

Board of Fire Commissioners  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

October 7, 2022

Present: Commissioner Dutton, Commissioner Quagliaroli, Commissioner Cofiell, and Commissioner Cavanaugh

Others: Chief Michael Thurz (by Zoom), Assistant Chief David Thurz, Deputy Chief Motowidlak and Deputy Chief Dennler

Absent: Commissioner Longo and Commissioner Cafazzo

Commissioner Dutton called the meeting to order at 6:37 PM

**Approval of Minutes:** The minutes from the September 1, 2022 and June 2, 2022 meetings were tabled. Commissioner Dutton was not in attendance at the September meeting, and Commissioner Cafazzo was not present to vote on the June meeting.

**Public Comment:** None

**Chief's Report:**

Chief Thurz reported the following:

- A Request for Proposal (RFP) for building renovations at Stations 3 and 4 was advertised on September 22, 2022 with a walk through of both stations on September 30, 2022. Proposals must be submitted to the Town on October 20, 2022. There were 18 people that came and toured the stations. However, it was uncertain if they were all general contractors or some may have been subcontractors.
- Facilities is in the process of installing security cameras on the exterior of all the stations. The cameras will be operational after Information Technology completes the installation of the network switches that are required.
- Facilities is installing new energy efficient LED lights throughout all the stations in the coming month.
- A new kitchen sink has been installed at Station 2.
- Vehicle exhaust system has been installed and now just waiting for Vehicle Maintenance to complete the conversion of the exhaust pipes on the smaller support vehicles.
- A Department picnic was held on September 23, 2022 as a thank you to the members for their efforts over the year. Deputy Chief Dennler organized the gathering in which each member was issued a new rain coat as part of our retention efforts. Approximately 70 people were in attendance.

- Continue to work with Captain Cody on the migration to a new records management system. A weekly meeting is held with the vendor to work on getting ready to go live with the new system by the first of the year.
- Fire Prevention is underway with the Department scheduling visits to a number of pre-schools, daycares and elementary schools. The Department is also participating in this year's Apple Harvest Festival with the Kid's Safety Trailer. The Department will be hosting an open house on October 18<sup>th</sup> from 6 to 8 PM at Station 1.
- Preparations are underway in developing next year's Capital Improvement Program budget. Six projects have been identified, five of which have been presented in previous years. The one new project is the addition of e-draulic extrication tools for Stations 1 and 3, which will be the priority. Based on a recent inspection report completed by Firematic Supply the gas power units have reach the end of their useful life. While the equipment can remain in service parts are no longer available. The goal of the Department is to convert everything over to e-draulic or battery operated. The CIP list in priority includes:
  1. E-draulic extrication tools for Stations 1 and 3 - \$100,000
  2. Tanker replacement - \$635,000
  3. Training facility improvements - \$330,000
  4. Engine Tanker replacement - \$953,500
  5. Ladder replacement - 2,000,000
  6. Façade and exterior improvements for Station 1 - \$568,000
- Chief's office will be working on putting together the Capital Outlay and operating budgets in the coming weeks. Capital Outlay include items that cost up to \$75,000 and have a life expectancy between five to 15 years. Some of the items the Chief's office is considering include:
  1. UTV for Station Four
  2. Rescue Struts
  3. Pagers
  4. Turn-out Gear
  5. Portable Radios
- Commissioner Dutton asked if the Commission would review the budgets before they are submitted. Chief Thurz advised that he has already submitted the Capital Improvement Program as it was due, but reminded the Commission that the budget is not approved until March. Chief Thurz also noted that he provided an overview of what he sees as being some of the Capital Outlay items for next year's budget, and that the operating budget probably will be around a two and a half percent increase on the various line items. The Commission will be given copies of the slides for Capital Improvement once the deck is put together along with Capital Outlay. Commissioner Dutton noted that he wanted to see them before they were submitted. Chief Thurz advised that the budget will be tweaked over the coming months, and that five of the six items have already been seen by the Commission. The only change to this year's proposal is the addition of the e-draulic extrication tools as the equipment is on borrowed time according to the latest inspection report.

- Commissioner Quagliaroli inquired if the order in the Capital Improvement Program listing is prioritized. Chief Thurz noted that the list is prioritized. The e-draulic tools and tanker replacement are for 2024. The training facility and engine tanker would be for the 2025 budget, the ladder truck replacement would be by itself in 2026 and the façade would be by itself in 2027.
- Commission Dutton was asked by Chief Thurz if he had any concerns with the July minutes, even though they had been approved. Commissioner Dutton noted that he listened to the tape, not every word but he spot checked the tape with the minutes and said he felt the minutes reflect what was said at the meeting.
- Review of monthly operating expenses

**Old Business:**

- None

**New Business:**

- Fire Marshal Position - Commissioner Cavanaugh noted that Commissioner Cafazzo reached out to the Town Manager and the Human Resources Department to see what the next step would be to get the Commissioners involved in the hiring process. A meeting with Mr. Johnson had been table twice and that Commissioner Cafazzo was waiting for a call back. Commissioner Cavanaugh noted that the Commission may want to form a Committee, which Commissioner Cafazzo would be interested on serving with anyone else who would like to be involved. Commissioner Cofiell said he would be willing to serve on the committee.

**Committee Report:**

- Commissioner Quagliaroli reported that the Strategic Planning Committee met on September 19, 2022 to continue discussion on recruitment and retention. Commissioner Quagliaroli further noted that in discussion with Commissioner Longo that the Strategic Planning Committee will start looking into long term goals of having some type of paid component. The Strategic Planning Committee would come up with some ideas and present them back to the Commission. Commissioner Dutton noted that the news had a segment on retention and showed one department in how they tried to keep people involved. He stated that the segment revolved around the lack of retention and how volunteerism is on the decline. Chief Thurz noted that NBC had a segment on how departments in the northeast corner of Connecticut are struggling to find new members. Chief Thurz noted that with Fire Prevention week coming up there has been a lot of attention focused on fire departments.

**Executive Session:** Commissioner Cofiell made a motion to adjourn into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing proposals received on the replacement of fire apparatus. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cavanaugh and approved unanimously. The Commission entered into Executive Session at 6:57 PM.

Present for the Executive Session were Commissioner Dutton, Commissioner Quagliaroli, Commissioner Cavanaugh, Commissioner Cofiell, Chief Thurz, Assistant Chief Thurz, Deputy Chief Motowidlak and Deputy Chief Dennler.

The Commission meeting reconvened from Executive Session at 7:21 PM.

Commissioner Cavanaugh made a motion that the Department move forward with the purchase of two fire apparatus from Marion Body Works. Commissioner Cofiell seconded the motion. Commissioner Dutton noted the committee did a great job with this project. The motion passed unanimously.

**Next Regular Meeting:** November 3, 2022, at Company 1, 2825 Main Street, 6:30 PM.

**Meeting Adjourned:** Commissioner Cofiell made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Commissioner Cavanaugh. The meeting adjourned at 7:23 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