

CENTERVILLE-OSTERVILLE-MARSTONS MILLS FIRE DISTRICT

MINUTES OF THE PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY MARCH 13, 2024

PRESENT: Carlton B. Crocker, John Lacoste, David Lawler, Prudential Committee; Molly Stevens, Clerk/Treasurer; Cristin Van Buren, Assistant Clerk/Treasurer, Michael Winn, Fire Chief; Byron Eldredge, Deputy Fire Chief, Craig Crocker, Water Superintendent

The meeting convened at 6:06 PM.

Public Comment: None.

David Lawler made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 26, 2024 meeting as printed, John Lacoste seconded the motion, the motion passed unanimously.

Michael Winn: The Chief began with a quick department update and report from last month's Fire Commissioners Meeting. He gave an update on the progress being made by members who are out with injuries and the addition of Nicola Stacy to Fire Administration to replace Mikayla Rocheleau who left on February 23, 2024. Fire Prevention continues to be extremely busy with inspections, permits, and real estate activity. Lieutenant Hill's Senior Safe risk reduction program continues to do well.

The Chief discussed the conditions of the department's vehicles and announced the arrival of vehicles that we've been waiting a long period of time to receive. The new Duty Officer's vehicle is a pick-up truck which is safer for them as they were exposed to their gear in the Tahoe. The Tahoe will be temporarily repurposed for the use of Fire Prevention to replace the 2010 Ford Explorer which is on its last legs. The Mechanic's vehicle also came in and Rich Randall did a great job putting the vehicle together. Our ambulances were originally slated to arrive in July, but it appears that this is not a realistic estimate. We are awaiting a VIN to be assigned in order to get a defined date.

Training continues to be very busy with EMT recertifications being completed recently. Lt. Hill attended Public Information Officer class which is a great opportunity for us to have a spokesperson for the Department.

Our boat is currently out of the water for annual service. It stayed and weathered the last two major storms because we had members checking on it every hour. There was significant flooding in the neighborhoods on Long Beach Rd, Short Beach, and Craigville Beach Rd where a car was stalled out in the flood waters, as well as at the boat yard in Osterville.

There was a key note in the IT report from the Fire Commissioners that the district was able to obtain a grant from the state for Cyber Security training. Municipalities like ours are vulnerable to phishing scams. Rich Sargent is working on rolling this out and meeting with an expert on modernizing our training room.

Chief Winn reported that 47 of 53 members participated in the NFTP physicals which were held on site last week. He also discussed the RFP contract for the Chief Officer Assessments which will begin in April. There are six members in-house who have expressed interest.

Chief Winn gave a brief overview of where we are with the FY24 budget before going over a draft of proposed article items for FY25. The need for general maintenance of the buildings was discussed with noted needs for roofs, painting, HVAC repairs, septic, parking lots and sidewalks. There will be further discussion in the meeting scheduled for March 27, 2024.

Apparatus needs are approaching and we are up against the manufacturing timeline. They cannot build them fast enough. We did submit an application for an AFGE grant last Friday to cover some of the cost of replacing the ladder truck, but the District would still be responsible for approximately 10% of the cost. The ambulances previously discussed have come in over budget from what we originally appropriated. Also, the defibrillators carried on each of our vehicles have a shelf life of 10 years and need to be replaced. They cannot be recalibrated or recertified after 10 years.

Byron Eldridge: Byron gave a brief summary of the proposed budget for FY25 with all of the changes highlighted. Contracts for two of the three bargaining units are not settled yet so there's no increase there at this point. Local 59's contract, which is the Custodian, Mechanic, and Fire Admin office is settled and is reflected in the various lines for those positions.

Deputy Eldridge presented a timeline for hiring and training new firefighters that will be needed to fill the vacancies created by Chief Winn's departure and subsequent promotions. The budget does reflect an increase due to the forthcoming promotions and training. He explained that it is more economical to bring on two firefighters at the same time due to the nature of the extensive training program.

He touched on the increased cost of service contracts, parts, testing of equipment, etc. but the increase overall budget is low. David Lawler asked about an ongoing maintenance fund for the facilities as they age. The Centerville Station is over 30 years old and is starting to show wear. The need for more lighting in the parking lot at Station 1 as well as converting from fluorescent lighting to LED was discussed. The fluorescent lights in the apparatus bay at Station 3 were recently converted to LED.

Craig Crocker: Craig reviewed the proposed Operation & Maintenance budget for the water department for FY25. Most line items have remained the same. David Lawler asked about the status of maintenance on the buildings. Craig reported that performance testing is done on the wells, motors, pumping equipment and they are in the process of doing that right now. Craig

mentioned that the lighting was changed out a couple of years ago. Painting and carpet cleaning are done every 2-3 years and will be addressed. All Water Department structures are in good shape.

Chairman Crocker asked about the vehicle needs. Craig stated that there is one truck that needs to be replaced and they are looking for a standard utility body truck with 4-wheel drive. The plow they currently have on that truck is in good shape and will be kept for use on the new truck. They are looking at a transit van that you can walk into for better access to materials.

Craig continues to work with Molly on the OPEB and reserve articles. The Water Commissioners have a meeting scheduled for April 3, 2024 to fine tune and finalize the numbers.

The electrical supply contracts are good through December 2025 and solar is doing well. The cell tower contracts are all current as well. There is nothing new on the sewer project other than what has been reported in the local media.

Craig has reported 2 new hires: one field technician, Mike Ramsay who started in February and one office person who is starting next week.

Molly Stevens: Molly discussed the preparation for the upcoming budget season and she will be doing a lot of work on it in the next few weeks. Molly will be out of the office Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of next week to attend year two of the Mass Municipal Accountants and Auditors Association at UMass Amherst. Cristin will be covering the office alone with Molly's remote oversight.

There was a brief discussion about building reserves to fund future big-ticket items annually. Molly has been talking with other departments to improve some items. A presentation by the Apparatus Committee has been scheduled for Wednesday, March 27, 2024 to be a joint meeting with the Fire Commissioners to give us a better idea of what the apparatus needs are for the articles.

The department salaries have been negotiated and are in place. Most other items are relatively flat with the exception of insurance. Both health insurance and business insurance are estimated to increase. Chairman Crocker asked if we should bid business insurance again due to the substantial estimated increase. Molly made the recommendation that we should get quotes from other carriers. The business insurances renew in July and are being worked on now.

There are no proposed articles for the IT budget as the only increases are maintenance fees for the various software programs.

Chairman Crocker requested clarification on the article for the OPEB. We have done our due diligence as far as contributions OPEB and Molly stated that we need to go over the actuarial report. She will be working on the articles in the upcoming weeks and will have things ready for the next meeting.

Molly led a discussion of health insurance eligibility at the group rate after 10 years of employment for former employees whose retirement is deferred, meaning they are vested but are not eligible to collect retirement due to age or other factors, and distributed a copy of Chapter 32B Section 9 of the Massachusetts General Laws pertaining to this. Molly relayed to the Committee that she had discussed the issue at length with Attorney Paul Hodnett and he had determined that any former employee not collecting retirement would need to go on a leave of absence without pay and they would then be responsible for 100% of the premium as per the statute. This statute does not pertain to elected officials.

David Lawler made a motion to approve a letter drafted by Molly and approved by Attorney Hodnett with respect to the 10 year issue associated with health insurance and retirement benefits, in accordance with Chapter 32B section 9, be authorized by this board to be forwarded to those individuals. John Lacoste seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Next Meeting: March 27, 2024 at 6:00pm and April 10, 2024 with a tentative second meeting for April 24, 2024.

Public Comment: None

John Lacoste made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:13 PM.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Cristin Van Buren", is written over a horizontal line.

Cristin Van Buren, Assistant Clerk/Treasurer