

WEST BARNSTABLE FIRE DISTRICT
PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE MINUTES - OCTOBER 28, 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 September 16, 2020 as written, with the correction of a typographical error.

Ms. Grace provided the Prudential Committee with a draft 2021 Election Meeting Calendar and Procedures for the Annual District Meeting scheduled for April 28, 2021. The Annual Fire Chief Review documents were also distributed to the Prudential Committee and the review is scheduled for the November 18, 2020 Prudential Committee meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

No public present to comment.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

The following warrants were approved for payment:

PR 21-12	12,436.72
PR 21-13	21,494.70
PR 21-14	19,867.37
PR 21-15	21,435.33

PR 21-16	13,023.65
PR 21-17	21,817.31
AP 21-08	31,810.91
AP 21-09	24,607.98
AP 21-10	19,876.84

The District is implementing the suggestions outlined in the FY2019 Audit Management Letter.

Mr. Pirrone is seeking clarification regarding signing and submissions for the DOR. Currently, he signs as both Treasurer and Accountant. The DOR is requiring a second signer. After discussion, it was agreed that the District Account, Susan Rao would be the logical second signer.

Mr. Schulman motioned, Mr. Smith seconded, and it was unanimously voted to designate District Account Susan Rao as the second signer on documents submitted to the Department of Revenue.

Mr. Pirrone advised that overall, the FY2021 budget is well in line. Expenditures are below budget. He noted retiree's health insurance will be increasing this coming year by approximately 8%. There will also be no premium holiday this year. Mr. Pirrone recently attended a webinar on Cyber Security and has some concerns about District security. He is using his Cotuit/West Barnstable Fire Districts computer; however, District Accountant Susan Rao is using her personnel computer. Mr. Pirrone recommended a District laptop and supplemental screen be purchased for Ms. Rao's use. There was consensus to implement his recommendation. Town of Barnstable Tax Assessor Ed O'Neil has not set a date for the Classification Hearing. Consensus was to schedule and advertise for November 18, 2020 regular Prudential Committee meeting and if necessary, reschedule if needed.

Regarding ambulance revenue, the department is receiving same number of calls and is busy; however, transports to the hospital are down. More calls seem to be for medical aid and assistance. There are fewer and fewer transports from Motor Vehicle Accidents, perhaps due to engineering safety of newer cars.

ROUTE 149 OVERPASS REPAIRS:

Chief Maruca advised that the state has passed legislation to include funding to make repairs and improvements to the Route 149 overpass. He has reached out to State Representative Randy Hunt and Town Councilor Kristine Clark to make sure a sleeve for utilities will be part of the process. Chief Maruca will prepare a formal letter to that effect to send to the state.

Mr. Northcross motioned, Mr. Schulman seconded, and it was unanimously voted to request the state to include a utility sleeve, sufficient to carry a water line, in the Route 149 Overpass repairs and improvements.

FIRE DISTRICT GIFT POLICY:

Chief Maruca presented a draft Gift Acceptance Policy to be included in the West Barnstable Fire District Operating Policies and Procedures manual. The Chief noted gifts can include tangible property, money, or real estate, and it's complicated. The policy will be discussed and finalized at the November Prudential Committee meeting.

FIRST DRAFT FY2022 BUDGET:

Chief Maruca noted that the cost of salaries, benefits and so forth for seven full time employees

basically consumes any tax increase of the District. The community isn't growing - there are no new businesses, buildings etc., adding to the tax base. We are in a transitional phase, as the Chief will be retiring in three years. As an attorney, Chief Maruca is unique to our District - we save in many ways due to his ability to research and write District policy and look into legal issues. However, the Chief feels regardless of his diligence, we are missing many Federal and State policies. He is looking at outsource entities such as Lexipol which provides live advice, policy manuals and consulting services to public safety departments. Truro, Hyannis, Barnstable, COMM and Onset are currently using such services. There are also other companies out there that can manage data - i.e., Quarterly Reports (which are now produced in-house, by the Chief and staff).

The first draft of the FY2022 calls for a 4% tax levy. Some items up for discussion going forward include:

- Sprinkler system needs upgrade - special article
- Exhaust fan over stove needs replacement
- Small building projects
- Replace Engine Tanker 296 - 35 years old, reaching obsolescence - need a plan to put aside funding to purchase
- Projection on retiree costs -
- Closer look at Capital outlay maintenance costs

Mr. Pirrone advised he anticipates approximately \$300,000 in free cash; about \$134,000 is in the abatement reserve. Borrowing rates are very low - should engine be purchased now with low rates or later - something to think about.

COVID-19 OPERATIONAL REPORT:

Nothing new operationally. There is an uptake in cases locally. Station still closed to the public.

CHIEF'S REPORT:

- The Chief reported that the Town of Barnstable requires a signature for the CARES Act sub-agreement award for reimbursement (\$40,021), signed by Mark Ells and Attorney Karen Nobler. The Chief will sign for the District.
- The final draft of the Strategic Plan is in the works - the Committee will be meeting on November 7th and hope to present the draft at the December Prudential Committee meeting, and formalize the plan by the January meeting.
- Reverse Halloween scheduled for Saturday, October 31st. Good response from the community. No Breakfast with Santa this year. Christmas trees/wreaths will be available for sale by the Association. There was difficulty finding a new vendor this year.
- Last night there was a full drill held outdoors. Next week there will be another full drill inspecting the Barnstable Farm and Pet property and premises on Lombard Avenue. National Grid will be presenting a ZOOM meeting regarding the new pipeline - there will be 30 firefighters participating.
- The ambulance inspection resulted in a perfect score. There was a glitch with state reports; however, Captain Murray worked with the state technician and the issue is resolved as of today.

DEPUTY CHIEF'S REPORT:

- Will be reaching out to Ashland, MA and checking out the engine they have for sale; still searching for a used engine. Barnstable also has one in good shape. Did not receive the Federal grant, no funding available.
- Inspections are up - lots of real estate movement.

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The next regular Prudential Committee meeting will be on November 18, 2020. Anticipate: Classification Hearing, Second Draft of FY2022 Budget, Fire Chief Annual Review.

There being no further business, Mr. Smith motioned, Mr. Schulman seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 5:42 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine Grace, District Clerk