

WEST BARNSTABLE FIRE DISTRICT

PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE MINUTES - FEBRUARY 17, 2021

PRESENT: Prudential Committee members Chairman Van Northcross and Stuart Schulman; Fire Chief Joe Maruca, Deputy Chief Dave Paananen, District Treasurer Ray Pirrone, District Accountant Susan Rao, District Clerk Elaine Grace, and District Moderator Kate Mitchell. Mr. Smith was absent. The meeting was held via ZOOM.

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Van Northcross called the meeting to order at 4:04 PM. The Pledge to Allegiance to the Flag was recited by all present.

CLERK'S REPORT:

The Clerk provided minutes of the January 20, 2021 regular meeting.

Mr. Schulman motioned, Mr. Northcross seconded, and it was unanimously voted to accept the minutes of January 20, 2021 as written.

The Clerk advised that the Election Calendar will be posted on the District website.

Annual Reports for the booklet are due March 1, 2021 or sooner.

There is still no information from the Town on when the West Barnstable Community Building will be available to the public.

There was discussion regarding whether to keep the date of the Annual Meeting as April 28, 2021 as called for in the District Bylaws and hold the meeting outdoors at the Fire Station or move it to another date later in the spring. In case of inclement weather, the meeting could be held inside the truck bays.

Rather than move the meeting to another date, it was decided to hold the meeting on Wednesday, April 28, 2021. The front cover of the Annual Report will announce the meeting location at the Fire Station. Masks and social distancing will be maintained.

Mr. Schulman motioned, Mr. Northcross seconded, and it was unanimously voted to hold the West Barnstable Fire District Annual Meeting on April 28, 2021 beginning at 7:00 PM at the West Barnstable Fire Station, outside or inside, weather dependent.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

No public comment.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

The following warrants were approved for payment:

PR 21-29	22,290.79
PR 21-30	14,925.86
PR 21-31	27,443.94
PR 21-32	13,767.76
AP 21-17	43,862.48

Mr. Pirrone advised that the FY2020 Audit has been completed and the report should be available in the next 5-10 days; the management letter will follow thereafter, sometime in April.

letter Mr. Pirrone also noted that Real Estate tax collections are over budget but down from FY2020. Although ambulance revenue is down from last year, it is solidly on budget. Overall, the revenue picture looks good.

Fire Department expenditures are below budget in the salary and overtime lines, and Mr. Pirrone expressed kudos to the Chief and Deputy Chief for their management. Mr. Pirrone advised there are no concerns with the budget as far as expenditures go.

Cash reconciliations are up to date.

Mr. Pirrone discussed the \$90,000 release of the excess abatement funds by the Town. The District can use the funds from this designation for other purposes, such as funding for a new engine-tanker.

The Chief noted he provided an Overtime Hours sheet in the documents for the Annual Report - a ton of money was saved in 2020 and it was the lowest in the history of the department. The Chief said he could not take credit for it - it was the silver lining of the pandemic. This year, Curtis Cottrell is scheduled to attend the Fire Academy from May through July 12 and overtime will need to be expended to cover his shift.

The Chief also noted that that there is a significant downturn in ambulance revenue. 2020 ended with 44 less transports than 2019 and 2019 ended with 33 less than 2018. These are significant reductions.

Last January there were 27 transports, and January 2021, only 18 transports. The reductions in part can be traced to a reluctance to go to the hospital because of Covid19 and the resulting isolation from family.

DRAFT FY2022 BUDGET:

Discussion centered on the strategy for funding OPEB liability, new Engine-Tanker 296 and the use of "free cash". It was agreed to place an Article on the Warrant to replace Engine-Tanker #296 based on the assumption that the FEMA grant may not materialize. The District would borrow \$300,000 @ 2% for a period of 10 years; use \$75,000 from the "Bailey Fund", \$100,000 from "free cash" and \$175,000 from the Stabilization Fund and the Abatement Overlay account for a total of \$650,000.

The District has a total of \$329,000 available in free cash - \$162, 500 would be used for funding the library, Stabilization, Debt, OPEB and Capital Improvements on the fire station. The balance would carry over to FY2023.

If we get really lucky, we will be awarded the FEMA grant for replacement Engine-Tanker 296 and there will be NO DEBT!

Mr. Schulman motioned, Mr. Northcross seconded, and it was unanimously voted to accept the FY2022 Draft Budget, as proposed, to present at the Annual West Barnstable Fire District Meeting on April 28, 2021.

REVIEW CHANGES - FIRE CHIEF'S JOB DESCRIPTION/ANNUAL REVIEW DOCUMENT:

The Chief will send the Job Description document with the changes noted to the Prudential Committee members for discussion at the March meeting. The Chief will also work on the Review document changes for discussion. The Chief noted that these documents are organic and can be added to and subtracted from on an ongoing basis.

COVID-19 OPERATIONS REVIEW/VACCINES:

The WBFD received the second dose of the Moderna Vaccine on February 11, 2021 with 95% participation. There were some reactions to the second dose. The vaccine rollout is faltering, and the state is consolidating vaccinations via mass sites, such as Gillette Stadium and other large venues. There is a rumor that Cape Cod Community College could become a mass site, contracted to a third party. no side effects.

There is more flexibility now with operational functions. No one is out - nothing dramatic is happening.

The Johnson & Johnson vaccine may be approved and available as early as next week which is a hopeful sign. There has been no vaccine available in the Town of Barnstable since last week.

CHIEF'S REPORT:

1. The Chief advised that the hiring process started last week. A class should be underway by mid-April. There were over 40 applicants. The Chief remarked that WBFD is the only fire department that has a waiting list to join. Applicants received orientation via ZOOM.
2. On February 14th, the annual physical agility tests, by appointment, took all day to complete.
3. On Saturday, February 20th and Sunday, February 21st the Deputy Chief and the Interview Committee will interview 28+ candidates, and probably 8-12 will be accepted.
4. Five grant applications have been submitted for various awards.

DEPUTY CHIEF'S REPORT:

- The Deputy Chief advised the department has applied for several grants.
State grant for \$10,000 for equipment

VFA Grant for \$2,000 (Wbfd only department that applied)

FEMA - Grants for new tanker, SCBA replacement equipment, Hydraulic tools with electric tools

State 911 Fund - to transfer 800 radios to digital system not covered under FEMA grant

There is about \$800-900,000 in requests out there - very competitive atmosphere.

Mr. Northcross noted it would be a good idea to list the grants the department has received in the Annual Report for the residents of the community to appreciate.

- The Deputy noted that Cape Cod Community College is talking with the state about a mass vaccination site. There has been no definitive answer and there are some logistical issues due to the Science Building construction activity.

The next regular Prudential Committee meeting will be on March 17, 2021. Anticipate: Finalizing Annual Meeting 2022 Warrant.

There being no further business, Mr. Schulman motioned, Mr. Northcross seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 5:18 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine Grace, District Clerk