

Dorset Fire District #1 Prudential Committee Meeting Minutes

Joint Meeting with Dorset Selectboard and East Dorset Prudential Committee

Dorset Town Hall: Tuesday, June 21, 2016, 7:00pm

DFD PRUDENTIAL ATTENDANCE

Attending: Roger Squire, Milt McWayne, Ben Weiss, Mark Putnam

Missing: Abbott DeRham

FIRE TAX EQUALIZATION MECHANISM

Town manager Rob Gaiotti explained the current mechanism to implement fire tax equalization between Dorset and East Dorset Fire Districts:

- The town will purchase fire services from both districts
- The town will include fire tax as line item on Dorset property tax bill
- The fire tax rate will generate all revenue necessary to fund total fire budgets of both districts
- The fire districts will receive payments from town in Oct. 2016 and April 2017
- The fire districts will remain independent municipal entities

Discussion then following:

- Henry Chandler (selectboard chair) stated that a 1-year agreement will allow the town “try out” this approach.
- Gaiotti stated that in order to be included on town’s fall tax bill, purchasing fire services (from DFD and EDFD districts) will need to be approved by town-wide vote at Aug 9 primary election.
- Mark Putnam question what happens at end of contract and recommended that contract be worded with “shall” instead of “may” concerning the purchasing of fire services.
- Sandy Pinsonnault (Dorset Town Clerk) stated that fire districts will receive their full budgeted amounts, regardless of any delinquent fire taxes.
- Ben Weiss stated that several joint meetings of these 3 boards have occurred over the past year and the current mechanism of tax equalization was seen by all 3 boards as the best approach.
- Putnam requested that Weiss ask the DFD attorney John Thrasher provide written confirmation of his verbal discussion with Weiss that Thrasher has no reservations about DFD district entering into a contract with the town for bookkeeping and clerk services. Weiss agreed to request this info from Thrasher.
- Jack Stannard (selectboard member) suggested another special meeting be held for DFD district taxpayers. Pinsonnault suggested a town-wide informational meeting on August 8 – the day before the vote.

VOTE OF FIRE TAX EQUALIZATION MECHANISM

Chandler stated that each of the 3 boards need to have their own vote to approve the inter-local contract.

Dorset Selectboard: A motion was made by Tom Smith and seconded by Liz Ruffa to approve the contracts to purchase fire services from the Dorset Fire District and the East Dorset Fire District. The motion carried with 3 yes votes (including the chairman) and 1 abstention (Stannard).

Dorset Fire District Prudential Board: A motion to approve the contract to provide fire services to the Town of Dorset was made by Weiss and seconded by Roger Squire. The motion passed with 3 yes votes and 1 abstention (Putnam).

East Dorset Fire District Prudential Board: A motion to approve the contract to provide fire services to the Town of Dorset was made by Judy Collins and seconded by Steve Ludlum. The motion passed unanimously.

SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

Gaiotti stated that if the town-wide vote passes on August 9th, the contracts will then get signed by all parties involved. Ludlum made a motion that EDFD sign their contract immediately after the town vote (assuming the voters approve). The EDFD board passed this motion unanimously.

BOOKKEEPING CONTRACT

The contract for the Town of Dorset to provide bookkeeping and clerk services to DFD was discussed. Milt McWayne (DFD committee) requested two revisions to the contract:

1. Reference to "Engle & Spivey" be replaced with "designated accountant".
2. Delete "may" in section 1 (j).

Chandler asked this contract (with McWayne's revisions) meet the needs of the Dorset Fire District. Roger Squire (DFD Clerk/Treasurer) replied "yes". Chandler then asked for a motion from a selectboard to approve the contract. The motion was made by Smith and seconded by Ruffa. The motion passed. Stannard stated that the selectboard was "putting the cart before the horse".

MEETING ADJOURNED

With no further business to discuss, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting and the motion passed.