

Board of Fire Commissioners
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

June 2, 2022

- Present:** Commissioner Cafazzo, Commissioner Cofiell, Commissioner Dutton and Commissioner Quagliaroli
- Others:** Chief Michael Thurz, Assistant Chief David Thurz, Deputy Chief Motowidlak and Deputy Chief Dennler
- Absent:** Commissioner Cavanaugh and Commissioner Longo

Commissioner Dutton called the meeting to order at 6:31 PM

Approval of Minutes: Approval of May's minutes tabled as there were not enough members present to vote, and that Commissioner Dutton was not in attendance for that meeting.

Public Comment: None

Chief's Report:

Chief Thurz reported the following:

- Request for Proposal for the new Rescue/Pumpers is in its final draft stage. The next step will be to submit to the Purchasing Agent for review.
- The committee for a new records management system met with another vendor on May 26th. This is the third vendor that the committee has reviewed. The intent is to make a final recommendation within the next 30 to 60 days.
- Commissioner Cofiell inquired earlier in the week about the proposed apartment project for 1199 Manchester Road. Chief Thurz informed Commissioner Cofiell that to date only a preliminary site assessment, in conjunction with the Fire Marshal's Office was completed. Some initial comments were provide to the developer in an administrative review meeting, but the project is still working its way through the planning and zoning process. From a life safety and fire prospective, the building will feature fire sprinklers.
- At the May meeting, Commissioner Longo inquired about the cost difference between a commercial and custom cab and chassis. While Commissioner Longo was not present, Chief Thurz provided the commission with a brief synopsis of the information he was able to obtain from various vendors.
 - While a commercial cab and chassis is less expensive than a custom, on average 600 (12%) of the 5,000 fire apparatus built each year are on a commercial chassis. The commercial cab market is experiencing at least a two-year delay, where custom cab delivery is slightly less, with material already on hand. A commercial chassis is not practical for the proposed apparatus based on a longer wheelbase between 24" and 30" and less maneuverable.

Furthermore, commercial chassis do not offer the same safety features found in a custom vehicle. Commercial cabs do not offer additional air bags (side impact or knee) or roll over protection. Additional disadvantages include divided responsibilities between warranties. A commercial cab and chassis is with one manufacturer, while the body is with another. Commercial cab and chassis do not offer the same corrosion protection found in custom chassis. The wiring and load management system found in a commercial cab is different, where as a custom cab is designed to mate with the fire apparatus body and pump assembly. Lastly, there are variation in material thickness in a commercial cab and chassis, while a custom vehicle offers double or triple wall construction.

- Commissioner Quagliaroli inquired if there was a significant cost savings going with a commercial truck. Chief Thurz replied there could be the potential to save up to \$100K. However, purchasing a commercial cab means modifications to the cabs interior to accommodate the fire service, along with the lack of several safety features and different warranty structures.
- Commissioner Dutton asked if a mechanic still needed to be Emergency Vehicle Technician certified if built on a commercial cab and chassis. Chief Thurz replied it did not matter if a commercial or custom chassis it's a fire apparatus, which dictates certification requirements. Chief Thurz also noted that he spoke with a representative from Marion Body Works regarding the level of raw material on hand. Marion stated that their cab and chassis manufacturer has a sufficient supply on hand, and that their focus is to build just fire apparatus. So with sufficient materials on hand, and the enhance safety features offered with a custom cab it only benefits the department and its members.
- Commissioner Dutton asked if the commission would have an opportunity to review the purchase choice before it is ordered. Chief Thurz said the goal is to get the Request for Proposal completed and advertised no later than this month, with proposals due by mid-August and vendor interviews by the apparatus committee.
- Commissioner Quagliaroli inquired if there was consensus of the type of truck to be purchased, or was it vastly different. Deputy Chief Motowidlak responded that members from both Stations 1 and 3 were on the same page of what they felt would best serve the department. Deputy Chief Dennler commented that both Captains and their committee members did a great job on agreeing what would be the best choice for their respective stations. They were very methodical for what their needs were for the apparatus.
- Review of operating expenses
- Chief Thurz advised of a \$10K transfer from the Unit Wage account to the Operating account. The transfer was to purchase new raincoats for the membership. Commissioner Cafazzo questioned if the proposed purchase was a good way to spend the additional funds. Chief Thurz replied that it was something that the Strategic Committee came up with as a retention tool for the membership. The last time the Department purchased raincoats was over 15 years ago. Commissioner Cafazzo was concerned the members would use the

raincoats instead of their structural personal protective equipment. Commissioner Quagliaroli noted that was not the intent, but would be utilized during calls for service, e.g. water in the basement. Commissioner Cofell asked if new recruits would be receiving a raincoat with their personal protective gear as well. Chief Thurz replied after the probationary period.

- Chief Thurz provided Commission members with a copy of next fiscal year's budget. Commissioner Dutton asked if there was an inflationary factor used in the overall budget. Chief Thurz replied the budget increased around two percent. Commissioner Cofell inquired about the staff vehicle replacement. Chief Thurz replied it was the Chief's vehicle based on its high mileage, and objective to go with a hybrid vehicle. Commissioner Cofell also questioned about the accountability system. Chief Thurz advised it was part of the MSA self-contained breathing apparatus program. Chief Thurz also noted that he applied for a FEMA grant to offset the cost for the system, as well as new four and five gas meters.

Old Business:

- None

New Business:

- None

Committee Report:

- Commissioner Quagliaroli reported that the committee met and discussed a new Standard Operating Guideline for the per diem position, as well as a draft Standard Operating Guideline for electric/hybrid car fires. The committee also revisited the discussion on recruitment and retention of members. Commissioner Quagliaroli urged others if they had ideas on the matter to pass them along as the committee was at a loss for new ideas. This dovetailed into the purchase of the rain jackets to help with retention.
- Commissioner Quagliaroli also commented that there was a very short discussion that will be brought forward next on daytime coverage. Currently there are only three people that can be counted on consistently during the day, that being the Chief and two Per Diem members when they are on. The future of the department will be one of the next big things for the Fire Commission to consider as it relates to daytime coverage. He noted over the past couple of months there were occasions when he was the only responder from his company, and that coverage can be thin during the day.

Next Regular Meeting: July 7, 2022, at Company 1, 2825 Main Street, 6:30 PM.

Meeting Adjourned: Commissioner Cafazzo made a motion to adjourn, which Commissioner Cofell seconded and approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:06 PM.

Deborah Torres

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