

**COTUIT FIRE DISTRICT
PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE MEETING
FREEDOM HALL
COTUIT, MA 02635
May 22, 2024**

Present: Mark Lynch, Fran Parks, Ray Pirrone, Seth Burdick and Charlie Eager

The meeting was called to order by Fran Parks on May 22, 2024

Fran did a roll call of the members present and the Pledge of Allegiance

Public Comment:

- Patty Daily
 - Here to volunteer the following:
 - Draft a scope of work for an RFP
 - Create an Ad Hoc Committee volunteering to help with that Committee's administration
 - Open Meeting Law
 - Requirements (agendas / minutes / public records law)
 - Head a Public Engagement process after the study is done before it goes before the voters
 - Ms. Daly then gave her resumé
 - She has been an attorney in MA since 1987
 - She moved to the Cape in 1989 and she started working with the Cape Cod Commission where she has been their (1) Chief Regulatory Officer; (2) Staff Attorney; (3) Director of Technical Services for Transportation GIS and Water; and (3) Deputy Director of Cape Cod Commission
 - Town of Barnstable both as private attorney in a private firm and she ran the Town of Barnstable Planning Department for a year.
 - Feels very familiar with the RFP Process and writing scopes
 - Study should look at the physical plant of the building and she recommends a landscape architect to look at the uses of the physical plan of the building with some broad direction (office / recreational use) then this will give the voters of the village enough information to make an informed decision going forward
 - Water Quality protection is top priority and should be written into the RFP

For the Annual District Meeting (ADM), Fran stated that the Chief suggested the Prudential Committee may want to put a tent for the overflow in the Parking Lot.

- Fran has been speaking to tent companies and the bids have come back with:
 - Bid #1 – Clam Bakes, Co. \$1,500.00 for tent with lighting inside and 60 chairs set up the day before the meeting and take down day after the meeting
 - Bid #2 – Prime Tent, Co. \$2,050.00
 - Bid #3 – Banks Etc. Co. \$4,335.00
- John Gardner stated that he has at least six (6) people ready to check people in with card to vote
 - Questioned why the Community Hall isn't being used?
 - Fran answered that the Warrant states Freedom Hall.
 - He stated that if the voter would like to speak then they would need to come into Freedom Hall.
- Mark stated that they would be looking to Jack regarding whatever is necessary to make tent work.
- Chief Brown stated that they did do a set up with all the tables and less than 150 inside and would work with Jack Gardner regarding the workflow and egress. Not a mandate of the Fire Department, more an observation based on the last meeting. Chief stated that extra chairs can be provided for the Prudential Committee.
- John Gardner commented to fill Freedom Hall first.
 - Chief weighed in on how the check-in process could work so as to not obstruct egress.
- Mark weighed in on the three bids and the moderator running the show
- Mark moved to hire Clam Bakes, Etc. to provide a tent for the ADM. Fran seconded. All in favor – unanimous
- Fran asked the Chief regarding the Workman Comp application.
 - Chief answered (minute taker could not hear)

Accepting past minutes

- Fran asked Committee members if they read the January minutes
 - Mark stated that there is an error with “RSP” / “RFP”
 - Mark moved to accept the minutes from the January meeting. Seth seconded the motion. All in favor – unanimous.

Treasurer's Report

FY24

- Ray looked through the published expenditure
 - Just at or below the expenditure level as of April
 - Will be within the budget
 - Tax collections are running at 78% instead of at 83%
 - Fran remarked that the last time it was at 75%

Public Comment:

- Public Comment from citizen
 - W2s discrepancy – company Paychex is classifying retirement allegedly incorrectly
 - Fran questioned 414H but supposed to be 401A.
 - Ray answered that he reviewed with District Counsel and he recommended a Tax Attorney. Tax Attorney declined to take this on but he knew someone that worked in the area that would be more expeditious dealing with the issue. He also has another Tax Attorney reference out that he will follow up with.
 - Ray stated that Paychex will do an amended W2.
 - Concerned citizen stated that he felt that he should not pay for W2.
 - Seth asked the Citizen if this was the first time it was entered this was or was it the first time it was noticed?
 - Citizen stated that Paychex stated 2022 the 414H laws changed.
- Matthew Dwyer – Sr. Operator at Cotuit Water Department
 - He echoed his frustration with the W2s
- James Gallagher – Sr. Operator at Cotuit Water Department
 - He echoed his frustration with the W2s
- Chief Brown spoke but minute taker could not understand
- ((Chief Brown came closer to the microphone))
 - Chief Brown stated that Board of Fire Commissioners and voted to pull Article 6 off of FY25 Warrant
 - Chief also stated that the Committee that was assembled to look at options for specifying fire apparatus and how they can arrange fire apparatus in the existing fire station determined, based on discussions with the vendors and available products in the market, that several hundreds of thousand dollars could be saved by waiting and ordering fire apparatus that fits inside an appropriately sized fire station. So, if the Article goes through, and the timing works out, then they will revisit the Article. If it doesn't then they will revisit the Article in FY26 and determine the best path forward. So, the Board of Commissioners decided to withdraw the Article

Treasurer's Report (some parts of the audio were unintelligible)

- Fran, Mark, Seth and Ray all discussed at different times the different Article numbers were discussed and some were withdrawn
 - Mark stated to the audience that the withdrawal of Article 25 is subject to the withdrawal of Article 26
- Ray spoke about Warrant Analysis
 - Articles 2, 3 and 4 (minute taker could not understand)
 - Article 6
 - Chief Brown stated that many vendors are ordering many pieces of apparatus at a time and there is very minimal customization and several hundred thousand dollars cheaper. Right now, there is potential be a 6-month turn around and several hundred thousand dollars less. Committee was quoted 3-4 years for customization.

- Ray stated that his concern is that the FD will not have the opportunity to act quickly. By taking the Article off, it removes the ability to act quickly.
 - Fran stated that if needed, a Special District Meeting could be held.
- Next Article (no number given) Protective Equipment is also in debt as well as \$1.3 million design project
- Article 9 was for the 2001 bush breaker
- Next Article (no number given) had to do with the Water Department (minute taker could not understand what Ray was saying).
- Ray stated that, like all of the Operating Departments, it will be raising the appropriate part of the tax (??)
- Project regarding funding the meter reading will be funded by debt.
- Computers will be moved to free cash.
- Next is something that Ray decided that the Committee should read and that is the Water Conservation Restriction.
 - Fran commented that she would like to use free cash.
 - Seth asked about the advantages of using free cash vs. debt.
 - Ray answered (minute taker could not understand) but recommended using free cash
 - Mark stated Majority Rules.
- Article 4 – Freedom Hall street lights
- Discrepancy between script and worksheet
 - Ray answered that the amount in the script was taken from the Warrant.

**Minute taker could not understand what was said by Ray going forward)

Complaints about Special District Meeting were read (not out loud)

- Fran stated that there were complaints about the Special District Meeting regarding Article 17 that was passed in 2021 regarding the RFP on the school.
 - Fran stated that, at that time, they did not own the school and you cannot do an RFP on a building you do not own.

Fran made Motion to Adjourn / Seth seconded the motion – all in favor