

WEST BARNSTABLE FIRE DISTRICT

PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE MINUTES - DECEMBER 16, 2020

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

CLERK'S REPORT:

The minutes of November 18, 2020 and December 2, 2020 will be reviewed at the January 20, 2021 meeting.

The Clerk noted the Election & Annual Meeting Calendar is all set and has been vetted by Town Clerk Ann Quirk. The Annual Meeting notice will be advertised in the Cape Cod Times toward the end of January. Nomination Papers will be ready for candidates following the notice in the newspaper and reports for the Annual Report are due on or before March 1, 2021.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

No public present to comment.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

The following warrants were approved for payment:

PR 21-21	21,016.20
PR 21-22	21,018.56
PR 21-23	36,847.74
PR-21-24	13,755.23
AP 21-13	31,265.72

AP 21-14 5,883.35

Mr. Pirrone reported real estate tax revenue is up 22% over last year and ambulance revenue is up 19% from last year. Street light expenditures are under budget, as is Fire Department overtime budget, due to an efficient use of manpower. Overall, the FY2021 budget is on target and there are no issues foreseen.

Mr. Pirrone noted he finally received the OPEB actuarial study today at noon. He noted Barnstable Fire received their report over two months ago. Mr. Pirrone said that in his opinion, the most critical information is found on page 10, which shows the net liability of the WBFD has increased \$21,222 despite increased net contributions (FY2019 to FY2020). Mr. Pirrone feels that in order to just stop the increase in future OPEB costs this year's contribution should be increased by at least \$23,000.

There was much discussion on contributions, current and future liability and at what point does the WBFD get to the stage where we cover growth not liability. At what point does it end? What is the goal? The Chief asked Mr. Pirrone if we can get a bigger picture on this issue and advised consulting with our auditor Tony Roselli after he reviews the report, and also setting up a meeting with the actuarial professionals.

AMBULANCE RATE SETTING:

No new ambulance billing data available - postpone rate setting to January 20, 2021 meeting.

SECOND DRAFT FY2022 BUDGET:

Mr. Pirrone noted that the free cash is approximately \$329,239. There is also approximately \$141,000 in the WBFD abatement account at the Town Assessors. The District could ask for release of \$90,000, retaining \$50,000. Based on past history, that would be enough to cover at least 5 years of abatement requests.

There are three main items to address on the FY2022 budget - OPEB Trust, and 2 capital items - replacing Engine 296 and replacing the sprinkler system and other repairs at the Fire Station and how to pay for them.

Deputy Paananen advised that the exhaust hood in the kitchen does not have to be replaced with a commercial hood, according to the Town Building Inspector. A residential hood would suffice (about \$5,000) - and a savings of \$30,000! The sprinkler system would run about \$11,000 - 12,000.

Deputy Paananen reiterated that they are still going after the grant for a replacement Engine-Tanker. Engine 296 should last another 3-5 years - pump inspection showed no issues. The used truck in Ashland is a no go.

There was discussion on several financial options available - using stabilization funds, free cash (although there is a concern about consistently relying on it), borrowing at low interest rates. Is this the year?

Regarding the OPEB Trust, what should be the contribution for FY2022 - a contribution of \$105,000 could raise the tax levy to 4.5%. And this would not be just a one-time payment - The Chief stated if we had a million, he's not sure it would resolve the issue.

The Prudential Committee will discuss options in more detail at the January meeting.

CHIEF'S JOB DESCRIPTION/REVIEW:

Chief Maruca presented draft changes to the Chief's Job Description and Review Document for further discussion at the January meeting. Mr. Smith asked if other departments had review documents and the Chief said they did, but most are less intensive.

COVID-19 OPERATIONAL REPORT:

Vaccine has arrived on Cape Cod. The Chief anticipates the vaccine will not trickle down to first responders until sometime in January 2021. There are a lot of open questions as to the definition of first responders and eligibility, which vaccine, where and how will vaccine be distributed, and so forth. The Chief advised if other staff (administrative, Prudential Committee) can receive the vaccine, he will see that it gets done.

ROUTE 149 OVERPASS REPAIRS:

The Chief advised he has a meeting with State Representative Steve Xiarhos about the overpass repairs and the need to include a utility sleeve during the process.

CHIEF'S REPORT:

- WBFD received 612 emergency calls for the year so far. Usual range is 625-630, but this year the mix was quite different due to Covid-19.
- The deed for the Fire Station is on file and the Chief has a copy.
- The Department recently experienced two significant fire events - a brush fire on High Street (arrival time 8 minutes) and a house fire (arrival time 5 minutes). 26 Firefighters responded to the brush fire and 32 Firefighters responded to the house fire. The system worked well and the two events allowed WBFD to compare for overall consistency in response times and turnout.
- A tractor trailer overturned in the eastbound lane on Route 6 on December 15th - colliding with two vehicles and spilling 50,000 - 60,000 pounds of gravel. 11 Firefighters responded and it took from 8:30 am to 12:30 pm to clear the scene. This was fourth rollover this year.
- The Santa Parade through the village was well received; the co-sponsor was Susanne Powers of Luke's Love. The department helped collect over 300 toys for Stuff-A-Bus and delivered two truckloads of food donations to the Salvation Army.

DEPUTY CHIEF'S REPORT:

- The Deputy advised that the Ashland truck was of no value to the WBFD.
- The Deputy completed the street light audit - one light was not working. There was a delay in getting it repaired - more work was involved than anticipated.

The next regular Prudential Committee meeting will be on **January 20, 2021**. Anticipate: Third Draft of FY2022 Budget, Ambulance Rate setting.

There being no further business, Mr. Smith motioned, Mr. Schulman seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 5:59 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine Grace, District Clerk