

Public Statement on Election Investigation

Recently, the Prudential Committee was made aware of a statement posted online alleging improper actions by an Onset Fire District election official at the District's election on May 21, 2019. The Prudential Committee takes such allegations seriously and promptly hired an independent investigator to commence an investigation into these allegations.

This investigation has been concluded, and the Prudential Committee considers the investigation to have been thorough and complete. Out of respect for the privacy of the individuals involved, the Prudential Committee is not sharing additional information about the investigation at this time. However, please know the investigation determined that the allegations were unsubstantiated and meritless. As a result, the Prudential Committee now considers this matter closed. The Prudential Committee is confident in the integrity of its elections and would like to express its appreciation for the hard work of all of its employees who make these elections a fair and accessible process.

Notwithstanding, this incident provides the Prudential Committee with an opportunity to address an unfortunate trend of discourtesy in residents' interactions with District employees over the past several years. While we acknowledge that it is all too common today for individuals to make ill-considered and frivolous comments in online media, false accusations such as those described above are not only personally disappointing to the members of this Committee, but also constitute a disservice to our District. Comments such as these are irresponsible and have real costs to the District, as the Committee can neither ignore such allegations nor respond without investigating. As in this instance, these types of incidents often require consulting with legal counsel, hiring an independent investigator, or both.

As an elected body of public officials, the Prudential Committee welcomes its opportunities for discourse and debate with the residents of our community. However, we would remind our residents that the District's appointed employees, in particular those who do not serve in policymaking roles, are unelected public servants who work hard to fulfill the District's day-to-day responsibilities and implement the policies set by the District's boards. We ask that, at a minimum, our residents observe standards of common courteousness and civility in their interactions with our employees, both in person and online, and consider the ramifications of their public comments before making them. Observing these basic principles will not only help create a more respectful and neighborly atmosphere in our small community, it will also help our District deliver its services more effectively and efficiently. Thank you.

Onset Fire District Prudential Committee