

FIRE DISTRICT #1 PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE REGULAR MEETING

Thursday, October 17, 2019 – 6:30 PM

Meeting Minutes

Prudential Committee Meeting Room

144 Newton Street

South Hadley, MA 01075

In Attendance: PC Chair Bruce Perron, PC Clerk Kevin Taugher, PC member John Wojciechowski, Interim Clerk/Treasurer Ira Brezinsky, Chief Robert Authier, Captain Kurt Schenker, Assistant Treasurer Kari Scytowski, Board of Water Commissioners Chair William Schenker

CALL TO ORDER

Perron called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: Taugher moved and Wojciechowski seconded to approve the minutes of September 12. Motion carried 3-0.

CLERK/TREASURER'S REPORT (Complete report on file)

- **Quarterly Financial Report:** All accounts are tracking at or near budgeted amounts with the possible exception of Legal expense (001-122-5400-5406), which is 58.2% expended. This account is part of the Administrative account, which is tracking within budget. This account should be watched going forward.
- **Possible Change to 2020 Election Date:** The Town is contemplating moving the annual election from April 14 (second Tuesday of the month) to March 3. The reason for this is to have the election coincide with the presidential primary, resulting in a cost savings. An additional benefit might be an increase in voter turnout. As a result of a change in District bylaws, the District election must take place on the same date and at the same location as the Town election. There will be a Special Town Meeting November 20 where this proposal will be considered.
- **Data Recovery & Re-Entry:** Work to re-enter lost data continues and we remain on track to complete the project as expected. Thanks again to Kari Scytowski who continues to work diligently.
- **Reinstatement of the District's Bond Rating:** After completion of the FY2018 audit and a meeting with David Eisenthal from Unibank, Auditor Tom Scanlon, and a representative from Moody's, the District's bond rating of Aa3 has been reinstated. In part, Moody's acknowledged the District's "very strong reserves, low debt levels and manageable pension and OPEB liabilities".
- **Bartholomew & Company:** Brezinsky met with Brian Jamros and Sue Kelley from Bartholomew to review the District Stabilization and OPEB funds. OPEB funds are being managed more aggressively (although being funded on dollar cost averaging basis over the next 12 months) and Stabilization funds more conservatively, as required by law and the District investment policy voted in July. As of September 30, total OPEB funds are \$559,559.66 and Stabilization funds are \$1,630,698.43, totaling \$2,190,258.09. The General Account balance has remained with MMDT and that balance was \$4,450,180.45 on September 30.

- **FY20 Budget:** Taugher asked about process for preparation of FY20 budget. Preliminary discussion will be included on the November PC meeting agenda. Brezinsky commented that Capital budget for emergency services should be reviewed and updated.

ADJUSTMENT OF AMBULANCE RECEIPTS

Motion: Taugher moved and Wojciechowski seconded to approve adjustment of ambulance receipts in the amount of \$177,281.21 for the month of September. Motion carried 3-0.

CHIEF'S REPORT

Inspections: Chief Authier reported 47 fire calls and 201 EMS calls in September. In addition, he reported 16 business inspections, 23 smoke/CO inspections, 1 Oil Burner inspection. There were no Certificates of Occupancy issued and there have been 155 lockboxes installed year to date.

Community Interactions:

- Fire District #1 conducted an Active Threat drill at the E-Ink on Gaylord St. Fire District 2 and Granby attended the event. Police officers from Chicopee, and Holyoke, were present. Baystate Medical Region 1 Director Wook Beltran participated in this exercise
- Fire District No 1 took part in a reunification drill with the South Hadley High School staff. The drill was conducted at the Plains School
- Fire District No.1 took part in lockdown drills at South Hadley High School, Plains School, Mosier School and Michael E Smith Middle School. This is in conjunction with Officer Fleming and members of the South Hadley Police Department
- Lt Houle and the Chief attended one day of training at the yearly SAFE conference held in Marlborough Massachusetts.
- Lt Houle attended the Town Municipal Vulnerability Planning meeting with local officials
- The Chief attended a multi discipline forum held by Hampshire County Sheriff Cahillane. The forum addressed the opioid crisis and methods to combat the ever growing epidemic
- Fire District No.1 participated in the Winter Carnival at the Senior Center. Lt Houle, Lt Walsh and the Chief attended the event.

He also provided an activity report for various departments detailing fire and ambulance calls. This report is difficult to use in comparing the activity between departments as reporting criteria is not consistent.

CHIEF'S COMPENSATION

At the request of the PC, the Chief provided a select list of Chief's salaries in western Mass fire departments. Perron asked which departments are most similar to FD 1. The Chief responded that Easthampton was similar in size and call volume to South Hadley. Taugher commented that Easthampton is served by one fire department while South Hadley has two separate departments. Taugher would like to see comparative data for other departments on the salary list re: staffing level, service level, number of households, and population. The rest of the PC agreed. Perron asked if there are any other areas of concern regarding future consideration of adjustments to the Chief's salary. He asked if there is a recommended staffing level based on population. Taugher listed as additional

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information to be included in the process, the 2010 job description, expectations written by the PC two years ago, and a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities.

UPDATE FROM BYLAW & POLICY ADHOC ADVISORY COMMITTEE (BPAAC):

Perron stated that the BPAAC would like to add District Counsel and Moderator Mark Beauregard to the committee. Taugher asked if he would be paid (in his capacity as Counsel). Brezinsky stated that he didn't believe so, but would confirm.

Motion: Taugher moved and Wojciechowski seconded to appoint Mark Beauregard to the BPAAC. Motion carried 3-0.

The BPAAC has begun meeting every 2-3 weeks. It is unclear at this time if proposed updates to the bylaws will be ready in time for the next Annual Meeting. There will likely be at least a portion of the bylaws ready in time for the meeting.

The question as to whether or not the Clerk/Treasurer should change from elected to appointed was raised. At this time, District Counsel is suggesting that it will need to remain elected until at least the next Annual Meeting. The reason for this is that the current bylaws require that any bylaw changes must be voted at the Annual District Meeting. Unless the District were to schedule the Annual Meeting extraordinarily early (i.e. November or December 2019), the Meeting would not take place until after the next District election. Taugher asked that this be further investigated as he would like to see the position changed to appointed if at all possible.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is planned for November 21 at 6:30 PM.

OTHER BUSINESS

Kari Scytowski mentioned that there could be a change in the amount budgeted for the Clerk/Treasurer based on the outcome of any changes to the position.

Perron asked if there's been any recent discussion between the Police Chief and the FD1 and FD2 Fire Chiefs. Chief Authier responded that nothing has been discussed other than ongoing conversation about dispatch.

ADJOURNMENT

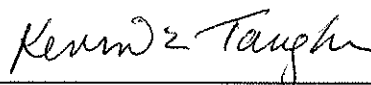
Motion: Taugher moved and Wojciechowski seconded to adjourn at 7:40 PM. Motion carried 3-0.

Respectfully submitted,



Ira Brezinsky
District #1, Interim Clerk Treasurer

A true copy, attest:



Kevin Taugher, Prudential Committee Clerk

PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE

SOUTH HADLEY FIRE DISTRICT NO. 1

BRUCE PERRON, Chair
KEVIN TAUGHER, Clerk
JOHN WOJCIECHOWSKI, Member

IRA BREZINSKY, INTERIM CLERK TREASURER

Date: October 16, 2019

From: Ira Brezinsky

To: Prudential Committee

RE: Clerk Treasurer's Report

Dear Prudential Committee Members,

The following is a synopsis of some of my activities in the last month.

Quarterly Financial Update: I have attached the quarterly Expenditure Report with a few comments. Overall there is nothing alarming here. Most accounts are tracking as they should. In most instances where a budget is more than 25% spent, the reason is payment of annual fees, licenses and contributions. At this time, the only account tracking higher than anticipated are Legal (001-22-5400-5406).

Possible Change to 2020 Election Date: As previously communicated, the Town is contemplating the idea of moving the annual election from April 14 (second Tuesday of the month) to March 3. The reason for this is to have the election coincide with the presidential primary, resulting in a cost savings. An additional benefit might be an increase in voter turnout. As a result of a change in District bylaws, the District election must take place on the same date and at the same location as the Town election. There will be a Special Town Meeting November 20 where this proposal will be approved – or not.

Data Recovery & Re-Entry: Work to re-enter lost data continues and we remain on track to complete the project as expected. Thanks again to Kari Scytkowski who continues to work diligently.

Reinstatement of the District's Bond Rating: After completion of the FY2018 audit, I met with Moody's and David Eisenthal from Unibank on September 23. District auditor Tom Scanlon also participated in the call. As you are aware, Moody's had previously rescinded the District's bond rating due to lack of data as a result of last year's data breach. On September 26 Moody's reinstated the bond rating of Aa3. In part, Moody's acknowledged the District's "very strong reserves, low debt levels and manageable pension and OPEB liabilities". The complete report is attached.

Telephone Bills and Equipment: Earlier this month I met for the second time with Scott Kent from Complete IT and Tom Lucia from telecommunications company Consero. They presented a proposal for a new, more resilient telephone solution. The proposal, as currently detailed, has a significantly longer than expected payback period. I am waiting for further information from them. In anticipation of FY21 budget discussions (Yes, it's almost that time!), there may be a proposal coming forward.

Bartholomew & Company: I met last week with Brian Jamros and Sue Kelley from Bartholomew to review our Stabilization and OPEB funds. I have attached the September 30 quarterly report. In a nutshell, both funds are doing well. OPEB funds are being managed more aggressively (although being funded on dollar cost averaging basis over the next 12 months) and Stabilization funds more conservatively, as required by law and your investment policy voted in July. As of September 30, total OPEB funds are \$559,559.66 and Stabilization funds are \$1,630,698.43, totaling \$2,190,258.09. As a reminder, the General Account balance has remained with MMDT and that balance was \$4,450,180.45 on September 30.

What's New in Municipal Law: I attended the annual "What's New in Municipal Law" forum put on by the Department of Revenue at the Log Cabin. The morning general session included updates from Commissioner of Revenue Christopher Harding and Senior Deputy Commissioner Sean Cronin. We heard a scintillating (tongue in cheek) discussion of a variety of new and pending legislation, as well as selected case law, presented by the DOR legal team. The afternoon was spent in a workshop on "Separation of Duties – Wearing Multiple Hats".

Year End Reporting: I have been working on year end reports that must be submitted to the State. My goal is to have them completed and submitted to DOR by October 25. Just one more set of tasks I'm doing for the first time. Makes life interesting

Please feel free to call any time with any questions or if you need any further information.

Best,
Ira