of grants have been outstanding."

Chief Maruca noted that West Barnstable is the only fire department in the area that has a Strategic Plan and the most important aspect of the West Barnstable Fire Department is the cooperation and collaboration between full time, part-time and volunteer firefighters. The training program is outstanding among their peer groups. The Chief has received outreach from neighboring departments regarding West Barnstable's training program and staffing model. The Chief commented, "We're known as the guys to mimic."

Fire Chief's Report:

- Chief Maruca advised that several Cape fire departments are hiring again, due to retirements and staff expansion.
- West Barnstable is advertising on Facebook for recruits for the spring training class.
- Lt. Kim Sylvia is graduating from the Fire Academy in Springfield, MA this Friday; she will be back on duty on Sunday morning at 8 AM. Curtis will be the next to go to the Fire Academy.
- The 1717 Meetinghouse Foundation will be meeting at the Fire Station on December 5, 2019 regarding the installation of the new water tanks – an increase from 20,000 gallons to 60,000 gallons. They are working to secure Town of Barnstable approval. West Barnstable Fire is assisting with the project, but the Meetinghouse Foundation is funding the project. The abandoned 20,000 tank will be filled with sand and left in place.
- The military truck conversion is moving ahead. It will become a multipurpose vehicle, especially useful on Sandy Neck and in case of flooding.
- The Chief will be away during the Thanksgiving holiday.
- The system for the radio grant is now up and running – should receive the grant money in the amount of \$89,000 through direct deposit.

Deputy Chief's Report:

- Deputy Paananen advised there are still ongoing issues with 294 and the manufacturer Rosenbauer. He received a quote from Peterbilt regarding the corrosion issues – they are not impressed with Rosenbauer or LineX prep work. 294 rear step was replaced three months ago, and is already corroded.
- 286 water tank has been repaired and re-installed.

The Chief and the Deputy feel that materials used in today's manufacturing of fire equipment is not what it used to be – and there are design flaws that affect the promise of life expectancy. Another problem appears to be that small town departments don't get the attention of the manufacturers since they are not big purchasers.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:58 PM.

The next Prudential Committee meeting is scheduled for **December 18, 2019 at 7:00 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine Grace, District Clerk

