

**COTUIT FIRE DISTRICT
PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE MEETING
Via ZOOM and In Person Freedom Hall
COTUIT, MA 02635
June 23, 2025**

The meeting was called to order by Mark Lynch on Monday, June 23, 2025, @6:00pm.

Mark led the Committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mark did roll call:

Prudential Committee members: Mark Lynch, John Havel, Seth Burdick, Treasurer Ray Pirrone and Clerk Charlie Eager in person.

Public Comment

- Patty Daley questioned lack of mentioning “Executive Session” on the Agenda

Approval of Past Meeting Minutes

- April 22, 2025 - Prudential Meeting Minutes

MOTION: To approve the meeting minutes of April 22, 2024

Motion made by: Seth Burdick

Seconded by: Mark Lynch

Motion passed unanimously.

- April 28, 2024 – Prudential Meeting Minutes

MOTION: To approve the meeting minutes of April 28, 2024

Motion made by: Seth Burdick

Seconded by: Mark Lynch

Motion passed unanimously.

- May 22, 2024 – Prudential Meeting Minutes

MOTION: To approve the meeting minutes of May 22, 2024

Motion made by: Seith Burdick

Seconded by: Mark Lynch

Motion passed unanimously.

- May 19, 2025 – Prudential Meeting Minutes will be reviewed next meeting.
- ADM Meeting Minutes will be done by Clerk Charlie Eager

Cotuit School Demolition

At the ADM, the Article regarding Demolition of the School passed so next step is bidding process.

Jannelvy Martinez - Consultant

Next phase of the project: launching a **public bidding process** compliant with Massachusetts procurement laws. The bidding process cannot proceed without **architectural plans and technical specifications**, which must be prepared by a licensed architectural firm. These documents are necessary to ensure a fair, legally sound, and competitive bidding environment for qualified demolition contractors.

Legal advisors and project leadership are reviewing the possibility of retaining **ICON Architecture**, the firm previously responsible for the initial study phase. Under **Massachusetts General Law Chapter 7C, Section 59**, it may be permissible to continue working with ICON under a **continuing services framework**, provided it meets legal requirements. The district is currently awaiting a determination from legal counsel (Mark Boudreau, Esq.) on whether this pathway is valid.

It was further clarified that because the estimated cost of the demolition is **in excess of \$1.5 million**, the district is required by law to engage an **Owner's Project Manager (OPM)**. The OPM's role is critical in managing the project's budget, cash flow, scheduling, and general oversight. If ICON employs a certified OPM, the district may be able to consolidate architectural and project management services under one contract, which would streamline operations. If not, a separate OPM will need to be hired.

Tentative Project Timeline:

- If ICON is approved:
 - Bid documents could be prepared and published by **late summer/early fall**.
 - Bids could be received and evaluated in time for **demolition to begin by the end of 2025 or early 2026**.
- If ICON cannot be retained:
 - The district would need to issue a **Request for Proposals (RFP)** for new architectural and engineering services.
 - This would likely delay bidding until **winter**, with construction starting in **spring 2026**.

Bidding Procedures:

Once the bid package is finalized, it must be publicly advertised in accordance with **Massachusetts General Law Chapter 149**, with an **open bidding window of no less than two weeks**. If subcontractors such as asbestos remediation firms are involved, the district may consider extending the window to **four weeks**. During which prospective contractors may submit their proposals. The two-week minimum is legally mandated and generally considered adequate for attracting sufficient bids. However, if the bid requires multiple layers, such as separate general contractor and subcontractor bids (e.g., for asbestos abatement), the bidding timeline might be extended to four weeks to accommodate these complexities.

It was noted that an example bid package—used for the **Marston Mills School demolition**—is available on the district website and provides a useful model.

Additional Considerations:

There was brief discussion about the scope of the "return to nature" directive. While that language was used in the article and has general support, the **specifics of what that process entails—such as grading, seeding, or environmental remediation—have not yet been defined** and will be the subject of future discussion. Additional procedural details were reviewed, including the fact that the project's bid package would likely include requirements for environmental remediation measures—referred to as "cyber mediation"—to ensure the site's safe demolition and restoration to a natural state.

The Committee agreed to await legal counsel's opinion regarding the continuing services contract with ICON and indicated a willingness to hold an interim meeting prior to the next regular monthly session if needed to maintain project momentum.

Firehouse Renovation – Staging Area, Parking, and Coordination

Presenter: Commissioner Kevin Conley, Board of Fire Commissioners

Discussion Summary:

Commissioner Conley provided a detailed overview of the fire department's **construction logistics** in anticipation of the firehouse renovation set to begin **late September or early October**.

1. Staging Area Requirements (Lay-Down Area)

Two sites are under consideration:

- **West Street Water Department Property:** This location includes a **fenced area** that may be useful for securing trailers and construction materials. A site meeting is scheduled with water department staff to evaluate feasibility and logistics.
- **Former School Property:** Should demolition not yet commence, this centrally located site could serve as a **staging area** for construction trailers and vehicle storage. Officials emphasized the importance of ensuring that this **temporary use** does not delay or interfere with the building's removal, which remains a **priority project**.

2. Parking for Construction Workers

The department is seeking a solution for **contractor parking** to avoid disruption to nearby residential streets. The primary candidate is the **Freedom Hall parking area**, with vehicles parked during weekday working hours (approx. 7 AM – 3 PM). A **shuttle system** would transport workers to the construction site.

Clarification is needed regarding **ownership and rights** to some parking spaces adjacent to Freedom Hall. Some signage suggests municipal control, while others may be privately owned. Resolution on this issue will guide final parking decisions.

3. Future Use and Transition of the School Site

There was consensus that if available, the **school property remains the most logical staging location**, especially given its **proximity and accessibility**. Officials discussed using the site post-demolition for **contractor parking**, particularly since portions of the site are already used for community events, such as **Cape Cod Baseball League games**.

The team emphasized the importance of being "**shovel-ready**" for the school demolition—when the green light comes, all logistical obstacles should be cleared in advance.

Freedom Hall Calendar and Website Access Discussion

The meeting focused on administrative challenges with scheduling and reservations at Freedom Hall, with resident Fran Parks raising concerns about the current Google calendar system's limited access and functionality issues.

John Havel explained that a solution involves creating a new WordPress website and managing DNS records and hosting, requiring coordination with current website owners and committee stakeholders to determine key information to display and necessary features.

- John estimated that with proper access and permissions, the technical development of the redesigned reservation and information system could be completed within one to two weeks. He recommended starting development promptly while resolving approval issues later, noting DNS and hosting changes are reversible.

It was noted that maintaining two websites simultaneously is possible, allowing fallback to the existing site if needed, but access and control of the Freedom Hall Google calendar must be clarified and improved.

- John shared that a preliminary website design was nearly finished and would include distinct sections for different village departments to improve usability and transparency. The group was optimistic about these improvements and supported efforts to streamline online scheduling and communication.

The discussion addressed long-term website maintenance concerns:

- While John is leading redevelopment, there were worries about relying on a single individual for ongoing updates and technical upkeep.
 - The Committee considered engaging a third-party contractor for regular website maintenance to ensure consistent service and reduce risks from staff turnover or absence.
 - John agreed maintenance demands are modest and promised thorough documentation and instructions to ease handoffs.
 - Despite this, the preference was for a formal maintenance arrangement with a dedicated provider to handle technical issues and routine updates, easing pressure on volunteers or part-time staff.
- John clarified that while he oversees redesign and development, ongoing tasks like updating meeting agendas or notices can be managed easily by designated users with appropriate permissions. It was suggested that members from the Fire, Water, and Prudential Committees be given login access.

A broader discussion emphasized the need to professionalize administrative functions within the Fire District to ensure continuity, transparency, and structured operations, rather than relying solely on volunteers.

- The committee agreed that although John had the expertise and willingness to start the project, long-term responsibility should be supported by clear documentation, procedures, and possibly outsourcing to a third-party contractor.
- John explained the first step would be presenting a mockup—a static, image-based design of the new website—so members could provide feedback before any backend coding begins. He reassured the group that this step involves no risk and that implementation could be done by him or someone else.

- A potential issue regarding web hosting arose, with uncertainty if Barnstable County still hosts the CFD website and whether the Fire District is paying for that service. The group agreed to follow up with county IT to clarify hosting and billing responsibilities. Patty Daly offered to provide John with direct contact information for county IT.

Fran Parks raised additional concerns about the Freedom Hall reservation calendar's functionality and accessibility, noting that a previous redesign effort was halted by county disapproval, the Google calendar feeding the public-facing calendar was no longer working, and existing reservations had been lost.

- Ms. Parks stressed the urgency of restoring the calendar to support both internal scheduling and public visibility for event planning. She requested contacting current website administrator Pete Emerson to help resolve the issue.
- Committee members agreed Ms. Parks could manage Freedom Hall reservations temporarily, at least until a new Assistant Treasurer is hired, and efforts would be made to regain Google calendar access and restore reservation data.

Assistant Treasurer Position

The conversation about the Assistant Treasurer position was scheduled for executive session to discuss candidates and next steps.

- Mark confirmed that Lisa Haven had submitted a detailed transition document with recommendations and offered to assist through July to ensure a smooth handoff.

The Committee expressed gratitude for Lisa's offer and recognized the value of her institutional knowledge in onboarding her successor.

Financial Update and Motion to Transfer Funds

Ray Pirrone reminded the Committee of a procedural matter concerning his previously circulated motion to transfer funds from the reserve account to cover potential debt service deficits before the fiscal year ends. Mark acknowledged the importance of addressing this timely.

- It was noted that the Treasurer's Report had been inadvertently omitted from the formal agenda. Mark requested a brief update from Ray before proceeding with the motion.

Ray reported strong financial performance across departments:

- Tax collections had caught up and exceeded projections by approximately \$350,000 as of the end of May.
- The Water Department exceeded its budget target by \$340,000.
- The Fire Department was ahead by \$35,000.
- Additional grant funds were expected to be allocated to the Special Revenue Fund, which would relieve some budget pressures on the Fire Department's operations.

District would end the fiscal year in a strong financial position. As of the end of May, the District had a revenue surplus of about **\$790,000**, due to higher-than-expected tax and water department collections. He cautioned, however, that this figure would likely drop slightly by the end of June, since most of the major tax collections had already occurred. Despite this projected decline, Ray anticipated a favorable year-end revenue surplus of **\$500,000 to \$600,000**.

Key points regarding fiscal performance:

- **Tax collections exceeded expectations**, reducing the volume of unpaid taxes. This will help bolster the District's "free cash" position, as uncollected taxes are treated as a negative factor in that calculation.
- **Most departments remained under budget**, with the exception of two notable overages:
 - **Debt Service**: This was underestimated because a bond was issued after the annual district meeting last year. Ray had not expected the related principal and interest payments to fall within the current fiscal year.
 - **Freedom Hall Wages**: This line item was projected to exceed the budget by approximately **\$1,000**, a relatively minor issue.

To address these deficits and close the books cleanly:

- Ray recommended that **\$42,000 be transferred from the reserve account**:
 - **\$22,000** to cover principal on short-term debt.
 - **\$19,000** to cover short-term interest payments.
 - **\$1,000** to address the Freedom Hall wage overage.

Committee members clarified that this was a **one-time, timing-related issue**. Although the expense had been anticipated in the following fiscal year, the bond came due sooner than expected. Ray confirmed that the upcoming fiscal year's budget already accounted for future payments, and that he had intentionally overestimated interest in that budget as a safeguard.

MOTION: To authorize the Treasurer to transfer the full \$42,000 from reserves.

Motion made by: Seth Burdick

Seconded by: Mark Lynch

Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment: Internet Issues and Committee Appointments

Lally Lloyd, Moderator, made several important public comments:

1. Wi-Fi Quality at Freedom Hall:

- Ms. Lloyd urged the Committee to investigate and invest in **upgrading the building's internet infrastructure**. She pointed out that frequent connection failures during public meetings were undermining transparency and accessibility for the public.
- She emphasized that, as a public building, Freedom Hall should be able to support hybrid and remote meeting formats effectively.

2. Committee Appointments:

- Ms. Lloyd reminded everyone that it is the **moderator's responsibility** to appoint two members of the public to each of the following:
 - The **Policy Advisory Committee**.
 - The **Bylaws Committee**.
- She issued a call for interested parties to either **nominate themselves or others** they believe are qualified and willing to serve. Interested individuals were invited to contact her via email:
cfdmoderator@gmail.com

3. Committee Launch Process:

- Ms. Lloyd asked that one member of the Prudential Committee be identified to **convene the first meeting of each committee**. Once those members are selected, she offered to coordinate with them to initiate the work of each committee.

Committee Leadership Reorganization and Committee Assignments

The Committee turned to reorganizing its own leadership and representation:

- **Chair Reappointment:**
 - **Mark Lynch** was nominated and unanimously re-elected as **Chair of the Prudential Committee** for the upcoming year.
- **Committee Representative Assignments:**
 - **John Havel** was appointed to serve as the Prudential Committee's representative to the **Policy Advisory Committee**.
 - He acknowledged unfamiliarity with the role but expressed willingness to learn.
 - Seth nominated John, and the motion passed unanimously.
 - **Seth Burdick** was then nominated and confirmed to serve as the Prudential Committee's representative to the **Bylaws Committee**.

Mark noted that in previous years, these appointments had been made too late, which led to rushed and less effective committee work. He emphasized the importance of making appointments earlier in the year, particularly for the Bylaws Committee, which should have sufficient time to prepare recommendations for the annual meeting.

There was some confusion over how often the Bylaws Committee was required to meet:

- Some members believed the committee was supposed to meet **biannually**.
- Others recalled the bylaws stating that the committee should meet **annually**.
- The Committee agreed to **review the bylaws** for clarification.

Additional Public Comments: Website, AV Equipment, and Committee Practices

Patty Daly offered additional feedback, reinforcing previous concerns:

- She expressed **support for Commissioner Burdick's earlier statement** about the need for a **professionalized website update**, emphasizing that such projects should not rely on volunteers alone.
- Ms. Daly stressed that the District should apply the **same professionalism to its audio/visual equipment**. Effective hybrid and remote meetings depend on reliable microphones, cameras, and internet service.
- She also urged the Committee to prioritize candidates for the **Assistant Treasurer position** who have the technical skills to **run hybrid meetings smoothly**, including in-person, Zoom, and mixed formats.

Fran Parks raised multiple procedural and operational concerns:

1. **Authority to Appoint Committee Members:**
 - Ms. argued that in the past, the **previous moderator (Jack Gardner)** solicited **volunteers at the annual meeting**, rather than directly appointing individuals to committees.
 - She encouraged the current moderator and Committee to **verify the proper procedure** in the bylaws.
2. **Wi-Fi Limitations at Freedom Hall:**
 - Ms. Parks was skeptical about the feasibility of improving Wi-Fi at Freedom Hall without major upgrades or boosters.

- She attributed some of the recent issues to the **unusual heat and weather**, which may have impacted Xfinity service.
3. **Frequency of Bylaws Review:**
- Ms. Parks reiterated her belief that **annual review of bylaws is unnecessary** and leads to “tinkering” for the sake of activity.
 - She reminded the Committee that a proposal she made at a previous annual meeting to change the bylaw review cycle to **every three years** was **voted down** by the voters.
 - Nonetheless, she maintained that a less frequent review cycle would better preserve the integrity of the bylaws.

Mark acknowledged Ms. Park’s comments and confirmed that she was correct regarding the past rejection of the triennial review proposal. He added that he too favored less frequent revisions, but the voters had spoken. Regarding the appointment process, he agreed to **consult with former moderator Jack Gardner** and review the bylaws more carefully to clarify when and how appointments should occur.

Lally Lloyd returned to the discussion to provide additional clarification:

- She stated that she had personally spoken with **Jack Gardner** at the most recent annual meeting. Gardner confirmed that his usual practice was to ask for volunteers during the meeting rather than make formal appointments.
- Ms. Lloyd maintained that, per her reading of the bylaws, **the current moderator has the authority to appoint** members to both the Policy Advisory and Bylaws Committees.

There was general agreement that **no formal appointments had yet been made** to these two committees, and the Committee concluded that efforts should now be made to **publicize the opportunity and solicit participation**.

Committee Appointments and Volunteer Process

The discussion centered on the careful and deliberate process required to appoint members to various committees, emphasizing the significance and time commitment involved.

Key points and developments included:

- The chair stressed that appointing committee members is a serious responsibility that often requires considerable time and thoughtful consideration from all involved parties.
- Patti Daly volunteered to serve on the bylaw committee, indicating community engagement.
- A member shared their personal experience from the previous year, explaining that they were appointed to the policy advisory committee by the former moderator, Jack Gardner, at the end of the last annual meeting. This example illustrated how appointments have been managed historically.
- The current chair outlined the ongoing procedure for appointments, which involves:
 - Inviting individuals to self-nominate or express interest in committee service.
 - Allowing a period for discussion and consideration before making formal appointments.
 - Emphasizing that volunteer interest alone does not guarantee appointment, with the goal of encouraging broad and representative participation.
- The chair confirmed that committee bylaws specify that the moderator appoints two members to each committee.

- The remainder of each committee is composed of representatives from the various commissions, ensuring a mix of appointed and commission-based members.
- No further public comments were raised on this topic.

Transition to Executive Session

Following the committee appointments discussion, the meeting moved toward a confidential phase with the following steps and decisions:

- The chair announced the intention to enter executive session, explaining the purpose was to discuss candidates for the open assistant treasurer position.

It was clarified that upon entering executive session:

- The public Zoom meeting would be concluded and would not resume.
- The meeting recording would be stopped at that point.
- The committee would continue the executive session with handwritten notes being taken to document proceedings.
- This transition marked the end of the public session of the meeting.

MOTION: adjourn to enter into Executive Session.

Motion made by: Seth Burdick

Seconded by: Mark Lynch

Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Gina Gonsalves