

The WEST BARNSTABLE FIRE DISTRICT
PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE MINUTES – AUGUST 26, 2020

PRESENT: Prudential Committee members Van Northcross, Edward Smith and Stuart Schulman; Chief Joseph Maruca, Deputy Chief David Paananen, District Treasurer Ray Pirrone, District Clerk Elaine Grace, Andy Lee, Strategic Planning Committee (via ZOOM), and guest presenter James Rowan (via ZOOM).

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Van Northcross called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was recited by all present.

JAMES ROWAN PRESENTATION:

Mr. Rowan is a consultant and leadership coach for the West Barnstable Fire Department. His presentation touched on the culture of the West Barnstable Fire Department which includes leadership, morale, values and other intangible qualities. He also spoke about the leadership qualities of the Chief and Deputy Chief and future succession plans for the department. He compared the West Barnstable organization to industry and regional standards. Mr. Rowan feels West Barnstable is really unusual and unique in the fact that the organization's standard is perfection. The department's scores for leadership, resources, morale, administrative support, communication, etc., are consistently high and have even improved since the last survey. The department scores in the top 1% for a combination department in all categories. However, Mr. Rowan cautioned the trap is thinking you're better than you are. It becomes harder to maintain excellence. He advised that it's important to stay humble and to continue to raise the standard.

The Chief advised his mandatory retirement is 4 years out so succession planning is important. At the present time, the department has the 'perfect storm' – really good Chiefs and really good officers. A team atmosphere exists and communication is key. The Chief's skills and the Deputy Chief's skills complement one another.

Chief Maruca acknowledged that without a Deputy, the Chief is isolated. This is particularly true with the advent of COVID19 which has added another layer of complexity – everything is harder to do, and urgent overwhelms important, without someone to delegate to.

Mr. Lee commented that he was very impressed with the numbers. Mr. Smith remarked that West Barnstable has a very strong team atmosphere, which he feels is remarkable and extremely rare in today's organizations. Mr. Northcross stressed that communication is the key – and is dismal in most departments – leading to speculation, rumor and dysfunction.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

No public present to comment.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

FY2019 AUDIT: The FY2019 Audit has been completed. Mr. Pirrone will forward the report electronically to everyone. Hard copies will also be available.

FY2020 STATUS & AUDIT: The Roselli firm has started the FY2020 audit – they have the bulk of what they need. Mr. Pirrone is waiting on tax lien information from the Town of Barnstable before he can close the books. He also needs OPEB information. The audit will probably be completed this fall.

FY2021 STATUS:

Tax receipts are up – banks are making escrow payments in timely manner. Ambulance receipts are down – the usual July downturn. Debt payment has been made; County retirement assessment has also been paid. The District is well within the budget – encumbrances need to be finalized and unspent funds are pending. Cash is reconciled through July.

The following warrants were approved for payment:

PR 21-02	17,113.60
PR 21-03	22,909.78
PR 21-04	14,818.82
PR 21-05	34,768.51
PR 21-06	13,555.42
PR 21-07	22,476.62
AP 21-03	35,236.00
AP 21-04	73,648.18
AP 21-05	6,212.71

COVID-19 OPERATIONAL REPORT:

Chief Maruca reported that the department is coming back to a more normalized office environment. Heather is coming in to the office twice a week, Ray and Susan are coming and going, and Nanette is also coming in. Tuesday night training is still all outside, as are staff/volunteer briefings. The building is still closed to the public. The Massachusetts COVID19 infection rate is down, and Cape Cod has the lowest rate in the state.

CHIEF'S REPORT:

- The Chief reported he has heard no public comment regarding the Cape Cod Times article on ambulance billing.
- A separate Treasurer's bond was received and coverage is effective as of today
- The Chief provided a spread sheet outlining apparatus maintenance expenditures for review. Costs are starting to increase. Good news regarding the grant application to replace #296 – West Barnstable is still on the list – we haven't received a no yet.
- Two former volunteer firefighters are returning – one from the military and one from Logan Airport.

- The rebuild of #295 has been completed – just needs radio installation and some pump wiring. It has gone from Brush breaker to Forestry – All hazards Response Vehicle. It can hold 600 gallons of water and carries 1000 feet of hose and has RV fire capability. It is able to operate on Sandy Neck, as well as on flooded roads. It will also be effective in blizzards. #295 has seating for 7 including space for patient transport.
- The Quarterly Reports have been reinstated and provided to the Prudential Committee.
- Class of 2020 has passed all their state tests for Firefighter I, II. The May class are doing on-the-job training. They will be testing in January/February. There is a 300 applicant backlog at the Fire Academy.
- Stained glass window has been repaired and reinstalled.
- Washing machine for fire gear has been installed.
- New flooring has been installed in the Communications Room; new carpeting in the Bunk Room.

DEPUTY CHIEF'S REPORT:

- The used ladder truck in New York was too much money. Another truck in Alabama was sold out from under us. Still looking.
- Open Cape internet system is being installed at the station as a backup system; Comcast is still the primary system. Open Cape's fiber optic system and microwave pathways will ensure public safety officials access to essential communications in harsh conditions and power outages.

The next regular Prudential Committee meeting will be on September 16, 2020 at 4 PM.

There being no further business, Mr. Smith motioned, Mr. Shulman seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 5:38 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine Grace, District Clerk