

Board of Fire Commissioners
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

September 1, 2022

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

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

Absent: Commissioner Dutton

Commissioner Longo called the meeting to order at 6:33 PM.

Public Comment: None

Approval of Minutes:

- Commissioner Longo asked for approval of the June's meeting minutes. However, because Commissioner Dutton was absent, and neither Commissioners Longo nor Cavanaugh were present at that meeting the minutes were tabled.
- Chief Thurz asked the Commission if they could provide some clarity as to the level of specificity they would like to see reflected in the minutes. Chief Thurz noted that while he was not present at the August meeting, he understood there were questions about the July minutes. Chief Thurz stated that the minutes are prepared by the Administrative Assistant and then reviewed by him to ensure accuracy after listening to the meeting's tape.

Chief Thurz stated that July's minutes were lengthy because the discussions centered around the purchase of two apparatus for \$1.6 million, and a potential change in the Department's culture as it relates to personnel. The minutes were in depth because both items reflect significant items that have an impact on the Department.

- Commissioner Cofield made a motion to accept the minutes of the July 7, 2022 meeting, which was seconded by Commissioner Quagliaroli. Commissioners Cofield and Quagliaroli both noted that neither of them had any problem with the minutes. Motion to accept the July minutes was approved with an abstention from Commissioner Cafazzo.
- Commissioner Quagliaroli made a motion to accept the minutes from the August 4, 2022 meeting, which was seconded by Commissioner Cavanaugh. Motion to accept the August minutes was approved with an abstention from Commissioner Cafazzo.
- Chief Thurz inquired as to the level of detail the Commission would like to see in the minutes of future meetings. Chief Thurz noted that the Administrative Assistant prepares the framework of the minutes based on the recording of the meetings. The Chief then reviews the written minutes to make sure that they provide sufficient detail. Commissioner Longo felt that the level of detail to date was sufficient. Commissioner Cafazzo noted that the minutes should be a summary so a layperson can understand what was discussed. Chief Thurz affirmed that the minutes are essentially a summary, but on larger topics more

detail is provided because of their significance. Commissioner Quagliaroli felt that up until July the level of detail was never an issue. He felt that the level of detail should not change.

- Chief Thurz wanted to clarify some items that were raised at the previous month's meeting during his absence. Those items included:
 - The expenditure to repair the Hurst cutters was for the e-draulic unit at Station 4 and not a hydraulic unit.
 - Under Vehicle Maintenance expenditures, in particular "All Other Categories" this was a catch all for expenditures referenced as Cab and instrument, Electrical, Accessories and Miscellaneous Repairs.
 - Of the \$3.2K under Boats and Trailers Miscellaneous, \$2.5K reflected the rub rail repair to Marine 2.
 - The \$5.4K in the "All Other Categories" for Engine 32 reflected electrical, accessories, cabs and instrument and miscellaneous repairs.
 - Of the \$7.5K under "All Other Categories" for Engine 61, \$7.2K was related to the radiator repair and oil leak.
 - The exhaust source capturing system currently being installed is being funded by the town under Capital Improvement Project. There was \$195K allocated for this project, of which \$150K will be reimbursed by FEMA once the project is completed.

Chief's Report:

Chief Thurz reported the following:

- Spoke with Commissioner Cofiell off line about additional incentives such as free passes to the transfer station and town pools. Chief Thurz is still researching the topic and would like to solicit feedback from the other members of the Strategic Planning Committee at its next meeting on September 19th.
- Request for Proposals for the apparatus were received on August 23rd. There were seven proposals submitted by six vendors, with one vendor submitting two proposals. The evaluation committee consists of Deputy Chiefs Motowidlak and Dennler, Captains Cody and Kessler, as well as an outside fire service member, who is past Colchester Fire Chief Robert Brown. The evaluation committee is now in the process of scoring the proposals. The committee is scheduled to complete their scoring by next Wednesday (9/7/22). Based on the scores a short list of vendors will be determined and invited to present their proposals to the evaluation committee. Chief Thurz noted that he was not at liberty to discuss price, but did acknowledge proposals were submitted by Emergency One, KME, Marion, Pierce, Smeal and Sutphen.

- Annual hose, pump and ladder testing was recently completed. Ladder 15 failed its drift test, which will require repair to the hydraulic cylinders on the extension fly. The part to fix the hydraulic cylinder will take three to four weeks to be delivered. All of the pumps passed and less than 400 feet of 5" hose failed.
- There was no building update to report this month.
- On August 29th Chief Thurz along with Deputy Chief Dennler, Captain Kessler and Captain Ruggiero attended a presentation on recruitment and retention at Rocky Hill Fire Headquarters. Rocky Hill Fire also invited Newington, Berlin, Cromwell and Wethersfield to the meeting. The presenter was Jason DeCremer with MissionCIT. Two takeaways from the meeting was marketing to selected age groups and engaging a prospective candidate's entire family as part of the on-boarding process.
- Department picnic to be held on Friday September 23rd at the Marine Corp League facility on Chestnut Hill Road. This event was started during Covid, and is a way to say thank you to the members for their dedication.
- Working on an opportunity to acquire a Kid's Safety Trailer from the Southington Fire Department. Southington is looking to transfer ownership of the trailer at no cost. The trailer would be used as both a fire prevention and recruitment tool at various public events.
- Commissioner Longo inquired if the problem with the ladder truck was a reoccurring issue? Chief Thurz advised that this is the first time it has happened. Deputy Chief Motowidlak advised there was previously an issue with the piston leaking on Ladder 31. Commissioner Cofiell asked if it was an issue with the ladder not being exercised enough? Chief Thurz advised that in the 21 years this is the first time the issue occurred. Furthermore, both ladder trucks are exercised at least once a week as part of the per diem program.
- Commissioner Longo inquired about the cost of the recent repairs to Engine 61, and if Engine 12 would require a significant investment as well to make it a spare, or would it be better to keep Engine 61. Chief Thurz replied it's a toss-up between both vehicles and a concern that he has as well. Another option could be to purchase a used fire engine that would be designed as a spare engine. He has had conversation with Vehicle Maintenance and something that he was going to keep an eye on. The recent expenditure on Engine 61 was to replace the original radiator that dates back to 1977. The biggest expense was the labor involved to remove the radiator, with the use of a crane.
- Review of operating expenses

Old Business:

- None

New Business:

- Commissioner Cavanaugh made a motion to establish a committee to work with Human Resources on the appointment of a new Fire Marshal. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cafazzo. Commissioner Cavanaugh referenced the Town Charter and the

Fire Commission's role in the appointment of the Fire Chief and Fire Marshal and making a recommendation to the Town Council. The motion was approved to be added to next month's agenda.

Committee Reports:

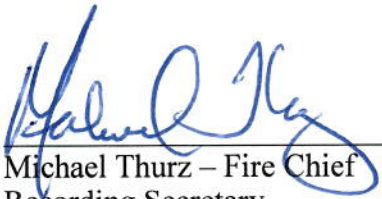
- Strategic Committee did not meet in August. The next meeting is scheduled for September 19th.
- Commissioner Longo inquired if the budget amount was disclosed in the Request for Proposal? Chief Thurz replied that it was not part of the document, but could be found by looking at the Town's approved budget. Commissioner Longo was curious about the prices received and didn't understand why it couldn't be discussed at the meeting. Chief Thurz stated that since it was a public meeting and the committee was still reviewing each proposal it was not allowed. Chief Thurz noted that there is a range of prices that the committee is working within. Once an award has been made the information will then be shared with each vendor.
- Commissioner Longo asked once the committee has completed its work if the Commission would be part of the decision-making process and able to provide any input? Chief Thurz replied that the truck committee was established to make a recommendation for what would be best for the Department. Commissioner Longo asked if they were allowed to voice concerns or options? Chief Thurz replied he would hope the Commission supports the committee's recommendation as they were the ones that put the Request for Proposal together, met with the vendors and understand the parameters they had to work with in designing the apparatus to support the Department's needs. Commissioner Longo asked the other Commissioners if this was the best way to go or consider something else like price consideration?
- Commissioner Cofiell inquired if there were options that the committee initially considered but then chose not to take and if the Commission could get an understand as to why and if it was a cost factor could it be worked into the apparatus? Chief Thurz replied there weren't many options. The options included a deck gun, a different generator system, a feature within the warning lights and a different motor. The different motor isn't being considered because it would increase the price. Chief Thurz noted that the options were not detrimental to the truck, and the committee's goal was to build a truck that was functional as a rescue pumper. Some committee members felt a larger motor might provide longer longevity, but cost was a factor. The Request for Proposal also requires that a deck gun be plumbed, but the actual device be added at a later date. The Whelen lights have a feature that can dim the intensity of the flash. There is a new hydraulic generator on the market that provides up to 3,000 watts that was included as an option along with an inverter.
- Commissioner Quagliaroli asked if the two trucks would be identical, which Chief Thurz replied they would. Deputy Chief Dennler noted that both stations did a great job in coming to consensus on designing a truck that would be best for the community and the department. Commissioner Quagliaroli asked if the bids were within budget, significantly over, or under. Chief Thurz replied that six proposal were within budget and one way out of the range. The one out of range wasn't even negotiable. Chief Thurz stated that there maybe

a need to asked for more funding given the price volatility in the market, and that the Town Manager was aware of this possible situation.

- Commissioner Cofiell inquired if the proposal that far exceeded the budget had more features than what the committee was looking for? Chief Thurz replied that it was not the case. Chief Thurz also noted that the committee initially interviewed six vendors. Of the six, only three submitted proposals with three others vendors who were not interviewed submitting too. One of the vendors interviewed didn't bid the truck because they couldn't get their proposal completed in time. One vendor proposed stainless steel as opposed to aluminum, which would drive the cost up. The other vendor's initial starting price exceeded the budget.
- Commissioner Longo inquired that since both trucks would be identical builds if that could be negotiable in the price? Chief Thurz replied he couldn't answer the question because a vendor hadn't been chosen, but noted that there could be some negotiable items once one was selected. Chief Thurz also noted that when the last truck was purchased a deposit was made in advance of the build which lowered the price.
- Commissioner Quagliaroli asked if the vendors knew that the Request for Proposal was for two trucks? Chief Thurz replied it was spelled out in the Request for Proposal that it was for two vehicles.

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

Meeting Adjourned: Commissioner Cofiell made a motion to adjourn, which Commissioner Longo seconded and approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:18 PM.



Michael Thurz – Fire Chief
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

