

The Prudential Committee held an FY26 Budget Meeting in the District Fire Station, on the above date, with the following officers present: Chairman Thomas A. Satko, Member Michael J. Lahey, Clerk & Acting Treasurer Allen J. Mendel, Chief Engineer John M. Pansecchi, and First Assistant Engineer David Lennon. Vice-Chairman Richard G. Kleiner was absent.

Also present: Superintendent John C. Barrett, Bookkeeper/Office Manager Kathleen A. Fletcher, Assistant Clerk & Treasurer Victoria A. Lassonde, and 6 Alert Hose Members.

Chairman Satko called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., stating that the meeting is being recorded and if anyone else is recording, please let the Chairman know.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

#### ***FY26 BUDGET***

#### **GENERAL FUND – Fire Department**

##### ***Chief Engineer's Salary***

***General Fund:           \$29,989.49***

Chairman Satko: explained that Chief Pansecchi has wanted to be full-time for a while. He detailed options for the Chief Engineer's position (full-time/elected/appointed), compensation, timing of transition (May or July), and the information to be presented to the public. Need to decide whether this should be a warrant article or a ballot item. Discussed salary for different options; full-time salary (elected or appointed), 3% COLA increase for the upcoming fiscal year, or \$5000.00 raise to compensate for additional hours now required to complete job duties.

Chief Engineer Pansecchi: stated the bylaws say they are required to remain in their position until a successor takes over in order to cover any gap (term ends in May 2026). He would be satisfied with the COLA or raise, but suggested the full-time salary amount for anyone who may fill the position in the future.

Member Lahey: asked whether the plan is to put this information out to the public in April.

Chairman Satko: confirmed that a public informational meeting is scheduled in April.

First Assistant Engineer Lennon: asked whether the plan is to put the full-time Chief Engineer's position in as a warrant article. He expressed his concern about the full-time position question occurring at the same time as repairs to the building, and how the public may respond.

Chairman Satko: answered that the Committee has not yet decided whether to address the full-time position on the ballot or added as a warrant article. The question of changing from elected to appointed positions will be on the ballot. He further explained the salary recommendations are options based on various scenarios, but the options have to be discussed, and budget amounts set.

Chief Engineer Pansecchi: noted that this is a full-time job. He does not feel that it's fair that the full-time position be put on the ballot. No other position is put on the ballot, other than Town politicians. He feels it should be a warrant article.

Assistant Clerk & Treasurer Lassonde: explained that the question of elected or appointed has to be on the ballot. The Chief Engineer's salary is a totally separate issue.

Chief Engineer Pansecchi: stated that the Committee has two votes tonight; one on the full-time salary, or if it fails (elected to appointed), the COLA or the requested increase.

Chairman Satko: addressed Bookkeeper/Office Manager Fletcher and Assistant Clerk & Treasurer Lassonde, asking whether they had calculated the budget based on the different scenarios.

Assistant Clerk & Treasurer Lassonde: answered that if the position is full-time (either elected or appointed), the salary would be funded from the budget that begins on July 1, 2026, so it would not have to be funded in the FY26 budget.

First Assistant Engineer Lennon: suggested that the warrant article for full-time Chief Engineer could be addressed first, then when the ballot question of Appointed/Elected is resolved, the salary could be presented in the warrant for the next year.

Bookkeeper/Office Manager Fletcher: explained the position can be full-time regardless of whether it's elected or appointed.

**Upon motion made by Member Lahey, seconded by Chairman Satko, it was unanimously voted to recommend the Full-time Chief Engineer position, effective July 1, 2026, for approval by Fire District voters at the Annual Fire District Meeting to be held on May 13, 2025.**

**Upon motion made by Member Lahey, seconded by Chairman Satko, it was unanimously voted to recommend \$29,989.49, (the \$5,000.00 increase option) from the General Fund Budget for approval by Fire District voters at the Annual Fire District Meeting to be held on May 13, 2025.**

***Chief Engineer's Expense***

***General Fund:           \$2,275.00***

**Upon motion made by Member Lahey, seconded by Chairman Satko, it was unanimously voted to recommend the above amount appropriated from the General Fund Budget for approval by Fire District voters at the Annual Fire District Meeting to be held on May 13, 2025.**

***Fire Department Expense***

***General Fund:           \$65,350.00***

Chairman Satko: noted the increase of \$9,150.00, stating the Chief Engineer has an explanation for the increase; vehicle maintenance which isn't cheap anymore, and the software subscription.

Chief Engineer Pansecchi: explained his vendors have recommended \$10,000.00 - \$12,000.00 for maintenance per vehicle. The bulk of the increased cost is for the new software for fire reporting required by the Federal Government, and also for the Lexipol policies and procedures, which are underway.

**Upon motion made by Member Lahey, seconded by Chairman Satko, it was unanimously voted to recommend the above amount appropriated from the General Fund Budget for approval by Fire District voters at the Annual Fire District Meeting to be held on May 13, 2025.**

***Certifications and Inspections***

***General Fund:           \$22,000.00***

**Upon motion made by Member Lahey, seconded by Chairman Satko, it was unanimously voted to recommend the above amount appropriated from the General Fund Budget for approval by Fire District voters at the Annual Fire District Meeting to be held on May 13, 2025.**

***Fire Alarm System Expense***

***General Fund:           \$400.00***

**Upon motion made by Member Lahey, seconded by Chairman Satko, it was unanimously voted to recommend the above amount appropriated from the General Fund Budget for approval by Fire District voters at the Annual Fire District Meeting to be held on May 13, 2025.**

***Firefighter Compensation***

***General Fund:           \$94,000.***

Chairman Satko: stated stipends remained the same. This (budget item) includes the request for a full-time firefighter. Also, raised the issue of part-time firefighters, because it would save us quite a bit.

Chief Engineer Pansecchi: stated he is not against part-time firefighters but hears from other Chiefs that they come and go quickly, although it could be a place to start. Applying for one firefighter, but we need one per shift for 24/7 coverage. More and more calls where the trucks don't leave the station. At two in the morning, it's not unusual to have a fire alarm and not have a truck respond.

Chairman Satko: asked whether they are having trouble at night.

Chief Engineer Pansecchi: answered that we're having problems all the time. One of the reasons so many stations have gone to some type of staffing 24/7, not really sure where to go with it. Concerned that part-time may decide not to show up, leaving gaps in coverage. We could discuss that (part-time) in the future, maybe for next year and see what the options are.

Member Lahey: asked for confirmation that Chief Engineer Pansecchi is requesting one full-time firefighter position.

Chief Engineer Pansecchi: confirmed that his request is for one full-time firefighter position in this budget. Began requesting this in the budget seven or eight years ago when we just started to have that need, it was more daytime, now it's all the time. I wish I could encourage membership to show up at calls, it just isn't happening. It's not happening in Adams, it's not happening in Williamstown, it's not happening anywhere. It's not just a local issue; it's a national issue.

First Assistant Engineer Lennon: noted that the main driver behind this (limited response) is the increase in call volume. In the 1960s the call volume per year was 70-80, and now we're at 370 calls per year. Huge difference, and back then it was strictly fire related activity. Not saying it was easier then, it's more of a disruption now, two adults work in the household, and we can't expect the same level of response based on the number of calls.

Chief Engineer Pansecchi: stated that the District has responded to 94 calls already this year.

Chairman Satko: pointed out the cost of the benefits for a full-time firefighter. Suggested we could get two part-time firefighters for that amount.

Chief Engineer Pansecchi: answered that he'll manage with whatever he's given, and staff based on the amount. Still in for the Safer Grant if it becomes available, and he's willing to try anything. Would like to be able to offer the part-time option to existing members if this is the way we go.

The Committee discussed several aspects of the part-time option: number of part-time positions, compensation, residency requirement, training, and proposed schedule.

Chief Engineer Pansecchi: suggested a budget of \$60,000.00 for hourly part-time station coverage.

**Upon motion made by Member Lahey, seconded by Chairman Satko, it was unanimously voted to recommend the above amount appropriated from the General Fund Budget for approval by Fire District voters at the Annual Fire District Meeting to be held on May 13, 2025.**

**Grants**

**General Fund:           \$12,000.00**

**Upon motion made by Member Lahey, seconded by Chairman Satko, it was unanimously voted to recommend the above amount appropriated from the General Fund Budget for approval by Fire District voters at the Annual Fire District Meeting to be held on May 13, 2025.**

***Capital Expense***

***General Fund:           \$52,030.00***

Chairman Satko: stated this is for truck E2, paint and re-piping of hose reel. Asked whether there is a local body shop that could provide a quote. Surprised at the expense. Doesn't seem like a difficult job, lots of hours in the quote.

Chief Engineer Pansecchi: stated there is a quote, tried to get other quotes, has not had many responses. Needs to get more quotes. Looking for a better price. Will check with T&M. Haddad has a body shop. Will pursue more quotes to find an affordable option.

First Chief Engineer Lennon: noted that the truck should be repaired, should be fiscally responsible and look for more affordable option.

**Upon motion made by Member Lahey, seconded by Chairman Satko, it was unanimously voted to recommend the above amount appropriated from the General Fund Budget for approval by Fire District voters at the Annual Fire District Meeting to be held May 13, 2025.**

***Hydrants***

***General Fund:           \$10,500.00***

**Upon motion made by Member Lahey, seconded by Chairman Satko, it was unanimously voted to recommend the above amount appropriated from the General Fund Budget for approval by Fire District voters at the Annual Fire District Meeting to be held on May 13, 2025.**

***Maturing Debt***

***General Fund:           \$50,000.00***

**Upon motion made by Member Lahey, seconded by Chairman Satko, it was unanimously voted to recommend the above amount appropriated from the General Fund Budget for approval by Fire District voters at the Annual Fire District Meeting to be held on May 13, 2025.**

***Interest on Maturing Debt***

***General Fund:           \$23,625.00***

**Upon motion made by Member Lahey, seconded by Chairman Satko, it was unanimously voted to recommend the above amount appropriated from the General Fund Budget for approval by Fire District voters at the Annual Fire District Meeting to be held on May 13, 2025.**

**OTHER – MISCELLANEOUS**

None

Prudential Committee - Budget Meeting

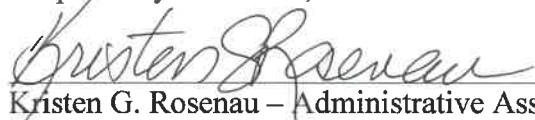
Page 6

March 20, 2025

**Member Lahey made a motion to adjourn, Chairman Satko seconded, Unanimous - Passed.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



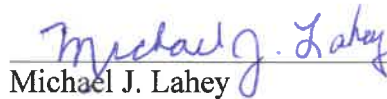
Kristen G. Rosenau – Administrative Assistant



Thomas A. Satko - Chairman



Richard G. Kleiner - Vice-Chairman



Michael J. Lahey

**PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE**