

COTUIT FIRE DISTRICT

Prudential Committee Minutes

February 21, 2011

The Chairman, Amy Kates, called the meeting to order. Members Rick Barry and Laurie Hadley were present.

The meeting was opened to public comments. Jessica Rapp Grasseti spoke and referred to Attorney Mark Boudreau's letter which had been available at the May District Meeting which stated that Chapter 32b of the Massachusetts General Laws established the Prudential Committee as the appropriate governmental body to determine whether or not elected officials should receive health insurance and the amount they would contribute.

Cynthia Gardner raised a question about the job description for the Prudential Committee and their governance over the finances of the District. She stated she was raising the question because she has been attending Fire Commissioners meetings where nothing is discussed, yet "things are happening." She expressed concern that she had not been able to get an answer as to how much is being spent on legal fees. She believes that "a couple of months ago, they maxed out their budget." She again asked how much has been spent to date on legal fees and where the funds are coming from.

Barbara Trainor-Tessier read a letter which she had previously read at the Fire Commissioners meeting and the answer she had received. She is inquiring as to whether or not the Fire Department's legal fees are covered in any part by insurance. She had previously asked this question at a Prudential Committee meeting and had been told by the Treasurer that the liability will not be covered by insurance. The Fire Commissioners reply to her answer about "astronomical legal fees" directed her to the Treasurer.

The Treasurer explained that the District Meeting does not vote on line items. The warrant appropriates funds to four general categories. The Department does indicate amounts for line items, but is free to move money from one line item to another within a category. At this time, the Fire Department has not gone over its total appropriation. Should they go over their total budget, their recourse is to go to the Prudential Committee and request a transfer from the Reserve Fund.

Cynthia Gardner then raised a question as to whether or not the Fire Department is taking away from the staffing so that legal fees can be met. She further stated that she didn't believe staffing was what it had been two years ago.

The Prudential Committee members then voted to approve the minutes of their last meeting.

Ms Kates stated that as the Prudential Committee had voted to initiate a home rule petition regarding health insurance for elected officials, this will be the only action they will take at this time. However, she will maintain contact with State Representative David Viera to be sure he has all he needs from the Committee.

Ms Kates summarized the actions taken regarding the District Treasurer. As Ms Murray had indicated her wish to remain in the position, the Committee agreed to a one-year appointment. As the starting date of the appointment had not been made clear, the Committee considered a starting date as of the next District Meeting; as of July 1, 2011; or as of January 1, 2011, through December 31, 2011. After discussion, upon motion made and seconded, it was unanimously voted that the period of the Treasurer's appointment will be January 1, 2011, through December 31, 2011, with the same salary and benefits that had been in effect. A question was raised about a job description for the Treasurer. The responsibilities of the clerk and treasurer are set by statute.

The District Moderator, Alison Lowe, requested that the minutes of the executive session, during which the Treasurer's appointment had been acted upon, be made public. It was agreed that this would be done.

Regarding a bulletin board, no further information was available as Ms Hadley had not made the inquiries. The By-law Committee had not yet met, but would be meeting the following week. The Policy Advisory Committee is meeting monthly and

is concentrating on Freedom Hall. The Fire and Water Commissioners had not meet prior to the Prudential Committee meeting. Mr Barry has been attending the strategysessions regarding the union negotiations. It is anticipated that negotiations will take eight to twelvemeetings. Ms Kates asked if the Prudential Committee had to sign the contract. A question regarding the use of a professional negotiator received no definite answer.

A motion to adjourn was seconded and unanimously voted in the affirmative. Respectfully submitted Laurie C. Hadley,
Clerk Prudential Committee