

**COTUIT FIRE DISTRICT
PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE MEETING (VIRTUAL BY ZOOM)
JANUARY 23, 2022**

Present: Charles Eager, Clerk, Ray Pirrone, Treasurer, Seth Burdick, Prudential Committee, Fran Parks, Prudential Committee and Mark Lynch, Prudential Committee.

The meeting was called to order at 6 PM on January 23, 2022 remotely using the Zoom app.

Fran Parks led the Committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Motion made, seconded and passed to accept the minutes of the December 19, 2022 meeting.

Mark Robinson of the Board of Water Commissioners made a new policy presentation on water rates to the Prudential Committee. Mark says the Water Commissioners want to make access to clean water to everyone in the District. In that way the Water Commissioners are looking to shift more of the cost to the higher users. The policy proposes to provide everyone with 20,000 gallons of water free of charge. The rate would remain as it currently for uses of 20,000 to 60,000 gallons. The rates for the three higher tier users would increase to offset the free 20,000 gallons. The high-end users' rates will increase 2.25% to 7.5% based on category. He noted that water revenues have exceed expenses for some time now. As an offshoot the Water Department is hoping some of high users will lessen their use and put in wells for their irrigation. This didn't when the rates were increased to lessen usage before.

Mark Lynch asked Mark Robinson where the 20,000 gallons amount came from. He said the amount is somewhat arbitrary. He said the Water Commissioners believe most people using the water supply should pay something. Fran Parks had some concerns and suggestions. First, why not call the high users and let them know the strain they are putting on the system. She said a number may not know what they are paying because they have someone paying the bills for them. Mark Robinson replied that they put in an irrigation policy banning new system being put in connected to the water system. They can still put in irrigation but they would need their own well. Fran said with free water she believes people will use more and not know when they are paying for the water. She also said the Water Department needs to let people know if they are having trouble paying their water bills to call the Water Department. It could be a statement on the bill. Seth Burdick asked if there was any thought on managing the extreme users. Mark noted the limitations of the Water Department reaching out to people. The Treasurer asked if there was any consideration of shutting off the high user. He said no and again noted the small staff the department has. He doesn't know the circumstances of the users. Mark Robinson noted the purpose of the policy is provide equity to everyone for access to clean water not to reduce consumption. Reduce usage could be a nice side effort.

The Treasurer reports the District is at 50% of the year. He notes revenues are slightly behind at 49% and expenses are sufficiently below at 43% after pulling out all the one-time payments and transfers. The weak areas on revenues are property taxes and water rates. The property taxes were again hit by a large abatement that the Treasurer needs to review the documentation the Town has provided him to determine what was the cause. The Water Department should need it quota and probably have a

surplus once the January billings come in. The billing was almost a million dollars, about twice of what was estimated. On the expenditure side once, the one-time expenditures are removed, overall, the expenses are below budget. There are a few exceptions such as Fire Department maintenance and building supplies. Benefits are on budget except for new paternity leave stipend and the budget error with the medical option Article are running on time and budget. He believes that Benefit may come in just under budget but will need watching.

The Treasurer then talked about the plan for idle funds. The Stabilization Funds were put in a 90-day 4.5% CDs. The Treasurer picked Cape Cod Five to handle the investments because the Cooperative rates were running .25 to .50% lower and don't have T Bills where the Treasurer would like to put some of the operating funds in 4-to-8-week T-Bills.

FY 2022 Audit field work has been completed last week with no exceptions being noted to the Treasurer.

Fran Parks reported Freedom Hall has had many inquiries for use. Fran reports the chairs are falling apart. The costs for new chairs are very high. Fran would like to put an article for new chairs at the next Annual Meeting.

Fran also reports that remote meeting exception is coming to an end as of April. There has no hybrid solution offered. The Water Department has been using the Hall and their recordings have been unintelligible. She proposes the trying out the OWL System talked about in earlier meetings and see how it works out.

Nothing new to report on Cotuit School, Policy Advisory or By-law Committees.

No Public comment.

Next meeting is February 27th.

Motion made by Mark Lynch to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Seth Burdick and passes unanimously.