

Board of Fire Commissioners

**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

October 1, 2020

**Present:**

**In Person:**

Commissioner Charles Longo  
Commissioner Arnold Higgins  
Commissioner Richard Quagliaroli

**By Zoom:**

Commissioner James Dutton  
Commissioner Gilbert Spencer  
Commissioner John Cafazzo

**Others:**

**In Person:**

Chief Michael Thurz  
Assistant Chief David Thurz  
Deputy Chief Bruce Motowidlak

**By Zoom:**

Town of Glastonbury's Information Technology Manager Bobby Ashton

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 March meeting. Commissioner Quagliaroli made a motion to accept the minutes from the March meeting, which Commissioner Higgins seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**Public Comment:** None

**Chief's Report:**

Chief Thurz reported on the following:

**Coronavirus:**

- The Town implemented Coronavirus protocol on March 13, 2020. Based on the uncertainty surrounding the virus a number of Department Directives were implement. The Chief issued daily operation briefings to Department members by email through May 14, 2020. Coronavirus also resulted in the need to cancel all in-person training, and switch to on-line training through programs offered by CIRMA and the Department's supplemental insurance provider ESIP.
- The Department purchased N95 masks, which will require all members to be fit tested annually. The Department purchased an N95 fit testing kit, which will become part of the annual self-contained breathing apparatus fit testing. The Department also purchased

additional regulators for the fit testing machine to ensure proper disinfecting in between use by the members.

- In-person training resumed in small “cohort” groups in May, with full company-level training taking place back in July, while following social distancing protocol.

#### **New Fire Engine:**

- During the pandemic, placed into service was the new Engine 41. It was unfortunate that given the pandemic, and the need to adhere to social distancing protocols, that not all the members could actively participate in preparing the engine for service. Firefighter Michael Kravontka oversaw the installation of the equipment and getting the truck ready for service.

#### **Station Renovations:**

- Station 1’s improvements:
  - The restrooms and kitchen projects are now completed. Glastonbury Partners in Planting, through a grant from the Hartford Foundation of Public Giving has landscaped portions of the property, including the front and side of the building. Work that still needs to be completed includes a new countertop in the communication’s room, installation of energy efficient window panes for the overhead doors, the façade, eyewash station and storage shed.
- Station 2’s improvements
  - The men’s restroom project is now completed. Work that still needs to be complete includes energy efficient windows in the lower level, a new countertop in the communication’s room, sink in the kitchen, replace the floor on the second floor, eye wash station, a chairlift to the second floor, women’s room and concrete and door jamb repairs.
- Stations 3 and 4
  - The Captains have reviewed the architectural drawings and the project is now out for pricing by the contractor. The contractor will be the same who completed the work at Stations 1 and 2. A start date has not be established as of yet.

#### **Incidents:**

- Fire related incidents have been down during the coronavirus, with the exception of the August 4, 2020 storm. The storm resulted in approximately 125 incidents.
- The Department did have four-low frequency/high-risk events during a two-week period at Cotton Hollow, which ultimately resulted in the town closing the park. Those events also resulted in the need to look at some safety concerns. A committee made up of members from Stations 2 and 3 was established to look into the concerns. Rope rescue technicians from Eastern Connecticut Fire School have also reviewed our rope rescue equipment and made recommendations in ways to improve how we operate. At the conclusion of the training, the department will implement a Standard Operating Guideline(s).

**Other Items:**

- SCBA Grant
  - It does not appear that the Department will receive a grant through FEMA's Assistance to Fire Act Grant, which would have replaced the Department's existing self-contained breathing apparatus. While the Department has not received its turn-down letter, Chief Thurz will be contacting FEMA once it is to see why we did not receive a grant. Given that the Department still needs to replace 120 air cylinders by year-end, the Chief will also look at other alternatives, such as purchasing previous-owned cylinders from other fire departments that are still in compliance. The thought process behind this idea would be to give the Department a few more years to secure appropriate funding to replace the entire self-contained breathing apparatus inventory. The Chief also noted concerns about the current self-contained breathing apparatus and future service needs. As newer versions of self-contained breathing apparatus are developed and introduced, parts for the older models may soon become obsolete.

Commissioners Longo and Quagliaroli discussed the option of purchasing new self-contained breathing apparatus in phases to eliminate having to stay with the current vendor. The Chief noted that this would not be an ideal situation if the Department were to switch to a different manufacturer in stages. This would require additional fit testing of all members, additional training and concerns of compatibility. Furthermore, the NFPA standard will be changing within the next two years (2023), and phasing in the replacement self-contained breathing apparatus now may not be in the best interest of the department. Commissioner Cafazzo recommended not phasing in a replacement program for a number of reasons; including compatibility, fit testing, training and overall firefighter safety. He did suggest that the department phase in the purchase of replacement bottles going forward. Commissioner Spencer suggested spreading the cost over a couple of years to purchase the new self-contained breathing apparatus. Commissioner Dutton inquired if the standards changing would have any impact on the cylinders not being compatible with the frames. Commissioner Dutton also concurred with Commissioner Cafazzo's comments about not phasing in a replacement program.

Chief Thurz will continue pursuing the purchase of previously owned air cylinder to get through the next couple of years. Chief Thurz will also make the replacement of the Department's existing inventory of self-contained breathing apparatus as a priority under next year's Capital Improvement Program.

- Air Bag Update
  - The committee has met with the three vendors to review the different options available to the Department. The committee has ultimately decided to move forward with Paratech. Through appropriations in this year's Capital Outlay, the Department will purchase the air bags. The anticipated delivery of the new air bags is six to nine months. Commissioner Longo inquired about the life expectancy of the air bags. Deputy Chief Motowidlak noted that the current standard is 15 years.

- Dive Team
  - Over the summer, some Department members participated in two dive rescue drills with the Portland Fire Department. The training was more of a familiarization as to what is involved in setting up for a dive rescue scenario. It also provided the Portland divers with an opportunity to review of the Department's new boat. There was some interest among Department members to possibly collaborating with Portland Fire's Dive Team. However, the Department has not committed any financial investment into this initiative. Given the increased activity along the Connecticut River, and at the Glastonbury Boathouse the training was beneficial.
- US Coast Guard Training
  - The Department conducted a search and rescue training session with the United States Coast Guard on August 6, 2020. In addition, Rocky Hill Fire participated in the training, which was held at the Glastonbury Boathouse
- The Town has a changed its worker's compensation carrier from CIRMA to Travelers Insurance.
- The locks and keys at all fire stations were changed. The Department will be working with Facilities to continue to enhance overall security of all fire stations.
- Hose, Pump and Ladder testing is schedule for the week of October 19, 2020.
- During the last week of August, the Department conducted a mini training academy for the Fire Cadets. Eight Fire Cadets participated in the training.
- The first installment of the unit payout will take place in October.
- There are currently six members participating in the Q driver's training program. Deputy Chief Dennler is overseeing the training, and the reason why he was absent from this evening's meeting. The candidates will be testing on October 18, 2020
- The Recruitment committee has on-boarded four new candidates, and will be interviewing four additional applicants on October 28, 2020.
- The implementation of ten additional iPads has begun. The iPads will be installed into the apparatus.
- Assistant Chief Thurz is working with Dispatch on some on-going NexGen matters, which includes inconsistent incident times and issues with certain streets still not be coded correctly. The implementation of the iPads in the apparatus may also assist in correcting some of these inaccuracies.
- The Eagle Scout project at the Fire Training Facility has started. The footings for the pavilion have been installed with the assistance from Lieutenant Feldman. The hope is to have the project completed by mid-November. About two-thirds of the funding for the project will come from the donations received in memory of Assistant Chief Pagliughi. Incorporated into the project will be a flagpole and a small memorial.

- Capital Improvement and Capital Outlay planning will be starting in October. Chief Thurz will be working on and putting together the budget request. The items to be incorporated into the Capital Improvement Program will be based on the recommendations of the Strategic Planning Group, which includes the Chiefs, Captains and Commissioners Quagliaroli and Spencer. In addition, the Chief will look to install gear washers and dryers at Stations 2 and 4 and continued personal protective equipment replacement.
- In July, the Strategic Planning Committee, as well as members of Stations 1 and 3 had the opportunity to review three Rescue/Pumpers. E-One provided one vehicle, while Rosenbauer provided two demo vehicles.
- In July, Lieutenant Richard Anderson announced his resigned from the Department and moved to Florida. The Chief's Office posted the vacant position and job description notice on August 27, 2020 in each fire station, with a closing date of October 15, 2020. Commissioner Quagliaroli noted that a candidate who expresses an interest in a vacant position should not serve in an "acting" capacity. He felt it gave an unfair advantage. He would rather see someone who has no interest in the position fill in in an acting capacity. Chief Thurz noted that it had been a standard practice in the Department to have an Engineer fill a vacant Lieutenant position. However, given Commissioner Quagliaroli's concern, an alternative scenario will be considered in the future when filling a permanent vacant position with an "acting" officer.
- The Department will explore the need to establish a Peer Support Team based on a new State Statue as part of the most recent PTSD legislation. Commissioner Longo inquired if this is something that the Town is able to assist with implementing through their Employee Assistance Program. Chief Thurz noted that it was more peer support conducted by other firefighters. However, he plans to address the matter with the Town Manager.
- Chief Thurz recommended that the Department develop a Health and Safety Committee. The chair of the committee should be someone whose primary focus is on all health and safety related matters. This remains a work in progress and a future initiative.
- Per Diem Program update
  - After four years of being in existence, there has been an increase in the number of days in which there is no one working per diem during the week. Currently there are 19 members eligible to participate in the program.

#### **Committee Reports:**

- Strategic Planning group has not met since February. Chief Thurz will look at re-establishing the monthly meetings in the coming weeks.

#### **Old Business:**

- Commissioner Spencer wanted to thank those that helped clean up the Fire Training Facility.

**New Business:**

- None

**Correspondences:**

- None

**Next Regular Meeting:** November 5, 2020, 6:30 PM via Zoom.

**Meeting Adjourned:** Commissioner Cafazzo made a motion to adjourn, which Commissioner Quagliaroli seconded and approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:00 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