

WEST BARNSTABLE FIRE DISTRICT

PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE MINUTES - NOVEMBER 18, 2020

PRESENT: Prudential Committee members Chairman Van Northcross, Edward Smith and Stuart Schulman; Fire Chief Joe Maruca, Deputy Chief Dave Paananen, District Treasurer Ray Pirrone, District Accountant Susan Rao, (via ZOOM) and District Clerk Elaine Grace.

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.

CLERK'S REPORT:

Mr. Smith motioned, Mr. Schulman seconded, and it was unanimously voted to accept the minutes of October 28, 2020.

The Clerk noted that Barnstable Town Clerk Ann Quirk affirmed the West Barnstable Fire District 2021 Election Meeting Calendar & Procedures as outlined.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

No public present to comment.

TAX CLASSIFICATION HEARING

Mr. Smith motioned, Mr. Schulman seconded and it was unanimously voted to postpone the Tax Classification Hearing to December 2, 2020 at 4:00 PM.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

The following warrants were approved for payment:

PR 21-18 22,892.47

PR 21-19 19,647.88

PR 21-20	15,740.11
AP 21-11	25,955.41
AP 21-12	13,957.56

Mr. Pirrone noted that tax collections have declined - District Account Susan Rao advised it is about 7% down from last year. Mr. Pirrone said there is some softness, and a quasi-shutdown again could impact collections. The Town's Assistant Tax Collector advised property owners have been slow in paying 2020 tax bills. Mr. Pirrone advised no alarm yet.

The District is on budget and in good shape. The auditors are waiting for the OPEB figures - have not received the information yet. The bank accounts have been reconciled and fund balances are 1.4 million as of October 31, 2020. Ambulance billing jumped up in October, we are three calls behind last October.

Overall, the department is 53 transports behind last year. However, revenue is up 37%.

FIRE CHIEF'S ANNUAL REVIEW:

Prudential Committee members conducted the Chief's Annual Review using the Performance Review document. The Chief scored 132 out of 132 - 100%. The Chief addressed the Prudential Committee about some of his concerns - failing to recruit women and candidates in the 30's-40's. Although the department does a lot of recruitment/training, most recruits are young men in the 20's. The Chief also is concerned about not being able to address some of the building maintenance issues and space concerns. As the Chief put it, he has lots of plans but his frustration is not being able to implement them. Space is a big concern for vehicles as well as personnel.

The Chief also feels that his job description and annual review document should be discussed and reviewed. The same documents have been used for a number of years and could use an upgrade. Mr. Northcross agreed and suggested it be put on the December meeting agenda.

FIRE DISTRICT GIFT POLICY:

Mr. Northcross motioned, Mr. Smith seconded, and it was unanimously voted to adopt the new Acceptance of Gifts policy as presented and to incorporate said policy into the West Barnstable Fire District Prudential Committee Operating Policies and Procedures manual.

SECOND DRAFT FY2022 BUDGET:

Chief Maruca advised there was no second draft as of now because there are several things to think about and what direction to take. The District needs to decide how much free cash to allocate and how do we begin to reduce reliance on free cash. It's too high to be sustainable forever. Building repairs need to be made and vehicles need replacement. A new sprinkler system will run about 9,000 to 11,000. The hood above the stove is vented but has issues - the preliminary price to replace, including the cost of electrical, ceiling repairs, etc. will run \$21,000 - \$25,000 (which doesn't include the cost of prevailing wage). The vent hood is not necessary to the operation of the stove. The Department will be exploring our classification with the Barnstable building department in order to clarify the expense. Do we replace Engine-Tanker 296 now - or address it within the next two cycles? The Chief feels that we're tempting fate - and financially it's costing more and more to patch together. The Chief feels the Engine-Tanker is more important than a ladder truck to the West Barnstable community. Barnstable Fire has two ladder trucks and an auto-respond agreement with West Barnstable as needed. From the Chief's perspective, the ambulance, engine, and the engine-tanker are the front row for 99% of the department's operations.

Mr. Northcross remarked that interest rates can only go up. Replacement of the Engine-Tanker should be a priority this year. A decision should be made next month whether to go ahead now or wait and what's available for funding - free cash, Bailey Fund, Stabilization Fund, loan.

The Chief advised that the Deputy reached out to the FEMA representative as to why the West Barnstable grant to fund a replacement engine-tanker was not funded. He learned that it was kicked out early, nobody read the narrative and it didn't make it to peer review. Some of the reasons included our call volume, age of other vehicles, wrong category - the representative encouraged the Deputy to continue to apply. It suggested tweaking the application, and moving it to tanker category. He seemed confident it will make it to peer review next time.

The department will be applying for a grant to replace self-contained breathing apparatus in order to free up the use of free cash. All were replaced in 2007 so it's time.

The consensus of those present was there was work to be done on this year's budget and some tough decisions need to be made.

COVID-19 OPERATIONAL REPORT:

The Chief reported a West Barnstable Fire Department officer tested positive for Covid19. In a partnership with Hyannis Fire Department, 43 West Barnstable personnel were tested on November 9, 2020. Hyannis Fire supplied the test kits, and Captain Murray drove the tests to the lab in Boston that evening. Fortunately, no additional cases were reported. The Department is sliding back to stricter protocols and limited live training. Small trainings are being done online.

Right now, outside is good - inside is bad. There are bigger positive numbers in Barnstable right now - at least 25 new cases a day and climbing. The State vaccination plan was announced yesterday - Moderna and Pfizer vaccines will be available on an emergency basis in December - the Chief feels it will be a month or two before Fire Departments receive any. Hospitals, nursing homes and health care workers in urban areas will be the priority, general population probably not until May/June.

Susan Rao, District Accountant reported that FEMA/MEMA reimbursement in the amount of \$8000 is anticipated in January/February 2021. She has responded to the Town of Barnstable's request for documentation for receipt of CARES reimbursement for the Deputy Chief's salary (about \$42,000) for his deployment at the drive thru test site at Cape Cod Community College.

CHIEF'S REPORT:

- A \$2000 grant application has been submitted for Wildland fire fighter equipment.
- Staff will be watching a presentation by National Grid on ZOOM tonight regarding the new gas pipeline installed on the Service Road. National Grid is hydro testing it and it will go live by December. The new pipeline will be 26" - the old pipeline which is 12" will also remain.
- The Chief has reached out to Representatives Randy Hunt and Steve Xiarhos and also Town Councilor Kris Clark regarding the Route 149 Overpass Project. He has not written a letter to the state pending more information.
- Emergency calls have lessened again - it has been quiet.
- The department has lost 5 volunteers - 1 to Nantucket, 2 to COMM, 1 to Sandwich and 1 due to family/work issues. The department is starting the process for a new recruit training class.
- Reverse Halloween reached about 143-44 kids - more than twice the anticipated participation. Four trucks went out and the list took about two hours to complete. Mr. Schulman congratulated the Chief and his staff for reaching out to the community in such a positive and unique manner.
- Instead of Breakfast with Santa there will be a Santa Caravan through the village. The Department has teamed up with Luke's Love for this activity, which will be held on December 6, 2020 starting at 1 PM.
- The Chief has cancelled travel to Florida at Thanksgiving.
- The Deputy has been checking District streetlight - has about 10% left to do - only 1 needs repair.

DEPUTY CHIEF'S REPORT:

- The Deputy is still looking at the Ashland truck - no date has been set to examine in person.

The next regular Prudential Committee meeting will be on **December 16, 2020**. Anticipate: Second Draft of FY2022 Budget, Ambulance Rate setting.

There being no further business, Mr. Smith motioned, Mr. Schulman seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 5:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine Grace, District Clerk