

Board of Fire Commissioners
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

December 1, 2022

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

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

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

Public Comment: None

Approval of Minutes: Commissioner Longo asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the November 3, 2022 meeting. Commissioner Cafazzo made the motion to accept with Commissioner Cofiell seconding the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

Chief's Report:

Chief Thurz reported the following:

- Acore Builders, LLC of Hartford has been awarded the contract for the renovation work at Stations 3 and 4. There were eight bids received for the project, ranging from \$436K to \$797K with the average being \$570K. Work will commence after the first of the new year, and will be completed one station at a time.
- Facilities had a meeting with the lighting contactor to review an alternative lighting fixture for the apparatus bays.
- Facilities is still trying to get a contractor to provide a cost estimate to fix the overhead doors at Station 1.
- As a follow up to Commissioner Cofiell comment from last month's meeting regarding the Duty Crew initiative and cost, it would be funded from the Units Wage account. If every week were to be filled with 16 members the annual cost would be approximately \$68K. Based on the \$210K allocated, along with the first installment of \$71K for this year, there remains \$139K in availability. Assuming the call volume remains the same, there would be sufficient funds to support the Duty Crew initiative with \$71K in availability. It was also noted that the \$210K in the Unit Wage account has remained unchanged for several years, and has never been exceeded, even during the years when there were significant storms. However, if the unit wage rate is increased consideration will need to be given to future allocations to the account.
- The co-chairs of the truck committee, along with Deputy Chiefs Motowidlak and Dennler met with Marion Body Works to discuss the cab and chassis. After the first of the year the full committee will meet to discuss the apparatus body.

- Fiscal Year 2023-24 budget continues to move forward. As noted there will be variety of workshops and meetings to take place as it relates to the budget, which Commissioners Longo and Cavanaugh will be kept informed. The only adjustment from last month's meeting was consideration is now being given to moving the training facility repairs ahead of replacing the Engine Tanker. The e-draulic tools and training facility would be the top two priorities, which would total \$435K.
- Insurance Service Office (ISO) is scheduled to come in after the first of the new year. There is a significant amount of preliminary work that needs to be prepared prior to their arrival. The last time the ISO reviewed the Department was approximately seven years ago.
- Assistance to Fire Act Grant workshop for 2023 is scheduled for December 5, 2022 at the Connecticut Fire Academy. Chief Thurz will be attending the afternoon session.
- Migration to First Due, the records management system continues to move forward. However, Chief Thurz anticipates the cut over date will need to be extend by 90 days with the intent of being operational by April 1, 2023.
- The Department's annual meeting will be held on Monday, December 5, 2022, 7 PM at Station 1.
- Commissioner Dutton inquired about the transfer of the old data into the new records management system, and if it needed to be modified? Chief Thurz replied the vendor will work on the migrating of the data as far back as 2004 to their platform.
- The Recruitment Committee interviewed five potential candidates which are being recommended to move forward in the process. Originally there were seven candidates scheduled, but one cancelled just prior to the meeting and one came in to say he was no longer interested.
- Commissioner Cafazzo inquired about the current unit payment amount. Chief Thurz replied it is currently \$10.25, and that he is proposing a \$.25 increase for next year, along with a 2% increase to the stipends.
- Commissioner Cavanaugh asked how far outside of Glastonbury could someone live to be a member? Chief Thurz replied those that live in East Hartford just south of Silver Lane would be considered. As for those that live in Manchester they are directed to apply to Manchester 8th District Fire Department. As for the other boarding towns, which are volunteer departments as well, the Department would not consider an application, unless the applicant was willing to volunteer for both departments. Chief Thurz does not feel it's appropriate to have a member that live in another community, which relies on volunteers not to serve in that community.
- Commissioner Longo commented on the proposed change in the Capital Improvement Program as it pertained to the training facility. While he is not well versed in

the condition of the building, but understand that an upgrade has been previously requested, he still thinks either an engine tanker or another replacement vehicle should take priority. Based on previous experience it takes a long time to replace a vehicle and feels it would be used more than the training facility. Chief Thurz replied that the training facility has not had any improvements in the last 18 years and is getting to a point where it could get condemned. While the building is inspected each year as part of the NFPA compliance requirement, the Department is pushing the envelope in its current condition. Furthermore, with the limited funds available in the Capital Improvement Program the Department may be able to complete two of the six initiatives being requested.

- Commissioner Cafazzo inquired about the age and number of hours on Engine 42. Chief Thurz replied the vehicle will be 24 years old, but uncertain on the total engine hours. Chief Thurz further stated that the training facility is needed too. While some routine maintenance has been completed, if condemned the Department would have to go out of town to complete its live fire requirements, which would be an added cost to the Department.
- Commissioner Dutton inquired if there were any funds regionally that could be applied for to repair the burn building? Chief Thurz replied that when the land was donated there was a caveat in the lease that the training facility could not operate as a regional facility. Other towns that have used the facility in the past have made small donations towards the upkeep of the facility.
- Commissioner Cafazzo asked if Engine 42 had a lot of maintenance issue, or was it just because of its age it needed to be replaced? Commissioner Cofiell noted that there had been issues finding parts and obsolete electrical items. Chief Thurz replied that the truck is not going out of service every single day. Commissioner Longo shared that his concern was more on the number of years it takes to purchase a new vehicle. Commissioner Cafazzo understands his concern, but noted the Department also doesn't want to see anything happen to the training facility.
- Review of operating expenses.

Old Business:

- Commissioner Cafazzo mentioned that the interviewing process will begin on Wednesday December 7th for the Fire Marshal's position. There are five or six applicants as of right now. Interviews will take place at the Town Hall. Commissioner Cafazzo will keep the other Commissioners informed as to how the process goes.

New Business:

- None

Committee Report:

- Commissioner Quagliaroli reported that at the last Strategic Planning Committee meeting members continued to discuss recruitment and retention and different strategies. Chief Thurz provided data regarding response time, average number of firefighters at an incident and times of day in which membership is limited. The committee was provided with a list of members who joined the Department between 2004 and November 1, 2022. During this period 185 people joined the Department. Of that number 61 members still remain on the roster, some of which are not active. Commissioner Quagliaroli stated that the department is at a historical low with respect to members across the board. Commissioner Quagliaroli further reported that the actual number of firefighters capable of wearing a self-contained breathing apparatus is very low and trying to get them to come to calls has been difficult. Hopefully the Duty Crew initiative will help alleviate the issue. He went on to say that the Duty Crew program is a 60-day trial, which is in its third week and felt that the concept seems to be working so far fulfilling the overnight obligation.
- Commissioner Cofiehl asked if the committee looked at the number of calls per company and if any burn out was being experienced? Commissioner Quagliaroli replied that the members were provided with charts and graphs that addresses the issue, and will be looking further into the possibility of moving some of the district lines. Chief Thurz replied that the new records management system will also be able to provide heat maps which will help to identify the issues too.
- Commissioner Caffazo inquired if there were four members overnight why isn't there four during the day? Chief Thurz advised it was four per station overnight, an officer and three members, which is 16 members from 10 PM to 7 AM. During the day the number is now three with the Chief. However, that could vary too depending if the Chief was at a meeting or in a training session during the day.
- Commissioner Quagliaroli stated that the per diem members are now at Station 1 twice a week. Commissioner Cafazzo recommended that perhaps the per diem members should stay at Station 1 every morning for three to four hours before going to the other stations later in the day. Commissioner Quagliaroli agreed, and that is why it's important to have the data to make those decisions.

Next Regular Meeting: January 6, 2023 at Company 1, 2825 Main Street, 6:30 PM.

Meeting Adjourned: Commissioner Cafazzo made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Commissioner Cavanaugh. The meeting adjourned at 7:07 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