

**COTUIT FIRE DISTRICT
PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE MEETING
ZOOM ONLY at Freedom Hall
COTUIT, MA 02635
March 9, 2026**

The meeting was called to order by Mark Lynch at 6:00 pm on March 9, 2026.

Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Lynch led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chair Lynch did roll call:

Commissioners: Mark Lynch, John Havel and Seth Burdick

Also present via ZOOM: Treasurer Ray Pirrone and Assistant Treasurer Ryan Ouellette

ICON Architecture: Paul DiGiandomenico

Tighe & Bond: Eric Doremus & Lauren Butts, Landscape Architect

LeftField: Kevin Sullivan, Joe Sullivan & Kayla Gallow

Public Comment:

Patty Daly made two comments. She noted that the Fire District Clerk salary is significantly lower than other districts, citing West Barnstable's clerk at about \$10,000 annually compared to Cotuit's \$3,550 base pay, and suggested increasing the salary to attract qualified candidates. She also asked whether the committee plans to continue Zoom-only meetings and questioned why the Zoom chat function is disabled, noting that chat comments could be monitored and reported during meetings.

Chair Lynch responded stating that the recent Zoom-only meetings were due to technical issues and the need to ensure outside consultants could participate. He said the committee expects to return to hybrid meetings. He also explained that the Zoom chat was disabled because it cannot easily be recorded as part of the official meeting record, but the committee could look into it.

Carol Zais suggested that members of the Civic Association might be willing to volunteer to assist with certain clerk duties while the district searches for a replacement. She also noted the committee could consider requesting special circumstances to delay the Annual District Meeting if more time is needed. She further expressed concern about the proposed boulders, noting they could attract graffiti, and suggested a more natural alternative such as a "green fence" of trees or bushes.

Meeting Minutes Approval:

MOTION: To approve March 3, 2026, meeting minutes.

Motion made by: Seth Burdick Seconded by: John Havel

Motion passed unanimously. (Mark Lynch, Seth Burdick, John Havel)

Cotuit School Building Demolition Status Update

- **Further Review and Approval of Demolition and Landscape Construction Documents; Start of Bid Process**

The Committee reviewed the final demolition and landscape construction drawings for the Cotuit School project in preparation for the start of the bid process. Chair Lynch reported that he reviewed the plans over the weekend and identified a few minor typographical errors, which he discussed with the project manager for correction. Chair Lynch also asked about a riprap stone area shown near the construction entrance off Old Oyster Road, located just above the gate and adjacent to the paved area. Project representatives explained that the riprap consists of large stones typically used as a temporary construction pad or apron. Its purpose is to knock mud and debris off truck tires before vehicles enter the roadway, helping keep the road clean during demolition and construction activities. It is commonly installed during construction and removed before project completion. Chair Lynch indicated that the Committee would prefer the riprap be temporary and removed at the end of construction, and asked that the drawings clarify this if necessary. Other members reviewed the plans and indicated they appeared acceptable.

MOTION: To approve the 100% construction drawing package and allow the bid for contractors to provide pricing for the contract.

Motion made by: Mark Lynch Seconded by: Seth Burdick

Motion passed unanimously. (Mark Lynch, Seth Burdick, John Havel)

Clerk Replacement

The Committee discussed ongoing efforts to identify a replacement for the District Clerk, noting that several inquiries had been made but no candidates had expressed interest. It was also suggested that additional outreach could be made through other municipal contacts to identify potential candidates. Members discussed the possibility of a short-term solution within the district to manage the duties for the upcoming Annual District Meeting due to the limited timeframe. It was noted that the clerk is an appointed position and the bylaws outline the duties. Familiarity with Robert's Rules and municipal district operations is typically helpful. The Committee also discussed compensation for the position, noting that other districts pay significantly more and that experience with municipal procedures can be important for performing the role effectively. Given the limited progress in identifying candidates, the Committee indicated that advertising the position may be necessary to develop a pool of applicants. The matter will remain under discussion as the Committee works to fill the role in the coming weeks.

Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer reported an accounting issue related to the June financing transactions, when one Bond Anticipation Note (BAN) was retired and another was issued. While tracking the movement of funds between the general fund and capital fund, he discovered that one transfer related to retiring the previous loan may not have been properly deducted.

As a result, the cash balance initially appeared overstated by approximately \$85,803.00, which corresponds to the amount transferred to retire the prior loan. The Treasurer is currently working with the auditors to locate the corresponding entry and resolve the discrepancy. He noted that all revenues and expenses appear to be properly recorded, and the issue likely relates to internal transfers between funds. The Committee agreed to keep the matter on the agenda until it is resolved.

Fire Union Negotiations

The Committee reported that negotiations with the Fire Union are ongoing, noting that discussions are continuing but have not progressed as far as anticipated.

Public Comment

Carol Zais discussed the nomination paper process for the upcoming district election, noting that the timeline and requirements are outlined in the district bylaws. It was explained that nomination papers are typically obtained through the Town, submitted to the Town Clerk for signature verification, and then returned to the Fire District Clerk, generally occurring in April.

Additional responsibilities associated with the clerk's role in preparing for the election were also discussed, including reserving Freedom Hall for the election, coordinating election workers, obtaining updated voter lists from the Town Clerk, arranging ballot boxes, and securing a police detail for election day. Mrs. Zais offered to assist with the process if needed.

Committee members acknowledged the information and reiterated the importance of appointing a knowledgeable clerk as soon as possible in order to manage the upcoming election preparations.

Mrs. Zais asked where the final demolition and landscape drawings for the Cotuit School project could be viewed. Chair Lynch responded that the drawings are currently available on the Cotuit Fire District website, though the most recent versions posted are not yet the final versions. He explained that several minor typographical corrections were being made and that the final bid set of plans will be posted before the bid process begins. The Committee expects the bids to be issued on March 11, 2026, at which time the updated drawings will replace the earlier versions currently on the website.

Kayla Gallow, Project Manager from LeftField, confirmed that the final package would be provided to the Chair for review, after which the bid documents will be posted online by Wednesday afternoon.

Matters not reasonably anticipated by the Chair:

A member raised a question regarding the timeline for nomination papers for the upcoming district election. It was noted that nomination papers must first be submitted to the Town Clerk for signature verification in early April and then returned to the Fire District later in April. Members discussed the importance of confirming the exact deadlines, particularly given the current vacancy in the District Clerk position, since the clerk typically serves as the notary and handles related paperwork.

It was suggested that, if necessary, the acting clerk could temporarily perform these duties, though members agreed it would be preferable to have a permanent clerk appointed as soon as possible.

Adjournment

MOTION: To adjourn.

Motion made by: Seth Burdick

Seconded by: Mark Lynch

Motion passed unanimously. (Mark Lynch, Seth Burdick John Havel)

Meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:36pm

Respectfully submitted,

Gina Gonsalves

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