COTUIT FIRE DISTRICT
PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE MEETING
ZOOM and IN PERSON
Freedom Hall
COTUIT, MA 02635
August 24, 2026

The meeting was called to order by Chair Mark Lynch at 6:01 pm on August 24, 2026.

Pledge of Allegiance & Roll Call

Chair Lynch led the Pledge of Allegiance and conducted roll call:

Commissioners present in person: Mark Lynch and John Havel.

Also present: Treasurer Ray Pirrone and Assistant Treasurer/Clerk Ryan Ouellette.

Commissioner Seth Burdick was attending another meeting in Hyannis at the time of roll call and was reported to be on his way. Mr. Burdick joined the meeting at approximately 6:05 p.m.

Public Comment:

No public comment was received.

Meeting Minutes Approval:

MOTION: To approve the meeting minutes of July 27, 2026.
Motion made by: John Havel **Seconded by: Mark Lynch**
Motion passed unanimously.

Following approval of the minutes, the Committee briefly discussed the Water Department sick day funding matter from the prior meeting. The Committee was informed that the memorandum of understanding had been approved by the Water Commission. A copy was to be provided to Mr. Ouellette. The Committee also noted that resolution of the sick day matter would require a warrant article at the next Annual District Meeting.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Pirrone reported that July revenues, including taxes, ambulance and water revenue, were off to a strong start. Expenditures were at or below the eight-percent target for the first month, except for benefits due to the annual pension contribution.

Mr. Pirrone reported that the new fire station remained on budget, although billing had been slower because project activity had been slower. Billing was expected to increase as work progressed into the existing building.

The Committee discussed short-term, long-term and combined financing options for the project. Mr. Pirrone stated that a combination could provide flexibility, particularly regarding anticipated savings, and noted that approximately $4 million in budgeted expenditures were expected after December. Interest rates and the timing of permanent financing were also discussed. Mr. Pirrone reported that the District's financial advisor recommended long-term financing in December, possibly with short-term financing for anticipated savings, and stated that he agreed with that approach at that time.

Long Term Financial Planning

The Committee reviewed financial information covering the previous ten years, including growth, inflation, staffing, operating expenses, salaries, debt service and the tax burden on District residents. The analysis included a cumulative cost-of-living increase of approximately 34.6 percent, wage growth of approximately 37.5 percent and a 2.4-percent increase in the number of residences served by the District. The effect of the Cape's aging population on ambulance and medical services was also discussed.

District salaries had increased approximately 78 percent, total budgeted operating expenditures approximately 63 percent, employee benefits approximately 43 percent and debt service approximately 42 percent. The per-household District tax burden had increased approximately 83 percent during the same period. The Committee discussed these increases in relation to Proposition 2½ and the factors affecting District costs and revenues.

The Committee discussed including water rates in the analysis to more fully reflect the cost of District services to residents. Mr. Pirrone agreed to work with the Water Department to determine changes in the average water bill over the ten-year period.

Capital expenditures, debt and debt service were also discussed. Mr. Pirrone discussed approximately $2.9 million as a base case for capital spending based on prior special articles. The Committee noted that debt service was the component that affected taxes and discussed the District's debt capacity and overall financial position.

The Committee discussed whether the expenditure and tax increases experienced during the previous ten years could continue over the next ten years and the need to identify anticipated future costs. Members discussed developing longer-term capital plans for the District and its departments so future projects, debt service and operating costs could be evaluated as part of the long-term financial planning process.

Governance Study

The Committee discussed the District governance study completed in 1999. Chair Lynch noted that the study addressed whether taxpayers were receiving an appropriate return on their investment in the District and alternative governance structures, including potential consolidation with other districts.

Members discussed the usefulness of the prior study and whether another study should be undertaken. Treasurer Pirrone stated that portions of the earlier study contained redundant or unnecessary analysis that did not add to its conclusions. The Committee agreed to review the 1999 study during the coming month and identify information or data that could assist with long-term financial planning. Historical financial information was available through annual reports, with older information contained in District ledgers.

Water Department representatives discussed long-term capital needs, including aging water mains with an anticipated replacement cost of approximately $500,000 annually and potential future water treatment costs of up to approximately $30 million. PFAS levels remained within regulatory thresholds but had been increasing slightly. The Committee also discussed source-water protection, wastewater infrastructure and contaminants including PFAS, sodium, nitrates, iron and manganese.

The Committee discussed holding a long-term planning session with representatives of the Water and Fire Departments to review anticipated capital needs and their combined financial impact. Members discussed having each department prepare a ten-year capital plan and holding the session in early winter, before the budget process. Representatives of the Water and Fire Commissions were to be invited to participate.

Public Comment

No public comment was received.

Matters not reasonably anticipated by the Chair

The Committee discussed a request from the Cotuit Nursery School to use Freedom Hall as an emergency shelter as part of its required emergency preparedness plan. Fire Chief Brown had identified Freedom Hall as a potential emergency shelter location. Mr. Ouellette agreed to confirm insurance coverage before arrangements were made for the Nursery School to have access to the building.

The Committee discussed the lack of a generator at Freedom Hall and its potential use as an emergency or warming location. A generator was discussed as a possible future capital consideration.

Chair Lynch raised the condition and maintenance of Freedom Hall, including exterior painting, the roof and plumbing. The Committee discussed having the building inspected to identify and prioritize future maintenance and capital needs, and Mr. Ouellette was asked to obtain recommendations for an inspector. Members also discussed incorporating Freedom Hall improvements into long-term capital planning and prioritizing District capital projects. The discussion also included future sewer expansion, drinking-water protection and considering District and Town costs as part of the overall tax burden on residents.

Adjournment

MOTION: To adjourn.
Motion made by: Seth Burdick **Seconded by: Mark Lynch**
Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Gina Gonsalves