

Cotuit Fire Department

Fire Commissioner's Meeting
November 12, 2025 @ 5:30pm
Freedom Hall and via Zoom

Present at Freedom Hall: Chairman Conley, Commissioner Zais, Commissioner Ross, and Deputy Clark

Via ZOOM: Chief Brown

Public Comment

- No public comment

Previous meeting minutes

MOTION: To accept October 16, 2025, meeting minutes.

Motion made by: Commissioner Ross Seconded by: Commissioner Zais

Motion passed by unanimous vote.

Fire Chief Report:

September 2025 had a total of 104 responses:

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

Approximately 45% of calls were overlapping.

Mutual Aid:

- Provided Mutual Aid six (6) times
- Received Mutual Aid six (6) times
- YTD call volume is up 8.32%

Mutual Aid Reporting:

In response to a question Commissioners had about Mutual Aid, Deputy Chief Clark discussed refinements to how mutual aid is tracked. Previous reports included administrative deployments—such as command staff assisting at external incidents—which sometimes inflated total counts. Future reports will distinguish between true operational mutual aid (when district apparatus leaves town) and administrative or technical support responses. This change will be better reflected when the station is actually unstaffed versus simply supporting another agency.

Community Risk Reduction:

Commissioner Zais asked DC Clark how frequently residents contact the Fire Department – either through the website or by phone – to schedule smoke detector checks. DC Clark explained that these requests are reflected in the department’s Community Risk Reduction Statistics, as personnel often assist residents by inspecting or troubleshooting smoke detectors. He confirmed that this service is part of the department’s standard Community Risk Reduction Program and that firefighters respond to such requests as needed, even during overnight hours, if necessary.

Administrative

- Chief Brown and Deputy Clark attended the New England Fire Chiefs Conference in Connecticut. The 2026 Promotional Process has begun, with interested members submitting a resume and cover letter by December 1, 2025.
- The department is also finalizing its transition to the National Emergency Response Information System (NERIS), a federally standardized data platform scheduled to go live December 1, 2025. This replaces the existing records management system to ensure consistent national reporting.

Technology

EMS Officer Gardner is evaluating improved mobile connectivity for patient care reporting. The department currently relies on Wi-Fi hotspots within each ambulance, which only reach a few feet outside the vehicle. EMS Officer Gardner has met with AT&T FirstNet representatives to explore cellular-based solutions that would allow reports to be completed inside homes or at crash scenes. Cost and performance options will be reviewed internally before presentation to the board.

Personnel and Training Activities

- DC Clark reported that department personnel conducted a High School Intern Training Day, which was very successful and well received. A total of 18 student interns participated in the full-day program, which was planned and executed by members of the fire department in coordination with Barnstable Public Schools, the other five local fire districts, and additional training partners. Chief Brown and DC Clark provided support, but the event was primarily organized by EMS Officer Gardner and Firefighter Lee, with assistance from Captain McNamara and other firefighters who volunteered on their days off. Participants from the school system expressed strong appreciation for the event, including a thank-you note from Mrs. Eastman of Barnstable High School.
 - Commissioners noted that students spoke highly of the intern day experience and expressed interest in future participation.
- The department also received a thank-you letter from the Historical Society and an online message of gratitude from a village resident recognizing the department’s high level of care during a recent emergency.
- Personnel additionally assisted with Fire Prevention Week activities, conducting educational station tours for the Federated Church Preschool.

- Chief Brown, DC Clark, Captain McPherson, and Firefighter Higgins attended the Cape and Islands Fire Chiefs Association Fall Leadership Education Session.

Apparatus and Equipment

- Both ambulances are operational.
- The second ambulance, recently obtained from Sandwich, will officially enter service after in-service training concludes on Monday.
- Engine 1 successfully passed its annual pump test and preventive maintenance inspection.
- Chief Brown reported that the department's new ambulance is currently being shipped from Iowa to the local vendor for final outfitting, lettering, and striping before delivery.

Facilities

Updates to be discussed under committee reports.

Sub-Committee Reports

Commissioner Zais and Deputy Clark Website Sub-Committee

The new district website has been uploaded to a staging server. Commissioners will have an opportunity to review the design and provide feedback before the public release. A possible live demonstration may be available by the next board meeting.

Commissioner Zais - Policy Advisory Committee

Commissioner Zais reported that the Policy Advisory Committee held its first meeting on Wednesday. The meeting lasted approximately one hour and forty-five minutes and was described as very productive and constructive. A Committee member was unable to attend due to vehicle issues while returning from New Hampshire, and he will be given the opportunity to review the meeting transcript before final minutes are posted. The committee expects to schedule its next meeting in the near future.

Commissioner Ross - By-Laws Committee

No meetings have been held yet due to scheduling conflicts. The committee is waiting for completed items from the Policy Advisory Committee before moving forward.

Chairman Conley - Renovation / Addition Project

- Building and demolition permits have been submitted and are in process. A demolition permit was filed separately to allow preliminary work to begin while the main building permit is pending.
A temporary trailer has been delivered and secured with fencing at the West Water Tower site. Site preparation and mitigation work are scheduled to start next week, including signage installation and environmental safety steps.
- The septic permit is under review; a redesign is required for a two-pump commercial system. Tax-exempt certification documents are being finalized to exempt district contractors from sales tax. Final Guaranteed Maximum Price figures are expected by the end of the week.

Union Negotiations

- Commissioner Zais provided an update on collective bargaining preparations with IAFF Local 3642. Coordination meetings were held with Chief Brown and DC Clark to discuss the process. Attorney John (last name inaudible) has assigned a junior associate to assist with negotiations. A strategy session will be scheduled to define goals and approaches.
- Mark Lynch was confirmed as the union's representative on the credential committee.

OLD BUSINESS

- The updated Deputy Chief's employment contract was reviewed and approved for signing.
- A letter of appreciation for Jack Gardner was prepared, and commissioners were asked to sign it before adjournment.

Public Comment prior to Executive Session.

- No public comment.

MOTION: To move from general session to executive session for the purpose of discussing labor negotiations with IAFF Local 3642 and will not be returning to open session following the Executive Session.

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

Meeting adjourned at 5:57 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Gina Gonsalves

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