

Board of Fire Commissioners

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

January 3, 2019

Present: Commissioner Charles Longo - Chairman
Commissioner John Cafazzo – Vice Chairman
Commissioner Richard Quagliaroli - Secretary
Commissioner James Dutton
Commissioner Arnold Higgins
Commissioner Gilbert Spencer

Others: Deputy Chief Bruce Motowidlak
Deputy Chief David Thurz
Firefighter Brian Lombardo

Commissioner Longo called the meeting to order at 6:32 PM.

Public Comment: None

Chief's Report:

Chief Thurz reported on the following items:

- Recommended that Deputy Chief David Thurz be promoted to the position of Assistant Chief effective January 4, 2019. The Chief explained that the promotion process consisted of three components; interview with three out of town fire service professionals, interview with three members of the Fire Commission and an interview with the Town Manager. The selection was based on scores and recommendations provided through the testing process.
- A job posting and description for the upcoming vacant Deputy Chief's position was provided to the Commissioners for their review prior to posting. The Commissioners were asked to provide their feedback at the next Commission meeting, which is scheduled in February.
- Provided the Commission with two articles; "Fire Departments in crisis: Time to make some changes" and a recent study completed by the State of Pennsylvania and the significant decline in volunteers firefighters in there state.
- A review of the per diem program, which included a summary of the initial report submitted to the Board of Fire Commission and Town Manager back in 2012. The report was based on the due diligence completed by the Chief, and former Commissioner Richard French, detailing the Department's statistics, information received from similar sized departments and an outline of the proposed program at the time it was written. A number of focus group meetings were held with the membership over a two year period,

prior to the program being implemented in February 2016. The objective of the per diem program was to ensure that there were two members available to respond to incidents, and to handle the routine business matters during the work week while the majority of members were at work. The intent of the program was not to eliminate any of the already established positions within Fire Department, and was considered an experiment. Since its implementation in February 2016, all but five days have been filled by two department members. The program isn't perfect, it lacks consistency and there is limited supervision. But the cost to ensure that there are two members readily available to respond during the week is reasonable.

Discussion followed in which Commissioner Dutton questioned the amount of down time being experienced when alarms are not being answered. Chief Thurz stated that they are asked to go through the apparatus at the station that they are assigned to for the day. They are required to complete an apparatus checklist form. In addition, they are assigned various tasks by any Chief Officer or Captain. They assist with the annual pump testing, hose testing and ladder inspection. They assist the Fire Marshal Office with fire prevention activity or preplanning.

Deputy Chief Motowidlak noted that the program is beneficial for him when apparatus need to be taken out of service or moved around during the day. He did note that while he has some flexibility to check in periodically that daily supervision is limited.

Commissioner Quagliaroli asked if one full time person were to be hired, and supplemented with one per diem, could a full time person also be a mechanic. Deputy Chief Thurz reported that he works for a neighboring Department and that they have attempted to hire a firefighter/EMT/mechanic with no success.

Commissioner Longo noted that he felt it was important to have a periodic review of the program to ensure that the funds allocated are being adequately spent. He asked the Chief to continue to look for ways to fine tune the program, to improve down time and to enhance the supervision.

- Work on replacing the ceiling in the training room at Station 1 was underway.
- A meeting with the architect to review the proposed improvements for Stations 1 and 2 is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, January 8, 2019.
- The new service truck for Station 2 is currently having its emergency lights installed. Completion date is unknown. The next step will be to letter the truck.
- The truck committee will be having a pre-construction meeting later in the month with the manufacturer. A date for the meeting was still to be determined. Chief Thurz anticipates delivery of the new truck to be a year from now (first quarter of 2020).
- Reviewed the Department's expenditures for the month of November.

Deputy Chief Motowidlak reported on the following apparatus repairs:

- Engine 42 is waiting on a part to fix the passenger side window.

- Ladder 31 required one of the outrigger pistons to be replaced as the cylinder was scored.
- Rescue 14 required its turn signal to be retrofitted because parts were no longer available. The slack adjuster for the brakes need to be corrected, and the studs on one of the wheels needed to be replaced.
- Ladder 15 was currently out of service for its annual DOT inspection.

Committee Reports:

- NONE

Old Business:

- Chief Thurz reported that he made the necessary formatting changes to the By-Laws. Commissioner Quagliaroli recommended that the stipend schedule for a non-exempt instructor be removed from the By Laws and written into the Department's Standard Operating Guidelines. The Commission recommended that until that change was made, along with the member's annual requirements implemented into the Standard Operating Guidelines that they would wait another month before signing off on the revised By-Laws.
- Commissioner Longo asked if there was any update on the status of Station 2's roof. Chief Thurz advised that he did not have an update, but would be meeting with facilities staff on Tuesday, January 8th and would inquire.
- Commissioner Longo brought up the discussion about the roof color of the new apparatus. He felt that the Department still needs to establish a standard color scheme for the Department apparatus. Commissioner Cafazzo noted that at the pervious Commission meeting that it was decided that a Standard Operating Guideline would be established and that the choice would be limited to either black over red or white over red. Commissioner Longo stated that a vote was never taken. Commissioner Cafazzo then made a motion that the Fire Chief establishes a Standard Operating Guideline in which the color scheme for all future apparatus purchased be limited to either black over red or white over red. Commissioner Dutton seconded the motion. Discussion centered on standardization and that for the Department to establish a set color standard for the existing fleet would take several years to accomplish. Commissioner Dutton stated that it would be next to impossible to standardize, and that it was the function of the apparatus that was most important. Commissioner Longo called for a vote on the motion. The motion passed 4 to 2 with Commissioners Cafazzo, Dutton, Higgins and Spencer voting in favor of the Fire Chief establishing a Standard Operating Guideline with respect to the color scheme of future apparatus purchased, with Commissioners Longo and Quagliaroli voting against.

New Business:

- Chief Thurz inquired about the Commissions intent in planning and coordinating the upcoming Awards Dinner. The Commission deferred the planning to the Chief with Commissioners offering to assist if needed.

Correspondences:

- None

Approval of Minutes: A motion to approve the minutes from the December 6, 2018 meeting was made by Commissioner Dutton, and seconded by Commissioner Higgins. Commissioner Dutton noted that there was a typo on Page 2, the word “future” should be change to “further” regarding Chief Thurz’s comment that ‘there is no guideline or policy that dictates the color of the apparatus.’ The motion passed unanimously.

Next Regular Meeting: The next scheduled regular meeting will be held on February 7, 2019 at Company 1, 2825 Main Street, 6:30 PM.

Meeting Adjourned: Commissioner Dutton and made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which Commissioner Longo seconded and approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:08 PM.



Deborah Torres
Recording Secretary

- c: Fire Commission (6)
Fire Chiefs (3)
Fire Captains (4)
Richard J. Johnson, Town Manager
Chris Siwy, Fire Marshal
Mary Visone, Purchasing Agent
Robert DiBella, Civil Preparedness