

COTUIT FIRE DISTRICT
Special Prudential Committee Meeting
Minutes

April 13, 2011

The Chairman, Amy Kates, called the meeting to order. Members Rick Barry and Laurie Hadley were present as well as several members of the community.

During the period for public comment, Ms Hadley replied to an e-mail from Ms Cindy Gardner and stated that the web site was "back in limbo" due primarily to the fact that Ms Hadley's computer had been down for a week.

A question was raised as to why public comment was being held at the beginning of the meeting rather than at the end as indicated on the agenda. Ms Kates agreed to cut off the public comment and hold it at the end of the meeting.

Ms Kates stated she had spent time on the budget comparing FY 11 unencumbered balances, what was expended in Fiscal Years 9 and 10. She felt this was necessary as the budget as presented did not include any "back up." She asked for and received some information from the District Treasurer and added this to the budget. She noted that no part of some of the line items had been expended. One such item she identified as "Emergency Expenses (line item 5132)." She therefore felt that the other items perhaps were sufficient and this particular item need not be included.

The District Treasurer, Agnes Murray, explained that the money from that account is used at the end of the year to make up any shortfall in other items. The District Meeting votes money in four general categories, not on individual line items. Money can therefore be moved to different line items within a category. The allocation of the amounts in each line item is determined by the heads of departments and the Commissioners.

At the end of the year, some line items will be over and some will be under. When you add up all the expenditures, the total amount left will most likely leave a balance of less than \$35,000. The Treasurer debits line items according to how they are identified by the two departments.

Mr Barry questioned whether or not there was some way to show the amount that had been taken from Line Item 5132, perhaps showing a transfer to another line item, or at least a total amount transferred so that at the end of year Line Item 5132 would show a balance of something less than \$35,000. Mrs Murray did not feel that this could be done.

At 6:30, Commissioner Mycock and Chief Olsen arrived, this being the time scheduled for discussion of the Fire Department budget. When asked, Commissioner Mycock indicated he would prefer that Chief Olsen be the spokesman on the budget.

Ms Kates had questions concerning several line items including call firefighter training and noted \$3,000 less had been spent in the current fiscal year than in preceding years and wondered if it was an item that could be cut. Chief Olsen responded that they hoped

to add two additional call firefighters in the next fiscal year, bringing the total to ten, and therefore the line items would be needed. Also there will be further expenses in the current fiscal year that have not yet been charged as against the items. Ms Kates questioned.

In response to a question from Ms Kates, the Chief indicated that in addition to the line items, the special appropriation was also needed. Certain of the expenses associated with hiring, training and outfitting new firefighters have traditionally been special appropriations, but could also be presented as line items. Some of the costs associated with hiring new people are a physical exam, protective clothing and the fire academy.

Ms Kates then questioned why a special appropriation was needed for protective clothing. Chief Olsen responded that because of wear and tear protective clothing had to be replaced approximately every five years. It costs approximately \$1,800 per set. They have in the past received a grant to help pay for this item and are currently working on an application for another grant. \$2,500 in budgeted for repairs to protective clothing.

Much of the discussion that followed concerned the way the Treasurer's monthly reports are compiled. The end-of-year accounting procedures were also discussed. The Labor and Salaries accounts were also discussed. All questions regarding injuries and payments were answered satisfactorily. Ms Kates asked if there were no areas of the budget where cuts could be made; and in the opinion of the Chief and Fire Commissioners, no further cuts could be made.

Ms Kates did however question one item of equipment which had been charged to "supplies" in the past and stated she felt this should not be handled this way again. The Chief pointed out that the line item is "ambulance supplies and equipment." Again, money which is in the overall category can be moved to different line items within the budget. As the amount was significant, Ms Kates and the Treasurer felt it should have been a special appropriation.

Commissioner Mycock advised the Committee that a call firefighter had been injured and that the District had insurance that would pay this person's wages. The present rate is \$300 per week for a partial injury and \$600 if out full time. The Medical reimbursement has a \$75,000 cap. A lot of the volunteers make more than that. The person who was injured raised concern that this might not be enough. The Commissioner felt that the District would be required to make up any shortfall. The Chief did get a quote on increasing the coverage to \$600 and \$1200 and is awaiting a quote on the medical. These amounts may be added to the budget before the Annual Meeting, and should amount to approximately \$300 more on one of insurance line items. In response to a question from the Chairman, it was stated that all insurance policies are reviewed annually. Each Department pays its share.

Commissioner Mycock requested that computers (hard ware) be made a separate line item and not included in Information Technology. The Treasurer agreed to do this.

Portable radios are being replaced as the one currently being used are fifteen or more years old and are failing.

In summing up, Commissioner Mycock pointed out that 82% of the Fire Department budget is salaries. The proposed budget does not include any increase in salaries. It is hoped that the budget will "settle down" in the coming year as injuries and other absences have contributed to the current year's expenditures. The total increase in the FY 12 budget is less than 1% over the current year. The outcome of the negotiations with the Firefighters Union may require a special meeting to cover any increase.

Ms Gardner stated she is concerned that the money in the Fire Department budget is not being spent as directed by the voters, particularly in the area of staffing. She is also concerned about legal expenses. Mr James Gardner is also concerned with staffing. Both criticized the current Prudential Committee members for not getting answers to their questions from the Fire Commissioners.

Once again, there was discussion of legal fees. No new information was provided.

Ms Kates reported on the recent meetings of the Policy Advisory Committee. They hired an environmental scientist to survey Freedom Hall at a cost of \$350. The main problems are water, mold and handicapped issues. The Committee has consulted with many different types of contractors including "mold remediation" contractors. They still have not rented a dumpster and the hall is not completely cleaned out. The Chief and the other Boy Scout leader will be removing their "stuff." All of the remaining junk does have to be removed. Copies of a report were provided to the Prudential Committee members. The main problem is water. This will have to be addressed before mold remediation can be performed. There are several causes including dry wells, gutters and the foundation itself. There may also be an asbestos problem. There is \$17,000. left in this year's budget. By the 25th, they hope to have an amount for an article in the warrant for the District Meeting. Mr Barry declined to take a vote on money as it had not been included in the agenda. He also suggested an air exchanger might be considered.

Ms Kates again suggested the basement in Freedom Hall for a District Office. She felt this had to be addressed before an Assistant Treasurer could be hired.

Mr Barry made a motion to go into executive session for the purpose of discussing pending litigation, not to return to an open meeting.

The open meeting of the Prudential Committee was adjourned