

Board of Fire Commissioners
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
August 3, 2023

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

Absent: Commissioner Caffazo

Others: Chief Michael Thurz, Assistant Chief David Thurz, Deputy Chief Motowidlak,
Deputy Chief Cody

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 April 6, 2023 Special Meeting. Commissioner Cofiell made the motion to accept with Commissioner Cavanaugh seconding the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Longo asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the May 4, 2023 meeting. Commissioner Cofiell made the motion to accept with Commissioner Quagliaroli seconding the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Longo asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the June 1, 2023 meeting. Commissioner Cofiell made the motion to accept with Commissioner Cavanaugh seconding the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

Chief Thurz asked for a moment of silence in remembrance of Jim Lyons and Dan Burke who both passed since the last commission meeting.

Chief's Report:

Chief Thurz reported the following:

- Captain Curreri has recommended Kyle Walker for permanent membership. Firefighter Walker recently passed his Firefighter I certification. Commissioner Cavanaugh made the motion to accept, which Commissioner Cofiell seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
- Apparatus
 - The cab and chassis for the two new rescue/pumpers is scheduled to be completed by January 2024 with another 200+/- days for the pump, tank and body work to be completed. The apparatus should be delivered in the early summer of 2024.

- A new front seal for the motor and water pump were installed on Engine 42. A new lightbar is in the process of being installed by Vehicle Maintenance.
- Ladder 15 and Engine 41's DOT inspections were recently completed.
- Hose, pump and ladder testing is scheduled for the week of September 11th. JLN Associates, LLC d/b/a Top Rung was awarded the work.
- Buildings
 - New overhead door panels at Station 1 were installed.
 - Contractor is pricing out the renovation work for the radio rooms at Stations 1 and 2.
 - Contractor has priced out the window replacements for Stations 2, 3, and 4.
 - Renovation work at Station 4 is beyond slow. The contractor should finish the bathrooms by the end of the week. There are a number of punch list items that still need to be addressed. Chief Thurz did express his frustration with the contractor regarding the pace of work. Renovation work at Station 3 is now three-months behind schedule. Work is anticipated to begin by mid-August. The contractor has all the materials for Station 3 in storage.
 - Commissioner Quagliaroli inquired if the same construction glitches at Station 4 will be at Station 3? Chief Thurz responded the column in the woman's bathroom will be there, and changing the low point drain for the sprinkler system will have to be plumbed through the Captain's office. Another change that occurred at Station 4, but not anticipated at Station 3 is the pipe used for the sprinkler system. Black pipe was used at Station 3, but copper at Station 4. The copper pipe at Station 4 needs to be replaced. In addition, the door frame for the woman's bathroom will be replaced, as well as selected exterior door frames that are rotted at both stations.
 - Commissioner Dutton asked what the pipe was being replaced with at Station 4 Chief Thurz replied he wasn't sure. Commissioner Cofield asked if the pipe was by-pass loops or main carrier pipes? Chief responded that they were main carriers with different piping that was used in the social club room at Station 4.
 - Material to repair the burn rooms at the training facility has been ordered and scheduled for delivery in December. Department will use the lower level burn room for live fire training this fall. The building will only be available to

Glastonbury, so the Department is compliant with its live fire training requirement instead of going out of town. Chief Thurz is working with the Purchasing Agent to go out to bid for a contractor so when the material arrives everything is in place. The work should take approximately six weeks to complete. The building will be shut down since burns do not take place in the winter months. Chief Thurz anticipates the work will be completed by mid-February.

- Commissioner Dutton asked if there was any hazardous material in the tiles? Chief Thurz replied there was none.
- Commissioner Longo inquired if there were any provisions when the contractor was hired regarding performance, and monies if the work was done sooner, or if delayed there was any penalty? Commissioner Longo felt for not an extremely difficult project it was taking a long time to complete. Chief Thurz replied there is no penalty, and there is nothing in the contract. It is a lump sum contract, and if the work is done sooner more money could be made. This was not a cost-plus contract, and there were minimal change orders beside the supporting beam found in the woman's room. The installation of the tile was very slow.
- Commissioner Cavanaugh inquired if the windows for the radio room was in the budget? Chief Thurz replied the window replacement was in the overall scope of the renovation work. The countertops in the radio rooms at Stations 1 and 2 will be replaced along with the windows. All of Station 2 windows on the first floor, besides the bathroom are original. There was also a termite issue at Station 2, which will require some vinyl floor tiles being replaced.
- Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Consultation
 - Chief Thurz reported OSHA was invited to provide a consultation of the Department's operation. The meeting was held on July 20th. Chief Thurz noted this was the first of many meetings to take place. The initial meeting revealed the need to modify and enhance the Department's respiratory program by developing a Standard Operating Guideline (SOG). The guideline needs to address fit testing, physicals, chemicals stored on site, how self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) are put on and taken off, along with cleaning the SCBAs.
 - The meeting also focused on replacement of equipment, and training compliance. In addition to replacing personal protective pants and coats every 10-years, helmets for interior firefighters must be replaced too. Captains have been asked to inventory the helmets of their interior personnel.

- As for physicals, fit testing and any other specialized training (rope and ice rescue, etc.) it must be completed within 365 days each year. If not completed within 365 days the Department is not in compliance.
- Chief Thurz reported he is drafting a new respiratory program that will be reviewed by OSHA and then issued as a new SOG. OSHA has given the Department until October 2, 2023 to address the items identified in their visit or file for an extension.
- Commissioner Quagliaroli inquired about the notice issued by OSHA and asked what the Department is lacking in its respiratory program? Chief Thurz noted that the current SOG does not reference MSA G1 self-contained breathing apparatus.
- Commissioner Quagliaroli also inquired how many helmets will need to be replaced? Chief Thurz estimated approximately 50 helmets. The Department currently has 71 interior firefighters, and the cost of a new helmet is approximately \$500.00 each or \$25,000.
- Commissioner Quagliaroli also inquired about the replacement of air cylinders for the SCBAs. Chief Thurz replied the Department is in the third year of the new MSA air cylinders and the goal is to start replacing them in five years. Chief Thurz noted the replacement of the helmets was not budgeted this year, and that he may need to ask for an appropriation this year through the Board of Finance. Commissioner Cofield asked if firefighters can still purchase their own helmets? The Chief said a member can purchase their own helmet as long as it is compliant with OSHA and the Department.
- Commissioner Longo asked if the Department received notice they were coming in to inspect? Chief Thurz replied it was not an inspection, but a consultation. Chief Thurz invited OSHA in as opposed to compliance coming in where any violations could result in a fine.
- Insurance Service Office (ISO)
 - ISO met with Chief Thurz approximately three months ago, and the Department's current rating is unchanged at 4/4Y. The 4Y reference is for those areas of town which are not within 1,000 feet of a fire hydrant, and not within so many miles of a fire station. The Department missed its rating being elevated to a 3 by 1.94 points. A lower ISO rating essentially means property owners may get a lower premium on their insurance.

- Potential areas in which the Department could pick up some additional points is in telecommunications (NexGen - CAD system) or future enhancements to staffing.
 - Commissioner Dutton asked what the deployment analysis stood for? Chief Thurz replied it was based on staffing and location of fire stations. Chief Thurz also noted that if more training was conducted, 16 hours a month, as opposed to four hours additional points could be gained.
 - Commissioner Dutton inquired how Glastonbury compared to other towns. Chief Thurz replied Colchester is a Class 3, Hartford is a Class 1, East Hartford is a Class 2. However, there are other sections of the state in which departments are rated as Class 5, Class 6 or even higher.
 - Chief Thurz concluded the Department has been at this rating for 28 years. The ISO comes approximately every 5 years, and it is mandatory.
- National Night Out was held on August 1st. The turnout was great, and something the Department will look to participate in annually. Some felt the event was better than the Fire Prevention open houses held in October, because it's in the summer, free food and activities for the kids. The Department had the kid's safety trailer, a rescue truck, ladder truck, ATV, an engine, as well as a prop set up so people could use a hose to simulate putting out a fire. It was a great public relations event, but not for recruitment.
 - Chief Thurz provided a report from Deputy Chief Makuch, who was on vacation, which speaks about the Fire Marshal's Office workload, backlog, staffing issues and program development. Chief Thurz, Deputy Chief Makuch and Captain Giantonio have been working collaboratively on a number of projects, and are looking at ways in which the two departments can work together sharing resources while making community risk reduction its primary focus.
 - Department's last recruitment resulted in seven prospective members. The Department ran a mini fire training academy, and now there are four, possibly five enrolled in Firefighter I training. As for the other two members, one resigned and the other hasn't shown any further interest. The committee just onboarded three new members, one who is a career firefighter in Rhode Island, one who is a returning member with over 15 years in the Department and one was a cadet. The recruitment committee is not meeting again until the fall, so Executive Officer Dennler elected to move forward with these three applicants.
 - Chief Thurz will be out of town the week of August 8th – 12th and on the 19th and 20th out of state.

- Review of operating expenses for June and July
 - Commissioner Quagliaroli inquired how much of the \$104,000 in July's expenses were open purchase orders? Chief Thurz replied roughly \$80,000.

Old Business:

None

New Business:

None

Committee Report:

Strategic Planning Committee:

- Commissioner Quagliaroli reported that the Strategic Planning Committee met on July 17, 2023. Two items were discussed at the meeting, a revision to the performance evaluation form, and the Department's compliance with the Department of Labor's Fair Labor Standard Act (FLSA). Commissioner Quagliaroli reported this is a topic that the committee will be addressing next to ensure the Department is compliant. Chief Thurz mentioned there are certain rules that need to be followed when it comes to compensation. The committee had a preliminary discussion in how to appropriately compensate members going forward, while adhering to the rules established by the Department of Labor. The Department will be looking at converting from a pay per hour to a pay-per-call system.
- Commissioner Longo asked if the Department is not in compliance is there a risk of some type of fine? Chief Thurz replied not so much a monetary fine, but the potential for a higher operating cost.
- Commissioner Cofiehl asked if the matter was similar to defaulting in paying someone overtime? Chief Thurz replied no, but it has to deal with how people are classified and the type of compensation they are eligible to receive. Commissioner Cofiehl inquired about the stipends for the officers? Chief Thurz noted that stipend pay is different, and that is something else the committee is investigating to see what is and what isn't allowable by the act. Commissioner Quagliaroli added he is reviewing a manual pertaining to FLSA, and that the matter is convoluted. While stipends are allowed, some of the other ways the Department compensates are not. There is no simple answer, as we change one item it could impact another. In the long term, from a financial standpoint it could work out better for the average member. However, there is more due diligence that must be done. Commissioner Quagliaroli also referenced a guidebook, developed by the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC), which had over 30 pages of questions pertaining to FLSA and various rulings. Chief Thurz mentioned the Department of Labor has certain rules, and the goal is to make sure the Department is compliant.
- Commissioner Dutton asked who regulates this in Connecticut? Chief Thurz replied United States Department of Labor. The ruling is to protect the employee, and not the

employer. The Strategic Planning Committee is working to make sure things are being done correctly, and to eliminate any liability exposure for the town.

- Commissioner Longo asked how long this suggestion has been in existence, and is this something we have been avoiding? Chief Thurz replied this was brought to the previous Town Manager attention several years ago. The FLSA has been in existence for many years, and is not unique to just Glastonbury. It is a nationwide issue and that the IAFC developed a reference book for fire departments to follow.
- Commissioner Cofieff asked where is the Connecticut Fire Chiefs Association in working with the Department of Labor on this matter, or are they putting their head in the sand? Chief Thurz said this is not a Connecticut Fire Chiefs Association issue. This is a ruling from the Department of Labor, it's not a state issue, but more of an issue for the IAFC to address. Chief Thurz replied that while he hasn't reach out to Connecticut's delegation, he is sure others have raised this matter. Changing the Department of Labor's ruling is a challenge. Commissioner Cofieff questioned if the Department of Labor was looking for standardization, which both Commissioner Quagliaroli and Chief Thurz replied was not the case. Commissioner Quagliaroli noted that there is a lot of leeway within the guidance. The goal of the Department is to develop a standard that is compliant with the Department of Labor. Chief Thurz reminded the Commission that initially the stipend was based on a pool of money divided up at the end of the year based on the total number of hours. It was in the late 1980s that the pool of money was set at an hourly rate, which was not appropriate.
- Commissioner Dutton asked if the state's Department of Labor has any say in the matter? Commissioner Quagliaroli replied this is a federal matter. Commissioner Dutton then asked if there was any government official looking into this matter? Commissioner Cofieff replied that in the southern part of the state this matter has been a concern as it relates to per diem, career staffing and volunteers. He has received a number of articles on the matter. Commissioner Quagliaroli noted there is no timeline that the plan needs to be solved or implemented. Commissioner Dutton then asked what are the ramifications if we messed it up? Commissioner Quagliaroli replied it would be back pay. Chief Thurz said the way the Department's compensation is structured today it is not acceptable. With that being said, the objective is to make sure everybody within the organization is made whole, or better, which could actually work towards another retention tool.
- Commissioner Cavanaugh asked how night time responses were going? Chief Thurz replied that last quarter there were 35 overnight calls. Chief Thurz is putting together a report, at the request of the Town Manager for the Town Council, to discuss the recruitment and retention efforts, as well as call volume. With the new software, the Department will be able to provide a heat map that will show the location of the majority of calls. Chief Thurz is using the second quarter data as he learns the new software and the types of reports it is able to generate. The new software will be able to provide response time for apparatus,

how many people are responding, and how many of the assigned company units are responding, as well as the other companies. The software is also able to generate an individual's response by their primary company, as well as responses in another company's district.

- Commissioner Longo noted the Commission should begin to start thinking about next year's budget. Last year Commissioners Longo and Cavanaugh met with Chief Thurz to discuss the budget, and he would like to recommend they do the same for the upcoming year. There was no discussion.

Meeting Adjourned: Commissioner Cofiell made the motion for adjournment, which was seconded by Commissioner Cavanaugh, and passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:27 PM.

Next Regular Meeting: September 7, 2023 at Company 1, 2825 Main Street, 6:30 PM.



Deborah Torres
Recording Secretary

- c: Fire Commission (6)
Fire Chiefs (4)
Fire Captains (4)
Jonathan Luiz, Town Manager
Michael Makuch, Fire Marshal
Gina Consiglio, Purchasing Agent
Robert DiBella, Civil Preparedness