



PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE FIRE DISTRICT #2

20 Woodbridge Street, South Hadley, MA 01075
Tel: (413) 534-5748 - Fax: (413) 517-6054

Minutes of January 14, 2020

Convened: 5:30

Adjourned 7:20 p.m.

Present:

Prudential Committee Chair: Kenneth McKenna

Members: James Menard & Kenneth LeBlanc

South Hadley District #2: Asst. Chief Todd Calkins

Treasurer Barbara Miller

Others Present:

Ryan Moore

Robert Authier

Jon Szymonik

Scott Flynn

Sam Lemanski

Kirsten Therrien

Joanne Carbin-Bryan

Sheila Lemanski

Sam Bernash

Diane Mulvaney

Brian Fay

Pete Jesionowski

Trevor McKenna

Meeting called to order by Chairman McKenna. He announced that the meeting is being recorded.

K. McKenna announced the election to be held March 3, 2020 at the South Hadley High School, Café 1 from 7:00 am to 8:00 p.m.

OPEB Trust

The Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB) Declaration of Trust has been reviewed by Attorney O'Toole, B. Miller and the Prudential Committee members were sent a copy via email. B. Miller explained that most of the stipulations within the OPEB Declaration of Trust were included in the original article voted at the ADM. We are currently adding to the fund at the rate recommended by the actuarial study which is updated annually. It is necessary to get the funds set up in the trust and invested in order to get the return on investment indicated in the study. The purpose of the trust is to secure the funds, so that they can only be spent to pay health, dental and life insurance costs for retirees and expenses directly related to the operation of the trust. B. Miller suggested having the WC witness the PC signatures on the trust. All agree that they would attend the next WC meeting and sign the trust in their presence and have them witness the signatures.

K. LeBlanc made a motion to approve the SHFD2 Other Post Employment Benefit Declaration of Trust.

Fire Truck

Fire Truck cost discussion. At the request of K. McKenna, B. Miller wrote a letter requesting an extension of the deadline to purchase the fire truck in order to avoid the \$20,000 price increase. She stated that even if the District had acted as soon as the price increase was announced, it was not early enough to get approval without holding a special district meeting. The leasing company said the increase was from the manufacturer and there was no way to extend the deadline. However, they worked with M. O'Neill and found \$6,224 in changes to the vehicle that

would save money without detracting from the usability of the vehicle. The Pierce company agreed to offer a discount of \$8,033 and an increase to the discount we receive for doing a lease purchase. Bottom line; the price in May is now \$1,033 higher than the price we would have paid had we been able to order it prior to January 31, 2020. K. McKenna stated that there was no need for a vote now. B. Miller stated that she requested a proposal good until the second week in May.

Assistant Chief Report

Asst. Chief Calkins thanked M. O'Neill, the committee and B. Miller for their work in getting the price of the truck down. Requested approval to purchase tires for R4 (the old A2), \$1,500. A1 will be going in for minimal maintenance. There were 800 calls in 2019. He has been working with WMass OEMS team regarding a call to Gorse school (child not breathing). The child is well, the staff is having some difficulties. The OEMS team has reached out to some therapists in Greenfield. He reported that the Hartford Steam Boiler will certify the pressure vessels in the district, the boiler and the air tank. A piece of exercise equipment was donated. They will be working in conjunction with police on a visitor training. They had the second round of lock-down drills. He informed the PC regarding the need of a simple letter, to the Fire Marshall, stating that we are in transition and the delegation of authority will go to the Asst. Chief.

Fire Chief Position

K. McKenna stated that he is retiring and Robert Bak is running for the position. In regards to the Fire Chief position, we owe MRI \$6,000 for work done so far. B. Duggan, from MRI, is willing to put it on hold until after the election. K. LeBlanc said that he is still interested in looking into hiring from within, he respects J. Menards position. K. McKenna stated that S. Brady has a complaint against the PC and MRI for a conflict of interest violation. K. McKenna contacted District counsel who contacted the Attorney General's Office, and determined that he doesn't see a conflict of interest. S. Brady stated that it was not a complaint, it was a concern, there is potential for ethical conflict he feels it is in the best interest of the District to request a written opinion from the Mass. Ethics Commission. J. Menard stated that there are multiple options, he still wants a fair and open assessment with no bias and no favoritism.

J. Menard made a motion to suspend the hiring process until after the election. K. LeBlanc second. Vote unanimous.

J. Menard made a motion to pay MRI \$6,000 and notify them that the process is suspended until the new board takes ownership.

K. McKenna spoke to the history of prior hiring processes with MRI and the fairness they have shown for the District.

P. Jesanowski asked if we have checked with legal counsel to determine what the harms could be if we didn't open up to a testing company, could they be challenged by someone in the community. K. McKenna stated that the PC has the power to appoint without any process, but he wouldn't do that. S. Lemanski agrees that a process is necessary, could we develop our own process so that we don't spend \$10,000 every time we hire a chief. J. Menard stated that the assessment of the individuals is a positive and the firefighters that take the test get the benefit of the learning process. K. McKenna stated that it gives everyone the opportunity to advance themselves, he thinks it's the right way to go. There was additional discussion regarding the process and possible additional costs.

Fire Truck

J. Menard stated that it should wait until after the election and until we are further into the budget process. B. Miller stated that decisions should be made by the first week in April. T. Calkins suggested the PC and the Fire Association hold an informational meeting focusing on the fire truck prior to the ADM. K. McKenna stated that there have been no votes regarding the fire truck.

Fire Dept. and Ambulance Budget

PC and Asst. Chief Calkins reviewed the fire and ambulance budgets in detail with an emphasis to reducing the budgets. J. Menard questioned the radio operations line. K. McKenna stated that he is discussing it with District 1. Asst. Chief Calkins stated that he believes Chief Gunderson is interested in putting down the exact costs and discussing it. Additional discussion regarding the other possibilities.

K. McKenna stated his desire to breakout the budget by department into three areas: Personal Services, Operating Expense and Capital Outlay. K. McKenna stated that the PC Chair and the WC Chair are the Finance Officers. B. Miller agreed to look into breaking the budget into the three areas similar to that of the Town.

PC and Administration Budget

The PC reviewed the PC and Administration budget with the Treasurer. There was discussion regarding K. McKenna's concerns regarding the percentage of debt to the total budget. J. Menard asked if our Free Cash is sufficient. B. Miller stated that she would like to see the Free Cash higher, but pointed out that you can't expect the Free Cash number to go up when you are consistently cutting the budget. She stated that we meet the percent recommended by Department of Revenue.

B. Miller stated the Social Security COLA is 1.6% this year. She researched the history back to 1975 and there have been years when they did not give an increase. The HCRS COLA is 3% on the first \$13,000. K. McKenna requested a breakdown of the cost of the different percentages and what would be added to the tax rate. T. Calkins stated that he had a spreadsheet with the breakdown which he would share with B. Miller. He asked that consideration be given to taking the inspection fees and putting them aside, for vehicles etc. K. McKenna stated that originally those fees were to offset personnel cost.

Strong Chief Act

K. McKenna stated that if they are interested in changing it, there will need to be a warrant article on the District Meeting warrant. J. Menard said he would like more information before giving an opinion.

Video of Meetings on Website

J. Menard stated that he feels it would be beneficial to have the video of the meetings posted on the District website.

J. Menard made a motion to post the meeting videos on the District website. Second by K. LeBlanc. Vote unanimous. B. Miller recommends that we only post them going forward from when the vote is taken.

S. Flynn thanked K. McKenna for his many years of service. He stated that as a career firefighter he feels the formality of making T. Calkins Acting Chief would send a strong statement to the department and benefit the morale of the department. K. McKenna stated that the only people that come under the strong chief act are the Chiefs. It is the Asst. Chief's job. In the absence of

the Chief, he is Chief. There is no cost to the taxpayers, he recommends until a Chief is named, he's in charge.

The next Prudential Committee meeting will be Tuesday February 11, 2020 at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Miller, Treasurer

Minutes approved _____