

PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE FIRE DISTRICT #1
144 Newton Street
South Hadley, MA 01075

Prudential Committee REGULAR Meeting Notes

Meeting Date: December 19, 2018

Location: Fire District Headquarters, 144 Newton Street

This session is being recorded

Call to Order: 6:30 p.m.

Prudential Committee Members Present:	Michael Wozniak, Chairman (MIW) Kevin Taugher, Clerk Bruce Perron, Member
Other attendees:	Chief Authier (RA) Kurt Schenker (KS) Monica Walton (MW) Scott Brady (SB)

- Review and approval of minutes of meetings
- BP asked the list of attendees from FD No. 2 at the 11/29 meeting be added to the minutes. BP moved and KT seconded motion to approve the minutes of 11/29 as amended and the minutes of 12/4 and 12/6 meetings as written. Motion carried 3-0.
- Discussion of health insurance for the temporary Water Commissioner
 - MW stated that because the temporary WC was 'elected', the position is entitled to benefits.
 - MW suggested that the policy of providing benefits to elected officials be reconsidered. Most other communities do not allow it anymore.
 - KT asked what must be done to amend this policy. MW said that this is not a by-law, a change only requires a change in policy.
 - KT said that given the district's unfunded liability for OPEB, he would be in favor of doing something.
 - MIW asked how we go forward on this. MW said we just have to write up a policy. MW said she would check with Mark (District counsel) on it. MIW asked if she could have it for the next meeting, and MW agreed.
- Discussion and vote to create a temporary data entry position for the purpose of re-entering data lost due to computer hack along with setting an overtime rate structure for performing this task.
 - MW presented copies of the disclosure agreements in accordance with MA state requirements.
 - MW said her own overtime rate would be \$46.93. Kerry's rate was included on the form.
 - KT asked how much of this work could be completed during MW's normal work day. If she worked six hours on her normal work and then two hours on the data entry without charging overtime. MW said it would depend upon the time of the year.

- MW's biggest concern is FY 2018 for the annual report. MIW asked how much effort would it take to just do FY 2018. MW said that effort to recover FY 2019 data averaged about five hours of effort per week of data recovery (14 weeks of data recovery took a total of 70 hours of effort.)
- BP asked if some of this effort could be accomplished in MW's regular work day. MW responded that it depends upon the time of the year. Right now, there is budget, annual report and election work going on.
- Based upon the terms of the District insurance policy, the District has a deductible of \$10,000. All costs exceeding this deductible would be covered by the insurance policy. The current estimate is \$23,000 to complete the work, \$10,000 to the District and the balance to the Insurance.
- MIW asked for comments. KT said that Kerry working on this is just a matter of overtime, but that he had reservations about OT for MW. KT would not be in favor of OT for MW. MIW agreed with KT's position.
- MW asked if this meant that she would not get any OT to do the work. KT said that MW's policy of backing up the software was what got us into this situation in the first place. MW backed up the software without realizing it had been encrypted. MW said she didn't know it was encrypted. KT said that is the point of using the software to make certain it is working before backing it up. If MW had tried to use the software before backing it up, it would have been clear the software had been hacked, meaning MW should use a backup copy and not write over the good backup with encrypted data.
- MW said that an alternative is to find a third party that may cost \$150 per hour to do the work. KT said that since the insurance has it covered, it doesn't matter what the third-party charges.
- KT said he was concerned with the public perception of an elected official collecting a salary as well as overtime, given the circumstances.
- BP said it didn't matter to him if the two individuals made some extra money, since it was the expedient way to do it.
- MIW said he was uncomfortable with the concept of paying OT to MW as well. MIW asked, If it was just Kerry, would she be able to do it?
- MW said that Kerry could not do everything. MIW asked how many hours it would take MW to do her part. MW did not know that number. MIW asked what is the end date? (for completion.) MW had not estimated an end date.
- MIW said he was okay with Kerry working on it.
- MW said in that case we could get a third party person.
- KT asked if MW could get a quote for the third party person. MW said sure.
- KT said that as long as Mark Beauregard had seen the MA state form and had approved it, he was in favor of signing the form for Kerry.
- MIW clarified that there were two issues involved. One, was to approve Kerry doing the data work, the other was to determine the cost and availability of a third party for support.
- KT moved and MIW seconded the motion to have Kerry start working on the data recovery. Motion carried 3-0.

- KT moved, that the Chair, based upon District Counsel's prior expressed approval, sign the form that will enable Kerry to get paid OT for the time spent on data recovery. BP seconded. Motion carried, 3-0.
- Discussion and update on free cash
 - MIW read the DOR report indicating that District free cash for FY 2019 was certified at \$729,768. This is about \$80,000 to \$90,000 more than last year.
- Review and discussion of FY2020 Preliminary budget
 - MW explained the FY 2020. There are no raises in the budget for any elected officials.
 - Only increase in operations is for a yearly audit, required now due to the tower truck bond.
 - The budget for union negotiations is rolled over from last year, and up to the PC to decide how much should be budgeted.
 - Retirement and health insurance. Retirement is set, based upon the standard calculation from the Hampshire County Retirement Board. Health insurance has yet to be decided. The next meeting of the Hampshire County Insurance fund will be held on January 23, 2019. MW is estimating an 8% increase, but doesn't know the change in dental, or if new or existing employees opt for a change in coverage. Last year's employee insurance fund had a surplus of about \$50,000.
 - IT budget should be increased from \$10,000 to \$15,000.
 - OPEB is budgeted for \$50,000. MW contacted the OPEB investment trust fund representative to investigate moving the District's OPEB funds to the investment trust for better interest rates. MW will set up a meeting with this individual to meet with the PC and the Water Commissioners.
 - MW said that the District is due this year for another OPEB actuarial analysis.
 - MW said that the recommended OPEB contribution as of June 30, 2017 was \$692,404, and with a credit of \$272,779 that the District is contributing yearly for retirees, the normal cost for active employees should be \$419,625.
 - MIW asked if there were other funds that could be directed to the OPEB account. MW said that there is currently over \$1,000,000 in the ambulance reserve fund.
 - KT asked how the ambulance fund balance compared to last year. MW said the balance was higher this year but did not have the exact number. KT asked that the ambulance fund balance for last year and this year be available for the next meeting.
 - RA reviewed his proposed budgets for FY 2020, focused on wages, less the contribution from the ambulance fund, training and call firefighter wages.
 - KT asked KS for his detail sheet on ambulance salary. KS did not have it with him. KT asked him to forward it to KT.
 - RA said that the ambulance fund is contributing more in this budget, and that some senior employees have left, replaced by lower cost new employees. These changes are reflected in the salary budgets.
 - RA explained that operating expenses are pretty much the same, but extra funds are set aside for maintenance on Ladder 5, operating expenses, and funds for updated radio equipment.
 - KS explained the ambulance budgets. Ambulance OT is up. Ambulance stipends are up due to contract requirements. Supplies are up because Holyoke Medical Center is no longer providing medical consumables at no cost. Stabilization fund for replacement ambulances is based upon a

- five-year replacement cycle (a new ambulance every five years) and has been adjusted to reflect current forecasts for costs.
 - RA identified replacement doors, windows, and repaving the back parking lot as building improvements. A replacement Chief's vehicle is also in the budget.
 - Other minor budget adjustments were also identified.
 - MW would like the final budget set by the end of February in order to meet the schedule for the annual report. The decision was taken to have the next PC meeting on January 23rd. February 13th will be set aside for a meeting just to deal with the budget, and the regular meeting will be on February 27th.
 - For the next meeting, MW will increase the OPEB budget to \$100,000, with the additional \$50,000 from the ambulance reserve fund. The ambulance stabilization fund will be increased to \$85,000.
- Report and recommendation for adjustments of ambulance receipts
 - KT moved that ambulance receipts be adjusted for the month of November 2018 in the amount of \$160,819.75. MIW seconded. Motion approved 3-0.
- Discussion and vote on the procurement of a replacement of the 2006 ambulance
 - KS said that two demo ambulances were brought to the station for inspection. The 2019 model was \$267,645 which could be adjusted downwards. The 2018 model is \$255,687. The 2019 model has more headroom.
 - The District could take delivery of either model within a month of order. We would send them our equipment for the vendor to install, avoiding integration headaches.
 - RA recommends the District purchase the 2019 model. KS confirmed the procurement of this ambulance was acceptable under MA state purchasing guidelines.
 - KT moved that we authorized the purchase of the 2019 model ambulance for \$267,645, based upon the Chief's recommendation. BP seconded. Motion carried 3-0.
 - MIW asked if there was any trade value for the 2006 ambulance we are retiring. The vendor will get back to us with a quote.
- Discussion and follow-up on merger discussions: (KT was to write a letter to Barbara Miller to better define financial information requested by D1, RA to contact Chief Brady to get apples-to-apples data on fire and ambulance calls including mutual aid, time of arrival, response times, etc.)
 - KT send a note to B. Miller requesting the information. She responded that she will have it shortly.
 - KT said that the reports received from D2 don't match up with the fiscal year Comstar data. Having all the reports for fiscal year time periods, which Comstar and D1 and D2 data correspond with.
 - We also need to confirm the mutual aid data (including intercepts) from D1 and D2 match.
 - It has also been determined that the ERS reports generated to date by D2 include ambulance responses, while the D1 reports only include fire responses.
 - SB spoke to the issue of generating reports. He asked that D1 define the parameters of the reports, and D1 and D2 could generate reports based upon those parameters.
 - SB identified "AmbuPro" as a software generating ambulance reports. The software can drill down to determine response times, etc. If parameters are established for D1, the same parameters can be used in the D2 report.

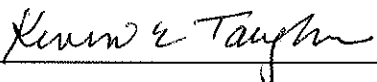
- SB confirmed that the D2 ambulance is used to respond to fire calls. In the D2 system, the ambulance is considered fire apparatus if it is responding to a fire call. The ambulance has fire equipment onboard.
- SB explained the D2 strategy on responses.
- RA and KS acknowledged that D1 could provide the parameters requested by the PC to D2 to generate the same reports.
- SB confirmed that FY reports could be generated by entering custom date ranges (July 1 to June 30)
- RA confirmed that he would have the requested reports for the next meeting.
- SB commented on D2 water dept. employees do respond to calls while on duty, but not for extra pay. If they respond off duty, they get reimbursed at the call rate.
- SB confirmed that there have been two senior water dept. employees that took positions in the fire dept. after many years as water dept employees. There has been one person moving from the fire dept. to the water dept.
- D2 has 24/7 dispatch service at minimum wage, \$11 per hour now, going to \$12 per hour in 2019. The total budget is about \$100,000 per year. The official job title is "Radio operator".
- RA asked to confirm the D2 policy on call back of full-time firefighters (FF's) for fire calls vs. ambulance calls. SB confirmed that FF's get OT for fire call backs, but hourly minimum wage plus a flat rate of \$28 per response for ambulance call backs. RA said that this differs from D1 policy, where FF's responded to fire or ambulance call backs get paid OT.
- KT said that based upon the ambulance responses in SB's numbers, D1 responded with 110 ALS intercepts, which amounted to about one third of the total ambulance runs in the time period. KT said that this would appear to be a significant overlap in ambulance responses, with D1 and D2 responding in some manner to the same call. KT said that this service was at considerable expense to D1, providing 24/7 ALS intercept service to D2, since D1 has a normal staff of five 24/7.
- SB said that D2 could get ALS support anywhere.
- Discussion and follow up of 12/3/18 email sent to RA from MIW along with RA response on 12/4/18
 - MIW distributed copies of the subject emails. Copies of these are attached.
 - KS distributed reports that were referenced in the emails.
 - RA spoke to mutual aid reports provided. RA passed out copies of the reports. RA was not sure what other reports the PC was asking for.
 - MIW expressed his concerns that there have been meeting notes published and follow up items identified, and even during meetings if RA had provided all this then there would be no need for follow up.
 - RA asked what are you asking for.
 - KT responded that we have specifically asked for a summary of all the mutual aid agreements, in a matrix, that showed, by city and town, what level of response we were obliged to provide. RA said Okay.
 - KT said that RA agreed to provide the documents that identified what the agreements were.
 - KT said that the reason we asked for this was due to the dramatic increase reported in aid requests from Granby and the issue of "they'll call us when they need us" becomes an issue when they call us multiple times in the same week.

- BP asked about a breakout per town.
- KT said that there's another point, if it's the policy decision of the PC on how we deal with mutual aid, then we should be responsible for that, and work with the Chief on those issues.
- BP asked if it's the PC responsibility for this policy or if it's up to the Chief.
- KT responded that it costs the taxpayers money, so it's incumbent upon the PC to have a handle on what's going on and how to control it. We heard tonight that we have a \$400,000 obligation for OPEB which we really haven't touched, and we're doing all kinds of mutual aid, but we need to put our hands on it because as other departments that are constrained on finances and don't have the personnel to provide the service, then it comes to us to do it, look at how much our OT has increase in the last two years.
- BP said it would be prudent for us to recognize and understand the policy and the cost associated with it, but the development of the policy, that's not ours.
- KT said yes, we develop policies, so we understand where we are now, and if things begin to change, we can keep our fingers on the pulse and decide if there has to some intervention.
- BP said his understanding was that the Chief developed the operational policies for the department, we oversee the financial side of the department, so it would prudent for us to understand what the policies are, the costs associated with them, but the development and distribution, I think is on (the Chief's side) of the table.
- BP solicited SB's comments on this. SB mentioned the agreements they have with adjoining communities.
- KT asked for the policies in a summary format, and we want to monitor it to look at costs, and that's all we've asked for. We haven't looked to change anything.
- BP said that was understandable, right?
- KT said and that request has been expressed for a few meetings now.
- BP asked the Chief if that would be available for the next meeting, and the Chief agreed.
- Discussion on 5/4/15 Annual District meeting relating to Article 6 as presented by BP at the last meeting
 - MIW read article 6.
 - BP related that the Chief had not received a raise in FY 2016.
 - MIW said, wasn't the Chief under contract at that time?
 - BP reiterated his claim that the Chief was entitled to a raise per article 6.
 - MIW asked KT for comments, since KT was Chair of the PC at the time.
 - KT said that BP did not do enough research, and he should start reading the Chief's contract.
 - KT said that going back for additional legal interpretations was a waste of money.
 - BP said that he contacted the legal counsel Brendan (Sullivan and Hayes) and the interpretation provided by Brendan was similar to BP's interpretation. BP said that we should heed the words from our labor lawyer.
 - KT asked BP if Brendan was aware of the Chief's contract. BP asked, "Does it matter?" KT said, Yes, it does."
 - KT said that if BP wants to pursue this, that BP should just read the Chief's contract, which BP has a copy of.
 - BP asked for MIW to contact Sullivan and Hayes. MIW said he would contact Fred Sullivan directly, since he had direct knowledge of the situation.
- Discussion to finalize the procedure for the formal review of the Fire Chief

- MIW said he doesn't know where we stand. MIW explained the need for information from the Chief.
- RA asked what period of time the review covered. MIW said the last review date was April 13, 2013. KT said that the Chief has a copy of his performance review, he can get the date from that.
- MIW said that he would expect the review period would be from April 2017 to present.
- KT said that RA will provide us the information in an open meeting, and we take that information and come back to the next meeting with our individual reviews, in open session, which will then be consolidated.
- Discussion and vote on increasing the intercept fee for ALS services for FY2020
 - KT said that at the last meeting, it was requested that KS develop costs associated with the ambulance service in order to be prepared to discuss intercept fees going forward.
- Chief's report
 - No questions or comments.
- New business unforeseen 48 hours or less before this meeting
 - None identified.
- Confirmation of agenda items for future meetings and next meeting date
 - Next meeting date is January 23, 2019, 6:30 at Fire headquarters.
- Motion to adjourn
 - KT moved to adjourn, seconded by BP. 3-0 motion passed. Meeting adjourned 8:37 p.m.

Voted and approved by the Prudential Committee on January 23, 2019.

A true copy, attest:

_____

Kevin E. Taugher, Clerk