

# **Cotuit Fire Department**

Fire Commissioner's Meeting  
January 13, 2026 @ 5:30pm  
Freedom Hall and via Zoom

**Present at Freedom Hall:** Chair Conley, Commissioner Ross, Chief Brown and Deputy Clark

**Via Zoom:** Commissioner Zais

## **Public Comment**

- No public comment

## **Previous meeting minutes**

**MOTION: To accept December 9, 2025, meeting minutes as written.**

**Motion made by: Commissioner Ross      Seconded by: Commissioner Zais**

**Motion passed (Commissioner Ross – aye / Commissioner Zais – aye)**

**(Chair Conley abstained from voting as he was not at the meeting.)**

## **Fire Chief Report:**

December 2025 had a total of 80 responses:

- 0 Fire Responses
- 47 rescue/EMS incidents
- 1 station walk-in
- 3 hazardous conditions
- 3 Community Risk Reduction efforts
- 0 Reassurance Program calls
- 6 Service calls
- 5 Good Intent Calls
- 14 Fire and/or Carbon monoxide alarms

Approximately 32% of calls were overlapping.

## **Mutual Aid:**

- Provided Mutual Aid six (3) times
- Received Mutual Aid seven (3) times
- YTD call volume is up 7.04% (compared to December 2024)

There was a review of calendar year 2025 as a whole: 1,132 total incidents for the year. This represented a 7.04 percent increase over 2024 and a significant 35.8 percent increase in call volume since 2020. By contrast, the increase from 2015 to 2020 had been only one percent. It noted that while demographic and population shifts following COVID likely contributed to the surge, there is no single data point that fully explains such a dramatic increase over the past five years.

## **Social Media Year-End Reporting**

The Chair offered comments thanking the Chief and Deputy for compiling year-end statistics that were shared on Instagram and Facebook. He proposed that this practice be formalized as an annual procedure, with year-end response statistics routinely published on the department's social media platforms.

## **Administrative**

Chief Brown reported that the department continues to support the Negotiations Committee and remains heavily engaged in the fire station project, including preparation of reports and committee

materials. Deputy Chief Clark reported that he met with Town of Barnstable officials and representatives from the other fire districts to review the Local Comprehensive Plan and Open Space Plan, which included discussion of future development and downtown infrastructure.

### **Technology**

Chief Brown reported that the department completed its quarterly IT review with Secure Networks, the district's IT consultant. Secure Networks will also be consulting on technology needs related to the new fire station project. This work falls under the existing contract, meaning there will be no additional cost to the district. The goal is to ensure that all technology installed as part of the new station can be properly supported and maintained after construction is complete.

### **Personnel and Training Activities**

Chief Brown highlighted training provided by the Cotuit Water Department, which included instruction on water distribution systems and tours of all district pumping stations. The training was led by Matt Dwyer. The Chief emphasized how valuable it was for fire department personnel to see such passion and depth of knowledge and extended appreciation to both Mr. Dwyer and the Water Department. The department also received several thank-you letters, including letters recognizing specific incident responses, general appreciation related to the community reassurance program, and thanks for holiday meals donated by a local business. In response to a commissioner's question, the Chief confirmed that these thank-you notes are shared with firefighters and relevant personnel.

### **Apparatus and Equipment**

Chief Brown reported that Engine 2 is currently out of service and scheduled for repairs on January 21, 2026. Although this engine had originally been slated for replacement in fiscal year 2025, the replacement has been deferred until the new fire station is completed so that the new apparatus will fit properly in the facility. The department hopes to keep the engine operational for a few more years. A new ambulance has arrived and is now in service. EMS Officer Christian Gardner worked with DOT and the Office of Emergency Medical Services to complete all regulatory requirements. All personnel have been trained on the new vehicle, and feedback from staff has been overwhelmingly positive regarding its design, functionality, and overall performance.

### **Facilities**

Chief Brown noted that there were no major repairs needed at existing facilities beyond what is already being addressed through the fire station project. He deferred further facilities updates to the committee reports.

### **Sub-Committee Reports**

#### **Commissioner Zais and Deputy Clark Website Sub-Committee**

Nothing new to report.

#### **Commissioner Zais - Policy Advisory Committee**

No new updates.

#### **Commissioner Ross - By-Laws Committee**

A by-law meeting had been scheduled the prior month, but Commissioner Ross was unable to attend due to a family issue. Another By-Law Committee meeting is scheduled for January 27 and that upcoming meeting is expected to go more in depth into the by-law issues.

### **Renovation / Addition Report**

Excavation has been completed and the project is now progressing to the stage of coming out of the ground. No unexpected subsurface or soil conditions were encountered, which was noted as a positive development. Procurement is underway for major building components, including generators, windows, HVAC systems, and metal building materials, and all procurement activities are proceeding as planned. At High Street, the existing structure has been demolished and debris removed. Excavation is complete, and foundation work, including walls and footings, is underway, with waterproofing and rebar delivery scheduled for the following week and increased site activity anticipated. Utility pole relocations are expected in the future, with coordination ongoing with Verizon, Eversource, and National Grid; the public will be notified in advance of any service interruptions. Storage containers located at the Cotuit School site are for construction materials and equipment and are not to be used as dumpsters. Monthly financial review meetings have been initiated with the Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer to monitor project funding and expenses, and the project is currently performing within the approved budget with no issues reported.

### **Policy Builders**

Deputy Chief Clark presented a proposal to engage Policy Builders, an outside firm to assist with the development, review, and maintenance of departmental policies to ensure compliance with applicable legal and statutory requirements. He explained that, unlike other vendors previously considered, Policy Builders allows the Fire District to retain full ownership of its policies. The firm would review and update existing policies, identify gaps in federally and Massachusetts-mandated policies, and assist in developing new policies as needed. The service also includes a centralized electronic records management system for policies, directives, and memoranda, with tracking of policy distribution and training acknowledgments. The proposed cost is \$7,500 for the first year, with reduced costs in subsequent years under a multi-year payment structure. While funds appear to be available in the current budget, the Board discussed postponing a formal vote until later in the fiscal year to allow for greater budget certainty. Deputy Chief Clark agreed to confirm whether the quoted pricing has an expiration date, and the matter will be brought back to the Board for further consideration.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

No old business was discussed.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

- No public comment.

**MOTION: To enter into executive session to discuss negotiations with IAFF Local 362. The board does not anticipate returning to open session at the conclusion of the executive session.**

**Motion made by: Commissioner Ross      Seconded by: Commissioner Zais**  
**Motion passed by unanimous vote.**

**Meeting adjourned at approximately 5:55 pm.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

*Gina Gonsalves*

**Gina Gonsalves**