

Board of Fire Commissioners  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

May 6, 2021

**Present:** Commissioner Quagliaroli, Commissioner Cafazzo, Commissioner Dutton and Commissioner Higgins in person.

**Note:** Commissioner Longo arrived at approximately 6:42 PM

**By Zoom:** Commissioner Spencer and Jonathan Constant with Information Technology

**Others:** Chief Michael Thurz, Assistant Chief David Thurz, Deputy Chief Motowidlak and Deputy Chief Bernard Dennler

Commissioner Quagliaroli called the meeting to order at 6:34 PM

**Approval of Minutes:** Commissioner Quagliaroli asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the April 1, 2021 meeting. Commissioner Spencer made the motion to accept with Commissioner Cafazzo seconding the motion. The motion passed unanimously, with Commissioner Dutton abstained, as he was not in attendance at the meeting.

**Public Comment:** None

**Chief's Report:** Chief Thurz reported the following:

- The second installment of unit and stipend payouts occurred in April. Total units for the six-month period was 9,194, which equates to \$89,641.50. The remaining balance in the Unit Account was \$1,017. The unit payout was higher than normal years due to Storm Isaias in 2020. During the one-week period in August, the Department responded to 155 incidents. The individual officers and technicians stipends for the six-month period was \$40,247.44.
- Asst. Chief Thurz, Deputy Chief Dennler and Captain Yacka continue to work on putting together the logistics for the "Man vs Machine" training course that will take place in June. The course will feature both a lecture and hands on training over a two-day period.
- The Department held a lecture entitled "Critical Thinking for the Fire Officer" on May 3, 2021 at the Riverfront Community Center. Approximately 30 members were attendance. The presenter was Deputy Chief (Ret.) Leigh Shapiro, who was with the Hartford Fire Department.
- On May 2, 2021, a former member made an inappropriate comment regarding Naloxone (Narcan), which resulted in negative attention both in the media and on social media for the Department. The individual, who was not representing the Department in any official capacity, resigned on May 4, 2021. The Department issued a press release to the media on May 5, 2021 regarding the comment. As a personnel matter, the situation was addressed in accordance to the Department's By-Laws and Standard Operating Guidelines.

Going forward the Department will be working to ensure that all members understand the sensitivity surrounding the comment, and making sure that appropriate training is in place.

- **Review of monthly operating expenses:**

Commissioner Longo inquired about the status of a transmission in one of the Department's brush trucks. Chief Thurz advised that Vehicle Maintenance was replacing the transmission in Company 4's brush truck. The Fleet Superintendent was able to locate a previously used transmission at minimal cost. Vehicle Maintenance staff will be performing the installation. The Fleet Superintendent felt it was cost effective to install a previously used transmission, as there is currently no provision to replace the vehicle. Commissioner Longo noted that at a previous meeting there was discussion not to invest any additional funds into the brush trucks. He inquired if there was a dollar cap assigned to the vehicle. Chief Thurz acknowledge the need to look at alternatives in the future to the Department's fleet of brush trucks, but in speaking with the Fleet Superintendent, he felt it was a cost effective investment, and would extend this particular vehicle's usefulness.

**Old Business:**

- Commissioner Longo asked for an update on the FEMA grant previously submitted. Chief Thurz advised he has not received any update from FEMA. Chief Thurz would advise once he heard something from FEMA.
- Commissioner Longo asked if there was any progress in establishing a Truck Committee, and if the Strategic Planning Committee would be part of the committee. Chief Thurz advised that a committee still needs to be established, but both Captain Cody and Captain Kessler have been discussing some ideas.
- Commissioner Longo inquired on the status of the per diem program, and if the days during the week were still being filled, or was there a lack of participation. Chief Thurz noted that there might be some struggles in June, as one member who has been working regularly will be moving on to full time employment. Since the inception of the program, over five years ago there may have been only 15 days that per diem members were not available.
- Commissioner Longo asked if there were any updates on the building renovations. Chief Thurz noted that he would be scheduling a meeting next week with Building Superintendent David Sacchitella to get a progress update.

**Committee Report:**

- Commissioner Quagliaroli provided an overview of the latest strategic committee meeting, held on April 19, 2021. The committee is reviewing job descriptions for the various positions within the department, which continues to be an ongoing process. Commissioner Cafazzo asked for an overall status report on the committee's work to date. Chief Thurz noted he would provide each Commissioner with a written overview after the meeting.

**New Business:**

- None

**Correspondences:**

- Commissioner Cafazzo inquired as to the status of the letter to the Town Council regarding the Fire Chief's position. Commissioner Longo replied that a letter had been already sent.

**Next Regular Meeting:** June 3, 2021, at Company 1, 2825 Main Street, 6:30 PM.

**Meeting Adjourned:** Commissioner Cafazzo made a motion to adjourn, which Commissioner Longo seconded and approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:01 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