

Meeting Minutes **DRAFT**

Ad Hoc Long-Term Strategy Meeting

Thursday, June 9, 2022

The Zoom-only meeting was called to order at 6:05pm. Attending were:

Mark Lynch Prudential Committee

Fran Parks Prudential Committee

Kevin Conley Fire Commissioner

Adam Zais Fire Commissioner

Rick Pisano Fire Commissioner

Scot Horsley Water Commissioner

Mark Robinson Water Commissioner

Ray Pirrone Treasurer, Prudential Committee

Lisa Haven Assistant Treasurer, Prudential Committee

Mr. Lynch noted that the purpose of the ad hoc committee was to occasionally gather members of the Fire, Water and Prudential Committees to discuss planning for long-term capital expenditures. As projected in the most recent capital plan, the most significant proposed expenditures are for a new fire station (estimated cost \$12-15 million); a water filtration plant (estimated cost \$20 million); disposition of the Cotuit School (estimated demolition costs in excess of \$1 million; rehab costs for potential other uses unknown).

Mr. Pirrone reviewed the most recent capital plan.

Mr. Lynch gave an update on the status of the negotiations with the Town of Barnstable concerning the possible inter-governmental transfer of the Cotuit School and some adjoining property to the Cotuit Fire District. The parties have been meeting on a basis for nearly a year. Both parties remain committed to the transfer. Substantial progress has been made on technical issues, including the terms of a Conservation Restriction from the Town to the District relating to the use of the land to be retained by the Town. Several significant steps remain to be accomplished. The Town must obtain an "Approval Not Required" from the Planning Board to divide the lot (the lot is approximately 13 acres; the Town will retain approximately 5.5 acres). An appraisal of the property must be obtained. The Town Council must vote to approve the transaction twice; each time by a 2/3 majority. The CFD negotiating group noted that the District would need to have a special meeting to seek approval by the voters of the Conservation Restriction and other terms of the proposed deal. The terms of a right of first refusal or reverter remain to be resolved. Importantly, the parties continue to discuss the removal of the oil tank on the property. While it appears that the possibility of a leak is low, it was noted that the consequences and financial costs of any such leak could be very large. Given all these additional steps required, it appears that the transfer is unlikely to occur for another four to six months.

There was substantial discussion regarding possible remediation of the oil tank. A pressure test was suggested, but it was noted that such tests raise a concern that the test itself could cause a leak in a marginal tank. The tank still contains product and it was suggested that this material be removed.

Mr. Pisano stated that the Fire Commissioners believe that a new fire station house should be constructed and indicated that the Cotuit School property would be the most appropriate site. He identified three major concerns with the existing station house: inadequately sized bays; the lack of a decontamination facility; and the lack of capacity for storage of water from the decontamination facility. He said that the current facility does not have these capacities and there is no reasonable way to retrofit the current station to accommodate these needs. Mr. Horsley inquired about the potential for groundwater contamination from the decontamination facility ~~at in~~ the School site from a new station. Mr. Lynch noted that several possible alternative uses associated with community services for the Cotuit School have been proposed. Mr. Pisano indicated that he knew of no other property in the village that could suffice as a site for a new fire station. He also noted that having to purchase land for the proposed facility would have a large financial impact on the project. Mr. Lynch inquired as to whether the Fire Department hoped to utilize the existing Cotuit School building in developing a new station. The current consensus of the Fire Commissioners was that the preference was to build a new facility. The capital plan currently identifies an expenditure for a new fire station in fiscal 2026. Mr. Pisano stated that he would prefer to move that expenditure forward to fiscal year 2024. He stated that he anticipated a 50% increase in the cost of a new station if construction does not begin until 2026 because of inflation and supply chain issues.

Discussion turned to the possible need for the construction of a water filtration plant. There was a discussion regarding the recent announcement by the Barnstable Fire District Water Department of the construction of a \$20 million filtration plant. This development was necessitated by levels of PFAS (so-called forever chemicals) above pertinent standards. The cost of the facility escalated from \$13 million to \$20 million over the passage of one year. That facility was financed by the use of no-interest loans from a Massachusetts state program. The new facility will result in a doubling of water bills in that district. Mr. Pirrone stated that a similarly priced facility in Cotuit would result in an approximately 65% increase in average water bills.

There was a discussion of the current CFD water quality. Mr. Robinson indicated that there is currently no testing issue relating to PFAS in Cotuit water. There is some concern regarding iron and manganese levels but these are both aesthetic rather than health issues. The current concern relates to sodium levels and increasing nitrate concentrations. Mr. Horsley stated that “Title ~~5~~ septic systems don’t work.” They are inefficient in removing nitrates from sewage, so this remains an ongoing concern. Both Mr. Robinson and Mr. Horsley expressed the view that they would prefer not to spend money on a filtration plant. They expressed some optimism that ongoing activities pursuant to the district’s Source Water Protection Plan could obviate the need for a filtration plant. A Source Water Protection Plan could include the replacement and/or upgrading of existing septic systems with a new generation advanced septic technologies within the contributing Zone 2 area. These new systems are shown to remove 80 – 90% of the nitrates and many of the contaminants of concern (CECs) including pharmaceuticals, flame retardants, and possibly PFAS. Nonetheless, they noted that the State Department of Environmental Protection would require a filtration system to be installed in the event testing for PFAS levels exceeded standards and that this would have to be done on a relatively expedited

basis. It was noted that, in addition to the Barnstable PFAS issue, Chatham had to shut down a well last year because of PFAS levels.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:10 pm.