

Board of Fire Commissioners  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

January 5, 2023

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

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

**Absent:** Commissioner Cavanaugh

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 December 1, 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:

Both Captains Cody and Ruggiero have recommended Alex Fahey with Station 1, as well as David Hall and Timothy Winfield with Station 4 to permanent membership after completing and receiving their Firefighter One certification. Commissioner Cafazzo made a motion to approve the memberships with Commissioner Longo seconding the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Lieutenant Joseph Elliott submitted a letter of resignation from his position as Lieutenant, however, is remaining a Department member. Chief Thurz acknowledged Lt. Elliott for his four and a half years as a Lieutenant, and the integral role he played on the self-contained breathing apparatus committee. Lt. Elliott will continue to participate with the committee on the phase two initiative.

With the resignation of Lieutenant Elliott, a posting for the open position was posted at Station 2. Four candidates expressed an interest in the position, however, one did not submit a letter of intent within the prescribed timeframe. Therefore, three candidates are eligible. The candidates will be tested based on an outside oral panel, as well as a Chief's interview. The oral panel is scheduled for January 18<sup>th</sup> at the Riverfront Community Center. Chief Thurz asked that either Commissioner Cafazzo or Commissioner Cofiell serve as a moderator in accordance to the Department's By-laws. Commissioner Cafazzo agreed to serve as the moderator.

On December 25<sup>th</sup> the Department responded to a structure fire at 145 Lancaster Road. No one was at home at the time of the fire. The house sustained significant damage and is uninhabitable.

The budget for FY'23-24 continues to be a work in progress. The Capital Improvement Program workshop is scheduled for January 19<sup>th</sup>. Preliminary discussions on the operating budget with the Town Manager has taken place. Some minor adjustments were made to Capital Outlay.

which included finding funds to purchase a network switch within this year's budget. In addition, the replacement of the portable radios was put on hold. Chief Thurz reported that he spoke to Commissioner Longo about including the purchase of new mobile and portable radios through next year's (FY'24-25) Capital Improvement Program in the Public Safety Communications category.

A meeting with Acore Builders, LLC, the general contractor for the renovations at Stations 3 and 4 will be held on January 11<sup>th</sup>.

Commissioner Quagliaroli and Chief Thurz met with the lighting consultant and contractor to review an alternative fixture for the apparatus bay. The fixture that the consultant is recommending has been installed at Station 2 and appears to produce sufficient lighting then the fixtures currently installed.

The cost to fix the overhead door and replace the other two front doors at Station 1 is estimated at \$18K.

Commissioner Longo asked if there were any dates as to when the renovation work would start, and if any apparatus would need to be moved? Chief Thurz replied that no dates as to when actual work will begin has been established. Moving of any apparatus would be dependent upon when materials were delivered and how much room the contractor would need for on-site storage.

A meeting with a representative from the Insurance Services Office (ISO) is scheduled for January 18<sup>th</sup>. Commissioner Cofiell inquired if the Department will be required to do any flow testing of the hydrants during the visit? Chief Thurz replied that was not required and that the representative has requested information regarding municipal water service directly from Manchester Water and the Metropolitan District Commission. Commissioner Longo asked when the last time the ISO performed an inspection? Chief Thurz replied in 2015.

A meeting date with the apparatus vendor and truck committee is in the works. Chief Thurz is waiting to hear back from the co-chairs as to when they will be able to meet and discuss the design of the apparatus body.

The foam from the apparatus tanks has been removed and rinsed from seven of the eight trucks. Chief Thurz reported that Engine 32 is currently out of service for a brake repair. Once Engine 32 is back in services arrangements with Environmental Services, Inc. will be made to have its foam removed and rinsed. Commissioner Cofiell inquired about the funding of the foam removal? Chief Thurz stated that the Board of Finance made an appropriation to fund the cost of the removal and that he has made an inquiry with the state if reimbursement is a possibility.

Six members are enrolled in a Fire Officer I training class, which is scheduled to start on Sunday, January 8<sup>th</sup>.

The Department's annual meeting was held on December 5<sup>th</sup>. Chief Thurz reported there were 36 members in attendance. Chief Thurz provided commission members with a copy of the slides and an overview of his presentation.

Commissioner Longo inquired where the funds would come from if the e-draulic tools were removed from the Capital Improvement Program? Chief Thurz noted that either the Limited

Access Highway account, where there is an estimated \$27,000 already accrued, the unit stipend account, or maybe another account within the overall budget that has a surplus. Chief Thurz could not provide a definitive answer at this time, but it was a possibility. Commissioner Longo asked if the tools are readily available? Chief Thurz was uncertain on the availability of the equipment or delivery dates. He did not that this could also be a time to re-evaluate extrication equipment as a whole and look at other vendors. However, this would go away from standardization within the Department. Commissioner Cofelli asked if it would be possible to buy one set and carry over or budget the other half of the funds in next year's budget? Chief Thurz believed the objective would be not to purchase the extrication equipment in next year's Capital Improvement Program budget.

Commissioner Longo asked if any determination has been made as to what might have caused the issues with Engine 32's brakes, and if its mechanical could it be assumed the engines might have a similar issue? Chief Thurz responded that he will inquire with Vehicle Maintenance as the engine is still being repaired in Cromwell.

Review of operating expenses. Commissioner Longo asked if there was any conversation about fuel pricing and locking it in? Chief Thurz replied that next year's operating budget still remains fluid, and that there have been some adjustments in the fuel budget.

**Old Business:**

None

**New Business:**

None

**Committee Report:**

**Strategic Planning Committee:**

Commissioner Quagliaroli reported that the Strategic Planning Committee did not meet in December and that the next meeting was scheduled for January 16<sup>th</sup>.

**Budget:**

Commissioner Longo noted that neither Commissioner Cavanaugh nor himself have met with Chief Thurz because the budget remains a work in progress and there has been nothing critical to discuss.

**Fire Marshal's Position:**

Commissioner Cofelli advised that Commissioner Cafazzo and himself interviewed five candidates on December 7<sup>th</sup>, and two additional candidates today (January 5<sup>th</sup>). There was a total of seven applicants, which has been narrowed down to three and sent to the Town Manager. The next phase will be to set up another meeting with the Town Manager to make a final selection. Commissioner Cafazzo said the next interview will consist of more specific questions, and if any of the Commissioners had questions they would like added to forward them to him. Commissioner Cafazzo asked the other commissioners what attributes they were looking to see in the next Fire Marshal? Commissioner Cafazzo stated for him it was community service. Commissioner Quagliaroli said someone who was customer service oriented. Commissioner Dutton noted having good communication skills. Commissioner Longo felt past experiences along with how they handle situations and personalities.

Commissioner Longo noted it is become abundantly clear that between the numbers and aging population of the interior firefighters that the Commission needed to start seriously thinking about what we are going to do in the next two to five years in getting some additional help. He further stated that the Commission needs to face the reality that we will need to look into ideas regarding staffing. How it should be implemented, number of people, revamping some of the fire stations, and the need to put forward some proposals to the Town Manager. Chief Thurz commented that it is a work in progress, and wanted to clarify that Commissioner Longo was looking for everyone to begin thinking about possible solutions. Commissioner Quagliaroli replied that the Strategic Planning Committee has already starting to look at the parameters, such as the biggest needs, which is already on the committee's radar, but couldn't identify the solution until more data had been gathered to develop a plan. Commissioner Cofiell also noted that things might need to be done in stages. Commissioner Dutton was curious as to what involvement would come from the Town Council. Chief Thurz replied that it would also include input from the Board of Finance and maybe even hiring an outside consultant to provide a study with a list of recommendations. Commissioner Cofiell noted that we need to be proactive as opposed to reactive.

**Correspondence:**

Commissioner Quagliaroli mentioned that the Commission received a thank you note from the Pagliughi family for the flowers.

Meeting Adjourned: Commissioner Cofiell made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Commissioner Longo. The meeting adjourned at 7:16 PM.

Next Regular Meeting: February 2, 2023 at Company 1, 2825 Main Street, 6:30 PM.



Deborah Torres  
Recording Secretary

c: Fire Commission (6)  
Fire Chiefs (4)  
Fire Captains (4)  
Richard J. Johnson, Town Manager  
Chris Siwy, Fire Marshal  
Gina Consiglio, Purchasing Agent  
Robert DiBella, Civil Preparedness