

**COTUIT FIRE DISTRICT
PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE MEETING
ZOOM and IN PERSON
Freedom Hall
COTUIT, MA 02635
September 21, 2026**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Mark Lynch at 6:00 pm on September 21, 2026.

Pledge of Allegiance & Roll Call

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

Commissioners present in person: Mark Lynch, Seth Burdick and John Havel.

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

Public Comment:

Lally Lloyd reported that Carol Zais had been appointed to the Policy Committee and John Solomon to the Bylaws Committee. She said one appointment to the Policy Committee remained open and that the Bylaws Committee was complete.

Ms. Lloyd asked whether the Committee had permanently changed its usual meeting day from the fourth Monday of the month. Chair Lynch said it had not and that the Committee generally intended to continue meeting on the fourth Monday. Ms. Lloyd observed that changes to the usual schedule made it more difficult for the public to know when meetings would take place and participate.

Meeting Minutes Approval:

MOTION: To approve the meeting minutes of August 24, 2026.

Motion made by: Seth Burdick Seconded by: Mark Lynch

Motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Pirrone reviewed the District's financial results for the first two months of the fiscal year. He reported that current-year tax collections were ahead of the comparable period last year and that revenue was above budget projections. He said the departments' expenditures were generally at or below budget after accounting for major annual payments. The Committee also discussed scheduling payments to the library and historical society.

He then reported that the fiscal year 2027 budget did not include debt service payments that would become due during the second half of the year after long-term fire station debt is issued. He said the amount needed remained to be verified; his revised preliminary estimate was approximately \$140,000 to \$150,000. He outlined possible approaches, including seeking an appropriation at a special district meeting or structuring the debt so that the first payment would occur later. The Committee discussed the financial and procedural implications of those options. Treasurer Pirrone said he would confirm the figures and consult with the Department of Revenue and the District's financial advisers. The Committee favored holding a separate public meeting once the options, amounts and recommendations

were ready for review. Treasurer Pirrone and Mr. Ouellette were asked to prepare that information, and Treasurer Pirrone said he would return with a proposed meeting date. No decision was made on how to address the debt service shortfall.

Long Term Financial Planning – Water Department

David Churbuck presented the Water Department's long-term financial and capital outlook. He reported that the system has five active wells, two water tanks, approximately 53 miles of water mains and 444 hydrants. In 2025, the Department supplied approximately 171 million gallons of water. Average daily use was approximately 470,000 gallons, while peak summer demand was approximately 1.4 million gallons per day.

Mr. Churbuck reviewed water quality and the potential cost of treatment. A 2019 study estimated that treating iron and manganese at three wells would cost \$10.25 million to \$11.25 million. He said a facility that also treated PFAS could cost approximately \$30 million to \$35 million, based on a comparable facility in Hyannis. Such a facility would not treat nitrates or sodium, and connecting the Department's other two active wells to a central facility would add expense. Based on current contaminant levels and trends, he did not anticipate a need for a treatment facility within the next five years, although an unforeseen contamination event could require treatment sooner. The Department plans to request updated treatment cost estimates.

Mr. Churbuck discussed water main maintenance and replacement. The Department has budgeted \$500,000 for water main replacement in the current fiscal year and again in fiscal year 2029. He recommended considering an annual \$250,000 appropriation for replacements at the superintendent's discretion. The Department has requested a systemwide inventory to help prioritize work based on the mains' age, condition and water quality. A current priority is the neighborhood off Putnam Avenue, including Roosevelt and Eisenhower Drives, where residents have reported recurring water discoloration. The Department is also looking for opportunities to replace mains when other construction requires roads to be opened. Other anticipated costs include repainting the water tanks approximately every 20 years at an estimated \$1.2 million per repainting project; periodic pump and generator replacements; a future vehicle purchase; and upgrades to the SCADA monitoring and control system. The Committee discussed planning for tank repainting and possible funding approaches. No funding approach was selected.

Mr. Churbuck reported that the Department is permitted to withdraw approximately 230 million gallons annually and is currently using approximately 73% of that allowance. He reviewed how future development could increase demand and recommended an updated capacity study. A new well was estimated to cost \$1.5 million to \$5 million, potentially as much as \$10 million if land acquisition or extensive transmission mains were required. No suitable site for another well has been identified.

The Committee discussed emergency interconnections with neighboring water systems and whether shared treatment might be feasible. Water Commissioner Mark Robinson said shared treatment would require further engineering review. The Department agreed to seek a more detailed explanation from the superintendent for a future meeting. No vote was taken.

Long Term Financial Planning – Fire Department

Chief Brown from the Cotuit Fire Department presented a 15-year capital plan, including projects deferred from earlier fiscal years. The presentation identified fleet and apparatus as the largest cost category, accounting for approximately 80% of scheduled capital expenditures. Chief Brown discussed increased apparatus prices, long delivery times, equipment service lives, and efforts to obtain grants and share resources with neighboring departments.

Engine 2, which the presenter said is 32 years old, was identified as a current replacement need. Its estimated replacement cost was at least \$900,000, with delivery potentially taking several years after an

order is placed. Other needs discussed for the next several years included a forestry vehicle, command vehicles, cardiac monitors, structural protective equipment, radios and vehicle extrication equipment. Chief Brown explained that the projected years could change based on equipment condition, technology and delivery times, and that approval of a purchase and payment for it might occur in different fiscal years. The Department also discussed longer-term replacement of an engine, an ambulance and a marine unit. There is no current replacement plan for Ambulance 5, a shared resource operated with Sandwich and West Barnstable. The Department intends to explore grants and continued cooperation with those communities when replacement becomes necessary.

In response to a question, Chief Brown said the items in the plan reflected equipment needed to continue providing the Department's services. Committee members thanked the Department for the presentation. No vote was taken.

Long Term Financial Planning – Prudential Committee

The Committee discussed how existing debt will be retired and how anticipated capital spending by the Water Department, Fire Department and Prudential Committee could affect debt service over the next five years.

Treasurer Pirrone presented a preliminary financial model combining existing obligations with hypothetical future capital spending. He identified possible Prudential Committee needs involving information technology and Freedom Hall's roof, septic system and parking lot. He emphasized that the timing and figures in the model were assumptions to be updated using the information presented by the departments. The model included existing debt, anticipated financing for the fire station and a hypothetical \$30 million water treatment facility to illustrate the potential effect of a major additional expense. Members discussed using the model to compare retiring debt with new borrowing, assess possible effects on debt service and tax rates, and test the District's ability to respond to unexpected needs. Treasurer Pirrone explained that he maintains amortization schedules for individual long-term obligations and combines them into projections using current District property valuations.

The Committee discussed how future housing growth and wastewater infrastructure could affect water demand and emergency services. In response to questions, a Fire Department representative said there was no direct population threshold that determined staffing needs. He explained that response-time standards and call volume are relevant measures, and that the Department uses automatic mutual aid for reported building fires and certain serious medical calls.

Members expressed interest in refining the projections with updated figures from the departments and making the planning assumptions clear to the public. No vote was taken.

Governance Study

The Committee revisited whether to commission a new governance study, approximately 26 years after the prior study. Members discussed the earlier study's focus on whether the Fire District should become a separate municipality, the possible cost of a new study, and whether there was a specific question that currently required one.

Members did not identify a pressing need for a new formal study. They discussed the possibility of gathering information about how other Massachusetts fire districts operate and comparing practices without commissioning a study at this time. No vote was taken.

Public Comment

Chris Rebello of 309 School Street asked whether the debt service issue had only recently been discovered. Chair Lynch confirmed that it had. Ms. Rebello emphasized the need for accurate figures and asked whether another person would help check them.

Matters not reasonably anticipated by the Chair

The Committee returned to a question from its previous meeting about possible emergency use of Freedom Hall by the nursery school. Treasurer Pirrone said the insurer's response had been conditional and appeared to assume that District staff would be involved. He said he would seek clarification. Members explained that the proposal was to make the building available for the nursery school and its staff to use in an emergency, subject to resolution of the insurance question. No decision was made.

Adjournment

MOTION: To adjourn.

Motion made by: Seth Burdick

Seconded by: Mark Lynch

Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gina Gonsalves