

COTUIT FIRE DISTRICT  
BYLAWS SUBCOMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES  
JANUARY 5,2022

The meeting was called to order at Freedom Hall at 6:05 pm. In attendance were:

Mark Lynch (Chair)

Carol Zais

Amy Kates

Rick Pisano (by Zoom)

Committee member Mark Robinson did not attend. Assistant Treasurer Lisa Haven (not a committee member) also attended.

In response to a question from Ms. Zais, it was confirmed by Ms. Haven that the most current, up to date, version of the District Bylaws were on the Fire District web site. Mr. Pisano noted that a history of changes to the bylaws were contained in each year's Fire District Annual Report.

Ms. Zais proposed two changes to the bylaws:

- 1) term limits for all committee members (proposed 12 years/four three-year terms)
- 2) rotating chairmanships of the Prudential, Fire and Water Committees

She noted that the Town of Barnstable currently limits Council members to a total of 12 years service. She felt it was important to rotate leadership positions among the community. Mr. Pisano noted that some recent elections to committee positions had been unopposed. Mr. Lynch concurred that he ran unopposed for the Prudential Committee, suggesting that there is ample opportunity for involvement by new community members. It was pointed out that 3 possible candidates presented themselves for that position, when a new member was to be appointed rather than elected. Ms. Kates suggested that having to run against a long-sitting member might be a deterrent to new candidates and that increasing open seats might encourage more potential candidates.

Mr. Lynch raised the importance of cross-communications between the three committees on issues of strategic and long-term planning. He proposed that the three committees meet jointly on a regular basis. Mr. Pisano noted that meetings of all three committees are open to the public, including members of other committees. Ms. Kates noted that having one member of each committee responsible for updating other members on developments on one of the other committees would be a best practice. Mr. Lynch noted that it was strategic and long-term issues that prompted his suggestion of more coordination between committees, rather than the details of their respective continuing duties. He thought cross-communication amongst the three committees was critical and that such communications should include all committee members.

The discussion then turned to the suggestion of rotation of committee chairmanships. Mr. Lynch noted that there was no discussion of committee chairs or their duties anywhere in the bylaws. It was generally agreed that the necessity for chairs was driven initially by the need for someone to run monthly meetings pursuant to Robert's Rules of Order. Additional duties or responsibilities have arisen through custom and practice. There was a discussion the chairs' duties and responsibilities as they

currently exist. In general, the chair's duties involve running monthly meetings and setting agendas with input from other members. Mr. Pisano noted that the Fire Committee chairmanship involved a high degree of coordination with the Fire Chief involving staffing and other logistical issues. It is a time consuming role involving an "immersion" in the details of the operation of the department. Ms. Fran Parks, who was attending the meeting via Zoom, noted that the role of chair of the Prudential Committee had come to include running monthly meetings, being caretaker and scheduler for Freedom Hall and meeting with the Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer on a regular basis. There was no representative from the Water Dept. in attendance, so there was no delineation of the duties of the Water Committee chair. Ms. Zais noted that the Water Committee rotates their chairmanship annually and she believed there were great benefits to this. Mr. Pisano noted that chairs are elected annually by committee members. (Again, this practice appears to have arisen from custom and practice rather than a written requirement in the bylaws).

Ms. Kates pointed out that Article 10, Section 11 of the Bylaws included the language "a panel of citizens". She wondered whether, given the recent change to the Bylaws requiring those eligible to vote at annual meetings to be "registered voters" rather than "citizens", the Section 11 language should be similarly amended. The group tabled discussion of that issue to our next meeting.

No motions for votes on any proposed changes were made during the meeting.

Ms. Zais suggested that the group meeting again soon for further discussion, which Mr. Pisano strongly endorsed. The group's general consensus was that the next meeting should take place by Zoom only, because of Covid concerns and continuing audio difficulty arising from joint in-person and Zoom meetings.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:20 pm.