



## PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE FIRE DISTRICT #2

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

### Minutes of January 12, 2021

Convened: 5:36 p.m.

Adjourned 7:42 p.m.

Present remotely via GotoMeeting link

Prudential Committee Chair: James Menard

Members: Kenneth LeBlanc

Robert Bak

Clerk/Treasurer: Barbara Miller

Fire Chief: Todd Calkins

#### Others Present:

Mike O'Neill

Perry McDonnell

John Marcy

Linda Young

Meeting called to order by Chairman Menard. It was announced that the meeting is being recorded.

Per Sections 57-58 of the Municipal Modernization Act and PC votes of 12/15/2016 and 3/10/2020 warrants were previously approved by J. Menard, PC Chair.

#### Minutes

J. Menard made a motion to approve the minutes of November 17, 2020 and December 15, 2020. Second by R. Bak. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

#### Chief Report

##### **Appreciation**

Chief Calkins thanked Lt O'Neill and FF Perry for their work on the DFS grant which has been submitted. The grant value is \$12,500 and was utilized for a variety of equipment. Chief thanked Cpt. Moore for all of his work with the entire COVID pandemic, Cares Act money, Grant portal, protocols and procedure. It was a team effort with Cpt. Moore at the helm. He thanked the entire staff for 2020, it was a difficult year. Final thank you to Chief Authier and Holyoke Medical Center for assistance with vaccines.

##### **COVID**

80% of staff has received the first round of vaccinations, including admin. PPE is in good shape, purchased sprayers for disinfecting rigs and building.

##### **Grants**

Chief stated that the DCR grant is a grant which is a grant that we generally receive every year, for 4 to 5 thousand (50/50, District/DCR) and the Senior and School SAFE grants are ready to go. The Assistance of Fire Fighting Grant (AFG), submitted for a Plymovent ventilation system to take out all the fumes and prevent bad air quality in the bays and a smaller system in the downstairs bays. It is a 75/25, AFG/District grant. There was discussion regarding the 75/25 grant and the ventilation system.

**Ambulance**

Ambulance at 83% collection rate.

**Junior Fighter Program**

Junior fire fighter program to begin in the spring if possible, with pandemic. He has a tool kit provided by Dept of Fire Service and Chiefs Assoc. and National Call and Volunteer Fire Association for all the legal and insurance information.

**Mount Holyoke College**

Mt. Holyoke has started moving in, approximately 750 students, they've provided locations for quarantine and isolation areas.

**PC Chair Discussion Items****Payroll Service discussion**

J. Menard stated that he would like the PC to consider using a payroll service. He feels it is the next step and would provide some time savings, more efficient for W2s. B. Miller stated that she doesn't see it as a huge time saver but does appreciate the benefit of them doing the W2s and the taxes and employment laws. Chief Calkins stated that Lt. Fay spends a large amount of time on the payroll. K. LeBlanc and R. Bak both stated that they use payroll service for their businesses and in their situations it is a benefit. B. Miller to do further research.

**Insurance Contribution Percentage**

There was discussion regarding changing the percentages for retirees and/or employees' and the potential savings versus the additional cost to the retirees and employees. Discussed options for a gradual implementation. J. Menard will contact Joe Shea from the HCGIT. K. LeBlanc stated that we need to put things in place that will, over time, save money. B. Miller stated that one area that we are trying to save money is the OPEB liability and investing in the Trust saved a million and a quarter over the long term liability.

**Evaluation of Staff**

J. Menard would like to meet and set goals and objectives for the next year.

**Tax Rate and Free Cash**

Tax rate approved at \$2.58

Free cash approved at \$220,450 it is high this year because we spent very little from free cash last year.

**Donation**

Chief Calkins received a phone call from Jess Miller, saying that she is part of an organization called Kind Squad 2020; a group of people that would like to donate two memory foam posture-pedic mattresses to the station. The people in the group prefer to remain anonymous.

K. LeBlanc made a motion to accept and thank Jess Miller and her organization for the donation of mattresses to the fire department. R. Bak second. The motion passed unanimously.

**Budget**

There was discussion regarding the fire department budget with some increases as needed based on the current and prior year expenditures and needs of the department.

Motion to approve the fire department budget as discussed and presented. Second by R. Bak.  
Motion passed with a unanimous vote.

## **COLA**

J. Menard stated that there was no COLA last year. He stated that the fire department and district employees have done a great job during these times. B. Miller provided a spreadsheet which included the cost to provide different COLA percentages. There was discussion regarding the disparity between the Consumer Price Index (CPI) as compared to the COLA increases.

K. LeBlanc made a motion for a 2% COLA increase. R. Bak second. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

## **Prudential Committee Budget**

J. Menard stated that he would like to decrease the reserve fund account on the PC budget to \$10,000. There was discussion regarding expenditures from the reserve fund in prior years. B. Miller expressed concern that we have two single employees who are both engaged and if they add spouses to the insurance during the year it will add \$600 per month for each to the cost of insurance and that money would need to come from the reserve fund unless we add money to the health insurance line. K. LeBlanc suggested reducing the reserve fund account to \$15,000. Chief Calkins expressed the need to have a Protective Equipment Fund. We have \$250,000 to \$300,000 worth of gear. Life expectancy of gear is ten years. The cost to outfit one firefighter head to toe is over \$11,000. Chief Calkins expressed the need to prepare for the future.

K. LeBlanc made a motion to go from \$20,000 to \$15,000 in the reserve fund. R. Bak seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

## **Fire Vehicle Stabilization**

J. Menard stated that previously the PC agreed to \$65,000 for the Fire Truck Stabilization Fund. But he would like to see \$50,000 go to the Fire Truck Stabilization from Free Cash this year.

K. LeBlanc made a motion to put an article on the annual district meeting warrant to take \$50,000 from Free Cash to be added to the Fire Vehicle Stabilization account. Motion seconded by R. Bak. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

## **Ambulance Stabilization Account**

The board reviewed the earlier vote to take 50% of the amount remaining in receipts reserved for appropriation. It was agreed to keep that the same.

## **Building Maintenance**

There was discussion regarding the current needs of the building and the need to build up the Building Stabilization Fund for future capital improvements. Chief Calkins stated that he would prioritize a list with estimates.

The next Prudential Committee meeting will be Tuesday, January 26, 2021 at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Miller, Treasurer

Minutes approved \_\_\_\_\_