

**COTUIT FIRE DISTRICT
PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE MEETING
Freedom Hall
COTUIT, MA 02635
March 24, 2025**

The meeting was called to order by Mark Lynch on March 24, 2025, @6:00pm at Freedom Hall and ZOOM.

Mark led the Committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mark did roll call:

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

Public Comment

- No public comment

Approval of Past Meeting Minutes

- 12.04.2024 – Tax Classification Meeting Minutes
 - Mark asked for a motion to approve
 - Fran moved
 - Seth seconded
 - All in favor
- 12.04.2024 – Prudential Meeting Minutes – Part A
 - Mark asked for a motion to approve
 - Fran moved
 - Seth seconded
 - All in favor
- 12.04.2024 – Prudential Meeting Minutes – Part B
 - Mark asked for a motion to approve
 - Fran moved
 - Seth seconded
 - All in favor
- 12.11.2024 – Prudential Meeting Minutes
 - Mark asked for a motion to approve
 - Fran moved
 - Seth seconded
 - All in favor
- 12.30.2024 – Prudential Meeting Minutes
 - Mark asked for a motion to approve
 - Fran moved
 - Seth seconded
 - All in favor
- 01.22.2025 – Prudential Meeting Minutes
 - Mark asked for a motion to approve
 - Fran moved
 - Seth seconded
 - All in favor

- 02.24.2025 – Prudential Meeting Minutes
 - Mark asked for a motion to approve
 - Fran moved
 - Seth seconded
 - All in favor
- Next month to catch up on any outstanding meeting minutes

Treasurer's Report

- End of February 2025
 - Positive position regarding revenue and expenditures
 - Tax Revenue
 - \$190,000.00 over target
 - Target is 8/12 months 67%
 - Collected 72% of tax levy
 - Cautions that next month, the number to be substantially lower
 - March collections have been very weak
 - Water Dept. is \$302,000.00 ahead of budget
 - Running at almost 98% of the budget
 - These are the budget figures that are submitted to the state and not the measurement that Water Dept uses to measure its own performance
 - Fire Dept. is 59% over budget
 - Interest and grant activity is \$59,000.00
- \$527,000.00 ahead of February target
- Below on expenditure side
 - \$384,000
 - Adjusted for large annual payments
- All departments are all favorable
 - Prudential Dept 68%
 - Fire Dept 61%
 - Water Dept 53%
 - Freedom Hall 53%
 - Streetlights 43%
 - Library 100% completed on budget
 - Debt Service 78%
 - There has been a shortfall in the interest that will need to be made up in the reserve account
 - Have not touched \$45,000.00 Reserve Fund
- Expenditures \$384,000.00
- Revenue \$527,000.00
 - Free cash close to \$900,000.00
 - Will not happen but nice to be in this position this time of year
- Nothing unusual regarding Articles
- Fire Dept is increasing its target expenditure for the year
- **Paychex has once again issued the incorrect W2s**
 - Still waiting for correct W2s for employees
 - Mark asked if this was a different mistake than what they made last year?
 - Ray answered it was different than last year but it was regarding deductions from both Federal Tax Wages and also State Tax Wages

- The problem has been compounded since last year
- Fran asked if Ray was considering replacing them
 - Ray answered that it was not just the mistakes but also the attitude he has received from the company
- Mark asked if a vote needed to be made to look for replacement for Paychex.
 - Fran answered it was the Treasurer's purview
 - Chris from the Water Department asked if Paychex has given any timeline?
 - Ray answered that Paychex has not given any timeline
- Chris from Water Department stated that he will go back to the Water Department personnel and recommend that they ask for an extension regarding filing for taxes.

Auditor's Report

- Auditor had a conflict with 03.24.2025
 - Offer will be extended next month
- Ray stated that the audit has been completed and auditor has recommended some suggestions regarding Cyber Security for the district
- Chris from the Water Department stated that he could give Ray a copy of his report
 - Ray stated that it would be helpful

Cotuit Water Department budget review

- Chris from Water Dept
 - Maintenance
 - Water mains = level fund
 - Stations and tanks = level fund
 - Grounds = increased
 - Road problems around generators
 - Water testing = gone down
 - Building repair = remains the same
 - Replacement = small increase from \$122,600.00 to \$123,200.00
 - Operations
 - Advertising = same
 - Postage & printing = has gone down
 - Due to 2nd mailing has not gone out / 2x a year instead of 4x/year
 - Computer and copier = increase in vendor rates
 - Consumption Assessment = gone down
 - Payment of last year's water so they know how much to pay the state
- Actual subtotal is lower than last year by 76%
 - Service connections have been raised because of price of brass and repairs
- **Labor and Salaries**
 - Recently hired a junior operator
 - Budget has increases in on-call and OT areas because at the time that the budget was set, they were not sure if they would be able to fill the open position
 - Cost of Living = increased by 2.5% (Social Security Administration COLA figure for the year)
 - Offering Merit Bonus to Superintendent of \$5,000.00

- Longevity bonus for \$3,000.00 so two senior operators JR and Matt for their 10-year mark
- Office manager has hit 10-year longevity increase
 - Budget is at 9.25% (\$43,000.00) more than previous year
 - Mark asked if most of the 9.25% is attributable to the new hire?
 - Chris answered that it may go down by only a few grand
 - Mark stated that it might be helpful when the Water Department has the final budget, to indicate what the overall percentage increases are as opposed to Cash + Percentage.
 - Ray stated that he had already done that.
- **Capital Improvement**
 - ½ ton reaching its 10-year mark
 - Would like to increase to a ¾ ton = \$75,000.00
 - HVAC cannot be fixed anymore / installed in late 80's
 - \$20,000
 - Ray asks if that takes into account any rebates?
 - Chris answered it does not.
 - Cyber-security
 - \$158,000.00 for everything
 - Mark asked if these were state-mandated changes?
 - Chris answered yes
 - \$90,000.00 to do work this year
 - Chris talked them down to \$60,000.00 for this year
 - Sent in a grant request to the State for \$30,000.00 on 03.24.2025
 - New printer/copier at the office
 - \$3,500.00

Cotuit Fire Department budget review:

- Chief Brown
 - Proposed FY 26 Operating budget = 4% increase in budget = \$2,824,175.00
 - Salary and Wages (contractual) - 5% increase
 - 4% increase in Fire Chief's salary
 - 2% increase in Deputy Chief's salary
 - 6% increase in Firefighter and Company Office salaries
 - Mark asked if these figures indicated bumps from training certifications as well
 - Chief Brown answered that was correct and it was budgeted at max liability because it is possible for everybody to achieve those
 - Operations and Maintenance = 1% increase = \$400,154.00
 - Upcoming significant request coming for FY26
 - Thanks to Captain McNamara, the department has improved its preventative maintenance plan for the apparatus, which is oftentimes a significant cost for the Operations and Maintenance budget so they feel

that the operating lines will be able to be managed better, thanks to his efforts

- 20% increase of \$4,500.00 in Training and Education
 - Building Renovation Project
 - Kevin Conley, Chairman of Fire Commissioners
 - Working with designers and OPMs to come up with estimate and will have that cost for the upcoming Warrant
 - Many upcoming meetings
 - Meeting with Town
 - Meeting with Historic Committee because of the historic nature of the fire station itself
 - Conversations regarding construction documents, cost estimates and public bid process
 - On target for overall expenditure to date
- **Committee looked at the FY25 Capital Project expenditure****
- Kevin Conley
 - Expected expenditure for FY25 = \$935,120.00
 - \$293,000.00 has already been spent
 - Ray stated that \$1.3M has been approved

Cotuit Elementary School Feasibility Study status:

Cotuit School Contract

- Mark stated that they hired ICON Architecture to undertake the review
 - ICON has commenced project and property has been inspected
 - Committee has emphasized to ICON regarding specific numbers that are needed for demo / complete rehabilitation / partial rehabilitation in time for the ADM.

Freedom Hall:

- Fran stated that Freedom Hall has stayed busy with more people wanting to use it and the exterior of Freedom Hall needs to be done
 - Exterior should not be painted and should be shingled
 - Fran stated that she can get some prices for re-shingling it
 - Possibly \$50,000.00 and this project would be perfect for going to CPC – Community Preservation Funds to see if they can get money for it

Website Renewal

- Fran stated an upgrade is needed for the Prudential Committee website as it is not user-friendly
 - County hosts the website but Fran cannot contact them to have them send the \$600 bill (per year).

Annual District Meeting

- Fran stated that there will probably be a very large turnout
 - Maybe a conversation with the church to use the community room?
 - Mark stated that he will talk to the Church regarding ADM on Monday 05.28.2025
- Mark asked when warrants were due?
 - Fran stated that they need to be closed 30 days before the ADM.
- Mark asked the Water Department where they stood on submitting their report?
 - Water Department answered (inaudible)

Public Comment

- Chris from Water Department stated that he received a request for a building permit for the cell tower and he sent it to Rick (attorney)
 - Regarding upgrades to AT&T
 - Mark asked Chris to include him in any conversation with Rick

Mark stated that he would accept a Motion to Adjourn. Fran stated So moved. Seth seconded. All in favor.