

Minutes of Prudential Committee & Finance Committee Meeting
December 3, 2019

Present: David Zamojski, Chairman, Prudential Committee
John Greene, Prudential Committee
Todd O'Brien, new Prudential Committee member
John Zellmann, Fire Chief
Eileen Tela, District Accountant
Don Reid, Finance Committee
David Thompson, Finance Committee
Patrice Squillante, Partner, Auditor in charge with Melanson Heath

Meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

Minutes were approved for the meeting of November 5.

Invoice warrants were reviewed and signed.

Questions for Pat Squillante:

Lease payments - Chief explained how he'd like to have a constant line item in the fire budget for fire vehicle leases. Pat explained that voters have to authorize a certain lease, rather than building it forward - really not supposed to carry forward departmental line items indefinitely. Per MGL line item has to be tied to a specific lease. The simplest thing in her mind would be to have an annual Special Article to put funds in the Stabilization Fund for fire vehicles. What budget the lease payment is included in is secondary, but for now we would need district meeting to move anything between groupings.

Moving Ambulance budget to Fire Budget – Chief suggested moving ambulance budget to fire budget. However our district requested special legislation to create the revolving fund for the ambulance service and district meeting said it should be a separate operation, so district meeting has to say that's okay to dissolve the ambulance fund and combine it into the fire budget. Discussion followed about the lack of expenses being charged to the ambulance fund and Pat reminded us the we should allocate expenses from fire budget to the ambulance budget, cannot do it the other way around – from ambulance to fire. It was suggested that we have a worksheet, to be updated annually, showing the allocations, with a line item credit to the fire budget and a charge to the ambulance budget.

Fire Fees collected – Chief suggested that fire fees be set aside and accumulated for vehicle purchases. Pat said that we would have to request this revolving fund be set up at district meeting. Eileen noted that fire fees already offset taxes, as it is shown as a local receipt offset against total taxes when the tax rates are set. If revolving fund were set up, we would have to request this dollar amount be added to taxation.

Overlay Surplus – Pat explained that once overlay surplus is released we could request special articles funded from it, but as of June 30, the balance would roll up into free cash. We expect that

the assessors will be releasing \$450,000 of the overlay surplus related to the FirstLight situation shortly.

OPEB Liability – Pat does not think that the state will require anytime soon for municipalities to fund the OPEB liability, even though many are choosing to do so. OPRB Trust is intended to accumulate funds to be used 20-30 years or so down the road to offset health insurance costs for retirees and their spouses, even though it could be used sooner. However part of our annual retirement appropriation goes to fund the unfunded liability with the theory being that it will actually be funded at the not-so- distant future.

Pat left at this time.

Dispatching – No decision has been made yet, even though it's been about 8-9 months. It may not be good to move dispatch to Shelburne. Chief has sent e-mails requesting an answer on this, but has had no responses.

Ambulance – A2, The second ambulance, is in service. Chris Mason has been instrumental in getting A2 ready.

Medicare Ground Ambulance Data Collection – We have been selected to gather a lot of information for the Medicare program, relating to our costs..

Staffing – We are overtaxing the permanent force with the call backs. The call force is decimated – not many members left. A few are out with injuries and a few are close to age 65. John will come up with a staffing plan. AMR is still struggling with their staffing.

Run report – We had 107 calls for November, of which 64 were EMS, including 17 transports.

Discipline and Harassment Policy – David Zamojski handed out copies of the new Discipline and Harassment Policy to be reviewed and voted on at the next meeting. It was developed by David, John Zellmann and a group from the fire department. Eileen will review the online ethics test.

Next meeting scheduled for Tuesday, January 7th, 2020.

Meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.