

Board of Fire Commissioners
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

August 4, 2022

Present: Commissioner Longo, Commissioner Dutton, Commissioner Quagliaroli,
Commissioner Cavanaugh and Commissioner Cofield

Others: Assistant Chief David Thurz, Deputy Chief Motowidlak and Deputy Chief
Dennler

Absent: Commissioner Cafazzo and Chief Michael Thurz

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

Approval of Minutes:

- Commissioner Longo asked for approval of the June's meeting minutes. However, because Commissioners Longo and Cavanaugh were not present at that meeting and Commissioner Cafazzo was absent the minutes were tabled.
- Commissioner Cofield made a motion to accept the minutes from the July 7, 2022 meeting. Commissioner Dutton stated that he wanted to make a couple of comments. Commissioner Dutton would be voting against adopting the minutes as he felt they were incredibly embellished. When he read them there were things not mentioned at the meeting and a lot of stuff added to the minutes. He found the minutes to be unacceptable. Minutes are not supposed to be embellish for any reason and would be voting against adopting them. Commissioner Dutton further stated that he would be doing some further investigating by reviewing the tape recording of the minutes. If the minutes were embellished he has a serious problem with it.
- Commissioner Longo noted that the minutes could still be voted to accept or not, but Commissioner Dutton has stated his position. Commissioner Longo noted that Commissioner Dutton raised some valid points and asked other Commissioners their thoughts whether to pursue discussion or table until some of the queries were answered. Commissioner Quagliaroli asked Commissioner Dutton specifically what he felt was embellished? Commissioner Dutton stated that he didn't know, but felt that the minutes seem to be much more detailed than what was ever discussed at the July meeting. He would like to listen to the tape recording and compare them to the minutes, but felt they were embellished and an unacceptable practice. Commissioner Dutton said he may be wrong, but wanted to listen to the tape recording and if they accurately reflect what was said at the meeting he would retract his decision and approve them at the next meeting. The minutes as presented did not sit well with him. He felt there was a lot of information added that was not said verbally at the meeting, and that is his concern.
- Commissioner Longo stated that in an effort for clarity and fairness felt it would be best to table the minutes to allow Commissioner Dutton time to satisfy his questions. Commissioner Longo asked that the motion be withdrawn and a new motion made to table the minutes until the next meeting. Commissioner Cofield withdrew his motion and made a new motion to table the minutes from the July meeting for further investigation due to

Commissioner Dutton's concerns. Commissioner Longo seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment: None

Chief's Report:

Due to Chief Thurz being on vacation, Assistant Chief David Thurz reported the following:

- The Chief will be out of state August 16th and 17th.
- Captain Ruggiero has recommended Firefighter Connor Crouse to be accepted as a permanent member of Station 4. Commissioner Cavanaugh made a motion to accept with Commissioner Dutton seconding the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- Annual Hurst tool inspection was completed in July. The Department will need to look at converting to all e-draulic tools in the near future as Hurst is winding down its support of hydraulic rescue tools. Some of the equipment that the Department maintains is no longer being supported by the manufacturer.
- Chief Thurz and Captain Cody had a kick off meeting with First Due as it relates to converting the Department's records management system from Firehouse.
- Building project updates included:
 - Working with Overhead Door on getting quotes for the doors at Station 1.
 - Station 2's generator has been ordered with the bid awarded to Electrical Energy Systems. There is no date on delivery.
 - Commissioner Longo inquired how the decision was made to go with First Due, was it a bid process or were other vendors entertained? Assistant Chief Thurz noted that three vendors were interviewed and that First Due was the vendor that met the Department's needs the best. The committee consisted of representation from the Chief's office along with each station.
 - Facilities is working with Purchasing on issuing an invitation to bid on the improvements to Station 3 and 4.
 - Facilities is in the process of getting quotes to paint the interior at Stations 3 and 4.
 - Facilities is in the process of getting quotes to replace the door jams at Stations 3 and 4. Commissioner Longo asked if this was a separate project from the remodel? Assistant Chief Thurz replied that it was being treated as a separate project.
- At the request of Commissioner Dutton, Assistant Chief Thurz provided a handout on the breakdown of vehicle expenses through May 2022. Vehicle Maintenance was still working on closing out June's expenses. As noted last month, Engine 61 had the largest expenditures due to its age and repairs that were required.

- Review of operating expenses.
- Commissioner Dutton inquired about the MSA expenditures. Assistant Chief Thurz explained that it was the new LUNAR accountability system, which is being incorporated with the self-contained breathing apparatus to track the firefighters for safety. The tracking is monitored with an iPad at the command post. An Incident Commander can monitor air management of a firefighter, as well as track if a member is in distress and their location.

Old Business:

- Commissioner Longo spoke with Chief Thurz last week and reported that there was nothing specific under old business. Commissioner Longo did inquire about retention and recruitment, which Chief Thurz noted that it would come up under Committee Reports.

New Business:

- Commissioner Longo stated at last month's meeting Commissioners were asked to think about retention and recruitment, as well as the discussion on the trucks. Assistant Chief Thurz said that the Request for Proposal are out and due back on August 23rd.
- Commissioner Dutton asked if the exhaust system is mandated, or was it just an idea? Assistant Chief Thurz replied that it is not mandated at this time but not far from it. Commissioner Dutton asked how far? Assistant Chief Thurz replied that he cannot say when it would be mandated but it is for the health and safety of the firefighters. It is cancer prevention and it is a federal grant. Commissioner Dutton questioned if the fire trucks are even in the building that long when they start up. Assistant Chief Thurz said that the system activates with the initial turn on of the apparatus, and quite honestly if the stations incorporate sleeping quarters in the future they are going to be needed. Deputy Chief Dennler mentioned about the carbon that ends up on the walls and ceilings. Commissioner Cofiell mentioned that this has been a discussion for over the last ten years, if not longer. Commissioner Quagliaroli noted that its being funded outside the town's budget. Commissioner Dutton felt it appeared to be a complicated system. Assistant Chief Thurz stated that it is easy to use. Deputy Chief Dennler commented that cancer is one of the primary health hazards of today's firefighters. Assistant Chief Thurz mentioned that it's an improvement, with a focus on members safety.

Committee Report:

- Commissioner Quagliaroli reported that the committee met and continued the discussion on recruitment and retention of members. Chief Thurz has met with several surrounding towns who are having the same problems to see if they had any ideas on how to get more recruits. There was discussion on possibly hiring a consultant to do some media and public relations work between all the towns.
- Commissioner Dutton noted that he had a client that does market research and while not his field he was going to try to find a company or an individual that might be able to help with the issue.
- Commissioner Quagliaroli noted that if anyone has any ideas to please bring them forward. The problem is not unique to just one town, all the towns are experiencing the same problem.

- Commissioner Dutton noted that the Commission needed to start contemplating how we would implement a system with paid staff. He doesn't want to get to a point where we can't provide the service anymore and we need to go paid, which then creates a panic mode.
- Deputy Chief Dennler mentioned that there had been discussion about putting together a subcommittee to look into the issue further. Both Commissioners Quagliaroli and Cavanaugh agreed that it was mentioned at last month's meeting. Commissioner Dutton noted it was inevitable and that we need to start planning and get more information together for the Town Council and Town Manager.
- Commissioner Dutton said he was thinking about bike clubs, and how to entice some of them to get involved with the Fire Department from a rescue stand point. We could possibly create a rescue team for those incidents that occur in the woods.
- Deputy Chief Dennler noted that creating a subcommittee would be the best way to approach the issue. Commissioner Quagliaroli noted that it was mentioned at the last meeting, and that a subcommittee should be established to look at the fiscal impact, the timeframe and other factors and logistics. Commissioner Dutton asked if Human Resources should be involved in the discussion. Commissioner Quagliaroli felt it would be better for the subcommittee to develop a framework and then present to Human Resources for any changes or amendments.
- Commissioner Longo asked if the proposed subcommittee should get some sort of financial parameters. Commissioner Quagliaroli noted that the fiscal parameters would need to be established and to get directions from the new Town Manager. Commissioner Longo noted that there needs to be support from town administration.

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

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