

Board of Fire Commissioners

**SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES**

February 6, 2020

Note: The Special Meeting was due to a change in location, as Station 1 had on-going renovation work being completed. The Special Meeting was held at Station 3.

Present: Commissioner Charles Longo  
Commissioner Gilbert Spencer  
Commissioner Richard Quagliaroli  
Commissioner James Dutton  
Commissioner Arnold Higgins

Others: Chief Michael Thurz  
Assistant Chief David Thurz  
Deputy Chief Bruce Motowidlak  
Deputy Chief Bernard Dennler Jr.

Absent: Commissioner John Cafazzo

Commissioner Longo called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM

**Approval of Minutes:** Commissioner Longo asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the January meeting. A motion was made by Commissioner Spencer and seconded by Commissioner Dutton. The motion passed unanimously.

**Public Comment:** None

**Chief's Report:**

Chief Thurz reported on the following:

- The Town Manager has presented a proposal to enhance the tax abatement program to the Town Council. Legislation was passed last year at the State Capitol to increase the abatement amount from \$1,000.00 to \$1,500.00, with an additional increase to \$2,000.00 after FY'21. While the Town is not obligated to increase the current abatement amount, the Town Council appears to be in favor of the proposal. The Chief stated that a public hearing would need to be scheduled to discuss the changes to the tax abatement program. If approved, the increase would incorporate both current and retired members. The increase would remain as a tiered structure. Commissioner Dutton inquired if the Chief would inform the members about the public hearing as it relates to the Town's annual budget. Chief Thurz replied that he did not feel it was necessary to endorse the notion of the Department attending the Town's annual budget meeting. However, stated that any individual could attend the public hearing so long as they were not there representing the Fire Department.
- The Capital Improvement Program workshop was held on January 23, 2020. The Department's request was for \$120,000 to replace 120 self-contained breathing apparatus bottles and an additional \$75,000 for on-going station renovations was recommended to

the Town Council and Board of Finance. The 120 self-contained breathing apparatus bottles will need to be replaced in December 2020, as they will no longer be serviceable by the vendor. The on-going renovation work is to continue to bring the fire stations into compliance with ADA and current building code requirements. The Chief will be attending a separate workshop on February 25<sup>th</sup> to discuss next year's operating budget. Final approval of next year's budget will not occur until the end of March at the Town Council's scheduled meeting.

- Glastonbury Partners in Planting (GPIP) has obtained a grant to improve the north end of town, which includes Station 1. The Chief, Deputy Chief Motowidlak, Captain Cody, along with Greg Foran from Parks and Recreation have been meeting with GPIP to discuss their proposal. GPIP hopes to begin work in the spring.
- Review of Department's monthly expenditures.

### **Old Business:**

- Renovation updates:
  - Fire Station 1 – new kitchen cabinets were installed. There remains a few follow up items with the cabinet installer. The women's bathroom renovations are continuing on schedule, and once completed work will begin on the men's bathroom.
  - Fire Station 2 – the renovation of the men's room continues. The longest lead-time remains the delivery of the lockers and bathroom sink. The bathroom will hopefully be functional within the next couple of weeks with completion by the end of February. A contractor has been engaged to look into installing a chair lift to the second floor. The sheetrock ceilings in the four rooms off the apparatus bay are scheduled to be repaired by the end of the month. Facilities staff will be completing the necessary ceiling work. There are two storage pods located behind Station 2 that are being used to store the Department's equipment and tools.
  - Fire Stations 3 and 4 – a meeting with the architect was held on February 4, 2020 to begin preliminary reviews of the plans for those two buildings.
- New Fire Engine update
  - The body is now on the vehicle's chassis. Capt. Cofiell, Lt. Ruggiero, and FF Kravontka will be flying to the factory on February 23<sup>rd</sup> until the 25<sup>th</sup> to inspect the engine. The engine, when completed, will be driven from the factory in Wisconsin to the dealer's facility in Cheshire for some final details. The engine should arrive in Glastonbury by the end of March, beginning of April. Commissioner Dutton inquired when the current Engine 41 will be taken out of service. Chief Thurz stated that there is no specific date, as there will need to be training on the new engine, as well as the switching over of equipment. Perhaps by Memorial Day the new engine could be placed into service.
- The FEMA grant application period opened on February 3<sup>rd</sup> and will run to March 13<sup>th</sup>. The Department will be reapplying to replace its current inventory of self-contained breathing apparatus.

**Committee Reports:**

- Commissioner Quagliaroli discussed that the Strategic Planning Committee met on Thursday January 9, 2020. The discussion centered on station renovation and upgrades. Each Captain had the opportunity to prioritize the improvements necessary for their station. The next meeting will be February 20, 2020.

**New Business:**

- Commissioner Dutton mentioned that the announcement for the Fire Commission meeting was not on the nightly tone test and asked that future meetings be announced.
- Commissioner Dutton inquired about members being told that they were not allowed to respond to other company incidents after certain hours. Chief Thurz responded that the Department implemented an "All Call" policy several years ago. The "All Call" permits members to respond to any incident Monday through Friday between the hours of 7 AM and 5 PM. After those hours members are not to respond to incidents outside their response district unless they are either near the assigned fire station or within a mile of the reported incident. Recently it was observed that there have been some members responding to incidents after hours when their assigned company was not dispatched. This is not only a form of free-lancing, but also could create a personnel shortage if another call was received in another district. The Chief sent a message to the Department that highlighted the "All Call" guideline, and what was acceptable and not.

**Correspondences:**

- None

**Next Regular Meeting:** March 5, 2020 at Company 1, 2825 Main Street, 6:30 PM.

**Meeting Adjourned:** Commissioner Dutton made a motion to adjourn, which Commissioner Higgins seconded and approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 PM.



Deborah Torres  
Recording Secretary

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