

TOWN OF PRINCETON MA  
Princeton Advisory Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
February 20, 2018

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AC members in attendance: George Handy, Judy Dino, Wayne Adams, Jimmy O'Coin  
AC members absent: Bill Lawton, John Shipman, Don Schoeny  
SB members in attendance: Jon Fudeman, Edie Morgan, TA Nina Nazarian  
SB members absent: Richy Bisk

**Joint SB and Advisory Committee (AC) Agenda – 2:00PM**

- Review FY19 Budget and Capital Requests for Fire Department
- Ad-hoc Committee report on financial model and projections

**Meeting Minutes**

**Joint Meeting Started at 2:00PM**

John Bennett, Chief of the Fire and Ambulance Department led a discussion of their budget and capital requests. Deputy chiefs were in attendance to assist with Q&A. All questions were answered, and no outstanding action items/information is requested.

Topics discussed included:

- Budget increase for personnel from 5 to 7 days for day shift for EMT. Critical response time is 4 mins for a call, especially if person has stopped breathing. There is an increase in EMT related calls due to increased drug use, aging population, and work/life related stress. While not responding to a call, personnel will perform paperwork and equipment maintenance.
- Though there has been slight increase in fires, it was noted as an anomaly. The major new causes were off-brand power chargers for cellphones and tablets and home DIY work not done to regs. However, this increase is not as large as the EMT related call increase.
- Above ground water storage. Will attempt to deploy one unit in FY19 out of remaining FY18 operating budget (not spent due to offsetting grants and fire-pond funds from a previous year), instead of a capital request. Cost of new fire ponds increased a lot in certain areas due to DCR and other watershed restrictions and required permits.
- Capital request for truck and type of truck discussed. Dept desires a multi-function water pumper truck to carry water and more personnel over a single function truck to transport water and less personnel. Strategy is to deploy as many personnel and water within the first attack and depend on surround towns for supplemental water to come in and ferry water from ponds to portable pond. Though there is a large cost difference over a water pumper vs a water tanker. Cost is \$525K to \$600K, pending buying new vs a deal-backed-out of. Dept to go with new due to cost avoidance of used and unknown maintenance costs. Truck to be replaced had >\$70K in maintenance in past year. Cost of 15 year loan for a new truck is \$45K a year.

- Stated, Fire Dept should have two fires stations and not one, for response times. New public safety building requirements have been relayed to FSC and JWA has the requirements reflected in Princeton Center site. Fire department still advising JWA to reduce office space and increase number of bays to house equipment. East Princeton has limited expansion options, most is one additional bay. Currently brush fire trucks stored in Leominster for \$400/month in the off-season. Understood the current fire station in town center is not to spec for decontamination, exhaust fume management, sleeping quarters, and equipment maintenance.
- ISO audit will take place. Currently Princeton is 6/6X , 6 in town center and 6X outside of town center. Last audit was in 1980s. Since then, ISO requirements for a rating have changed and tightened. E.g., in 1980s, a house could be 2000 ft from a water source. Current distance is 1000ft. Speculation is the town will be rated as either a 6/8 or a 6/9, with maybe a few homes 6/10. Insurance companies may raise rates for higher ratings (, e.g. 8, 9, 10...and some agencies may not issue policies for a 9 or 10). Neither a new truck or a new fire station will effect ratings much. Not clear after we are rated, when ISO would return to re-audit Princeton for possible improved rating (e.g. if we receive a 9, and with water storage and truck, could be rated a 8 or 7 ; due to tightened requirements to be a 6 or 6X, any new investments short of having a town water to each house and hydrants, we'll not be a 6X again).
- TA/FD Chief will post a subset of the Dept Overview materials that were sent around on the town website for all citizens to know more about the capable and able department and services the town has.
- Department does a lot of maintenance on its trucks. Some items have to go to regional repair garages to be restored and certified to spec. Though the town highway department does maintenance on its own vehicles, both departments are stretched thin to help each other out with maintenance outside of some periodic welding.

AC made no preliminary opinion about all/some of the requests for budget. AC needs to review all town requests in aggregate and review town budget and debt scenarios.

The Ad-Hoc committee requested to be rescheduled to another time/day.

Meeting adjourned at 8:55 PM

### Upcoming AC meetings

BOS, TA, and Dept Heads with AC, Town Hall Annex:

- Next regular BOS meetings are scheduled for March 5<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and April 2<sup>nd</sup> 7:30PM

**Optional** FSC public session for town residents, Tuesday, **February 27th**, 7-9PM . Final JWA Report.

### **Handouts and Referenced Documents**

- FY19 Fire and Ambulance Budget
- Fire Department Overview of Operations, Personnel, Vehicle Fleet, Fire Ponds, ISO, and Stations
- FY19-24 Fire and Ambulance Department Capital Requests

Minutes recorded by Wayne M. Adams, AC Member