

Barnstable Fire District Prudential Committee

Meeting Minutes

Date: August 11, 2026

Time: 4:00 PM

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

4:00PM EST

Roll Call Attendance

X	Andrew Miller	Prudential Committee Chairman
X	William Jones	Prudential Committee Member
X	Wellesley Marsh	Prudential Committee Member
X	Charles M. Sabatt PC	Representing Attorney
X	David Mason	Chair, Board of Water Commissioners
X	Sean Anderson	Water Department Superintendent
X	Richard Buffington	District Treasurer
X	Chris Beal	Fire Chief
	Kevin Brailey	Deputy Fire Chief
X	Sara Benson	Clerk
X	Steve Rizzo	Owners Project Manager, Synergy Consultants

Residents in Attendance: None

2. Public Comment

- **Discussion:** With no public comments, the Board discussed implementing a formal structure for future public comment periods consistent with Open Meeting Law and Robert's Rules. Under the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law, public bodies are not required to provide a public comment or public participation period during their regular meetings and the Chair retains full authority to decide whether, when, and how public comment is allowed. With this information the Board agreed to offer these guidelines for Public Comment at the beginning of a meeting.
 - Limit comments to two minutes per person
 - Require speakers to state their name and address
 - No deliberation or direct Q&A during comment period
 - Information requests directed to the Clerk via email.
 - Policy to be added to agendas and minutes for clarity.

3. Review and Acceptance of Minutes

- Minutes from the previous meeting were presented by Clerk Sara Benson; improved readability format than past minutes.
- **Motion** made to approve the revised minutes.
- **Vote:** Motion passed 3-0-0

4. Board of the Water Commissioners

- Financials: FY27 budget tracking as expected.
- Well Projects:
 - Satellite project at Well 3: Design expected to be 50% complete by approximately August 15, 2026.
 - Treatment plant for Wells 3 and 4: Under MEPA review; 90% design plans received and under staff review.
- Leak at Well 4: KOH bulk storage tank valve leak contained; Clean Harbors engaged to pump down tank; insurance claim pursued via MIAA.
- Water Balance Program: High Point Treatment Center (60 Perseverance Way) paid \$215,860 mitigation fee; committee affirmed decision not to lower fee, establishing program precedent.
- Personnel: Conditional offer made for entry-level position, pending physical and drug tests.
- Department-Wide Study: Complete; presentation to Water Commissioners to be scheduled, followed by public presentation after Labor Day.
- Borrowing Documents: Upcoming meeting with Bond Counsel; Sara Benson and Rick Buffington to review on August 14, 2026.
- Joint/Executive Coordination: Anticipated joint focus with Prudential Committee on a potential litigation settlement; Water Commissioners to meet in executive session to vote on recommendation.

5. Report of the Fire Chief

- FY26 Budget: Finished on budget, 99.95% expended; SCBAs and turnout gear remain encumbered (long-lead).
- Cape Cod RECC: Engagement in regional dispatch discussions; estimated operational start July 2029–2030. Interim dispatch through Barnstable County Sheriff expected to significantly increase costs; Town of Barnstable may cover fire districts' RECC costs.
- Grants: Closing out two FEMA AFG and one FEMA SAFER grant; update on new SAFER application for six firefighters expected by end of September 2026.
- Personnel: New Firefighter/Paramedic John Mahoney started August 3, 2026; assigned to a shift on August 19, 2026; all shifts at full strength.
- PFAS-Free Gear: Testing Firedex PFAS-free turnout gear on the new hire; full transition estimated ~\$250,000; phased approach needed.
- September 11 Ceremony: 25th annual ceremony on September 11, 2026, at 10:00 AM at current station; Mass at St. Mary's; last ceremony at this location.

6. Treasurer's Report

- FY26 Closeout: 98.9% of budget expended.
- FY27 Status: On track; ~47% expended due to July debt payments and lump-sum Barnstable County assessment (discount for single annual payment).
- Free Cash Certification (DOR): Working on year-end cash report, reconciliation, statement of indebtedness, outstanding receivables; estimated completion around September 11, 2026; awaiting receivable balance reports from the town.
- Rick Buffington to email Chris and Sean for their June 30, 2026 accruals
- Financial Policies: Need to establish policies for Bond Counsel; to be placed on a future open meeting agenda (target fall 2026).
- Financial Assessment: Consider engaging Lynn Foster for a comprehensive district financial assessment/roadmap.

7. Clerk Report

- Document Management: Clerk Sara Benson received historical documents and a zip drive with digital files from prior clerk's family. Sara thanked Sandra Eager for her continued commitment and help with providing information.
- **Source of Authority for Elected Officials' Health Insurance Eligibility**
 - Enacted in 1974. Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 32A&B governs group life, accidental death, and health insurance for employees, retirees, and dependents of counties, cities, towns, and districts. The statute defines "employee" to include individuals "employed, appointed or elected by popular vote", and further states that:
 - *"persons elected by popular vote may be considered eligible employees during the entire term for which they are elected regardless of the number of hours devoted to the service of the governmental unit."*
 - This language establishes that elected officials are eligible for district-provided health insurance, regardless of hours worked, unless the district has adopted a different policy under local acceptance provisions.
- **Participation Cost Summary** - Current figures (to be revised):
 - Total Healthcare Policy Cost = \$102,456.00
 - Total District share of Policy Cost (5 Subscribers) = \$81,964.80
 - Total Subscriber share of Policy Cost = \$20,491.20
- **Average district cost per insured elected official: \$16,393** (Based on current members enrolled in Medex or family health plans.)
- Elected officials do not receive opt-out stipends
- No formal warrant article or annual meeting vote found adopting health insurance since 1935; practice appears to be in place for many years.

8. Prudential Committee

- **Citizens Committee:** Working on specs to solicit bids for building condition assessment, valuation, and real estate appraisal; appraisal expected October 2026; RFP target mid-September 2026. Exploring reuse options (e.g., Harwich model: housing/museum). Next Phase Two Committee meeting: September 2, 2026, at 5:30 PM; Water Department to present.
- **OPM – Fire Station Construction Update**
 - Budget/Commitments:
 - Invoiced to date: ~\$13 million.
 - Committed: ~\$33 million.
 - Uncommitted: ~\$1.8 million; ~\$1.48 million earmarked for FF&E, technology, equipment.
 - Contingencies remain in GC contract and FF&E budgets.
 - Schedule:
 - Major apparatus bay concrete pour coordinated (no staging on Phinney's Lane); possible late evening work.
 - Admin roof underlayment installed. Retaining wall complete; binder course planned in rear/left parking; construction trailer relocation to enable front-of-site underground work.
 - Eversource transformer installed ahead of schedule; awaiting wire runs from substation down Phinney's Lane.
 - Project tracking toward May 27 substantial completion with July move-in (year per current cycle).
 - Change Order Authority:
 - Discussion to delegate authority to OPM (Stephen Rizzo) and Chief Beal to approve individual contract change orders up to \$50,000 with monthly reporting; over \$50,000 requires committee approval.
 - **Motion:** Motion to delegate authority to OPM (Stephen Rizzo) and Chief Beal to approve individual contract change orders up to \$50,000 with monthly reporting; over \$50,000 requires committee
 - **Vote: Motion passed 3-0-0**
 - Specific Change Order:
 - **Bill Jone Motion:** Prudential Committee hereby authorizes Chief Beal and the Owner's Project Manager to execute a Change Order to the Fire Station GMP contract with W. T. Rich Company in the amount of **\$165,000 (One Hundred Sixty-Five Thousand Dollars)** for the installation of the APS Station Alerting System. Funds for this change will be taken from the overall Project Contingency. The total project

cost as appropriated at the Annual District Meeting will not increase due to this change.

- Second: Stephen Rizzo.
- **Vote: Motion passed 3-0-0**
- Monthly Reporting: Expectation set for change orders and contingency updates at each monthly meeting.
- **Matters Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair**
 - **Next Meetings:** Prudential Committee: Tuesday, September 8, 2026 and Phase Two Committee: September 2, 2026, at 5:30 PM at the Water Department.

7. Adjournment

- Executive Session:
 - **Motion:** To enter Executive Session under MA Open Meeting Law to discuss strategy with respect to litigation, as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of this body. The body will not reconvene in open session at the conclusion of the Executive Session.
 - **Second:** Bill Jones.
 - **Vote: Motion passed 3-0-0**
- Meeting adjourned at approximately 6:10 pm