

COTUIT FIRE DISTRICT  
Prudential Committee

Minutes  
March 21, 2011

The Chairman, Amy Kates, called the meeting to order. Members Rick Barry and Laurie Hadley were present.

The Committee addressed an Open Meeting Law complaint received from King Lowe, former Prudential Committee member. The meeting had been held on a Monday, which was a state holiday, and the posting had not taken this into account; therefore the posting was one day late. To eliminate any questions of legality, the Committee will revote on those matters discussed on February 21<sup>st</sup>.

The minutes of the January meeting were approved unanimously after a motion which was seconded.

After a motion made and seconded, the Committee voted unanimously to make the appointment of the Treasurer run from January 1, 2011, through December 31, 2011, with the same salary and benefits as before. Upon motion made and seconded, it was unanimously voted to release the minutes of the Executive Session at which it had been voted to reappoint Agnes Murray as Treasurer for the period of one year.

Ms Hadley reported on the information she received from local sign companies, which was that they could not better the prices listed on line. However, the posts are not included in the price of the bulletin boards. Because not all residents of the village use computers, it was decided to order an outdoor bulletin board which can be mounted on the outside of the building at the fire station. A motion was made and seconded to purchase an outdoor, non-freestanding bulletin board, approximately 24 inches by 36 inches, and not to spend more than \$500. The motion passed unanimously. However, it was determined that we would wait until after the meeting with the Attorney General's staff on May 28<sup>th</sup>.

The By-law committee met once. The members from the Water and Fire Departments will submit any changes they have for the April meeting. Ms Hadley has some changes to discuss at that time with the Prudential Committee. The Policy Advisory Committee has been working on Freedom Hall issues and will have a presentation for the Prudential Committee at the April meeting.

A suggestion that two members of the Prudential Committee be appointed to participate in union negotiations was not taken up.

The Treasurer presented the Committee with estimates for the appropriation for the Financial Department including increases in health insurance. The report on the audit has

been completed and an exit interview with the Treasurer has been held. The final report should be received soon. The District will be participating with the other Districts, the town and the county on an actuarial study to determine our liability on post-retirement liabilities. It was suggested that we adopt the provision in the law that allows us to start funding this liability, and we should perhaps put an article in this Annual Meeting warrant to enable us to do so. We need not start the funding, but cannot do so until this provision is adopted.

The public comment session started with a question from Mr James Gardner relative to the Fire Department budget and how the department can be on budget with all the absences that have occurred as he feels that cannot be done without decreasing the staffing. He is also concerned about an article for two additional firefighters and whether or not grants, SAFER grants, have been applied for.

Mr Molloy made the comment that he's hopeful salaries will not be raised in the upcoming fiscal year.

A short recess was taken before meeting with the Fire and Water Commissioners.

Fire Commissioner Ron Mycock and Chief Olsen were present. The Commissioners were thanked for sending the budget to Prudential Committee members prior to the meeting. It was explained that "Recruit training" had a zero balance in prior years because it hadn't been necessary to send anyone to the Academy. There is a request for this line item this year because there will be hiring to replace a member who is retiring and a person who has not been to the academy may be selected. Salaries and benefits constitute 82% of the department's budget. The present contract expires July 1<sup>st</sup>. The Department is currently in negotiations with the union. Dispatch may be an item that will decrease as we might be able to contract with the County.

The Fire Department's special appropriations show an increase in ambulance billing. Funding for new call firefighters is in one article and new radios are in a third. All together the budget has less than a two percent increase.

During a discussion on overtime, Chief Olsen pointed out that the Union has been very cooperative in allowing the use of call firefighters during the period of two lengthy absences.

There was lengthy discussion concerning the health insurance costs and how to reflect them in each departments' budgets. The consensus was that a note could perhaps be included in the material presented to District Meeting breaking out the costs for each department.

Before discussion began with the Water Department, Ms Barbara Trainor-Tessier again raised the question of insurance payments for legal costs. The answer was that we have insurance for legal costs, but not for grievances. The Treasurer was unsure how this was paid for.

The Water Department presented their budget and five-year capital projections, along with special appropriation articles. The budget includes a three percent increase in labor and salaries. In addition, one operator has upgraded his license two steps. The policy of the Department is to increase salaries commensurate with upgrades. It is possible he may be able to upgrade again this year. This also has caused an increase in the budget for salaries.

There has been an increase in overtime, used primarily as on-call pay. Three senior operators are on a rotating shift and are on call for one week at a time. They are paid a flat rate of \$150 for an on-call week, in addition to regular salary. They are also paid overtime if they are called in and are paid only for actual hours with no minimum. This hasn't changed in approximately fifteen years.

The policy has always been to seek raises on a percentage basis across the board. The admin assistance gets the same percentage as the supervisor. It is usually based on the increase in the cost of living.

Maintenance is being increased primarily due to lab bills. This item generated a discussion of the Stratford Hills problem. Apparently there is no solution in sight.

An increase in postage reflects a decision to do more educational mailing: conservation matters, protecting the water shed, hazardous waste disposal, and the like. They're trying to practice better conservation in the office as far as use of computer supplies, cutting down on printing and similar actions. All the generators are now being run on LP gas. They have also been able to cut their phone bills.

An article on capital improvement for roads was in last year's warrant and was withdrawn because the final figures weren't available. The roads in question are in the area of the well fields and are one reason why vehicles need to be replaced fairly often.

A motion to adjourn was made and voted unanimously.

Respectfully submitted

LAURIE C. HADLEY