

Board of Fire Commissioners
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
November 2, 2023

Present: Commissioner Longo, Commissioner Dutton, Commissioner Quagliaroli,
Commissioner Caffazo, and Commissioner Cofield

Absent: Commissioner Cavanaugh

Others: Chief Michael Thurz, Deputy Chief Motowidlak, Executive Officer Dennler,
Firefighter Steven Bemer

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

Commissioner Longo asked for a moment of silence in remembrance of former members Russell Shenstone and Howard Horton who recently past.

Public Comment:

None

Approval of Minutes:

Commissioner Longo asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the October 12, 2023 Special Meeting. Commissioner Dutton made the motion to accept with Commissioner Cofield seconding the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

Chief's Report:

Chief Thurz reported the following:

- Fire Department responded to a structure fire at 61 Woodbridge Road on October 25th. The fire was extinguished quickly and confined to the furnace room and a three-season porch. There was significant heat and smoke damage to the residence, which is uninhabitable.
- Renovation work at Station 3 continues, with tile work taking place in the bathroom, along with new kitchen cabinets being installed. The exterior door frames are being replaced as well. There are some temporary doors being installed until the correct ones are received.
- Station 4's kitchen will be renovated shortly. The cabinets have been delivered.
- Station 2's generator will be installed in the coming weeks. A pad will be poured next week, with the generator being delivered shortly thereafter. Commissioner Quagliaroli inquired if it was going to be an exterior generator? Chief Thurz replied yes, with the old generator being removed. There will also be some repairs made to the building's exterior after the generator is removed. Commissioner Dutton inquired how many kilowatts was

the new generator? Chief Thurz wasn't exactly sure, but estimated it to be at least 35 kilowatts and sufficient to power the entire station. Commissioner Dutton inquired what its fuel source would be? Chief Thurz replied natural gas.

- The material for the training facility was delivered eight weeks early. The next step is to identify a contractor to perform the work. Chief Thurz is waiting for one more review to be submitted. Commissioner Cavanaugh has completed his review, as well as one other staff member. Commissioner Dutton inquired where the materials were being stored? Chief Thurz replied in one of the storage containers at the training facility.
- Department participated in a statewide Haz-Mat exercise. This was an annual exercise put on by the State of Connecticut Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security. This year's incident consisted of a simulated sulfuric acid spill in the area of Glastonbury High School. The exercise was a four-hour event, which included injects being sent and needing to be answered. This exercise was held in conjunction with Emergency Management.
- Glastonbury Little League is looking to rename the baseball field at Riverfront Park to Heroes Field. Don Loughtin invited Chief Thurz, along with the Police Chief and a representative from the armed services to be part of a committee to design a monument for the park. A local firm will be working with little league to design the monument, which will also include fundraising activities.
- Participated in a training class with the American Red Cross as it relates to establishing a shelter. This was a town-wide initiative to get residents involved with volunteering their time to run a shelter in the event of a natural or man-made disaster event. There were 41 residents that expressed an interest, of which 21 participated in the training class. Lisa Zerio, Director of Parks and Recreation will be the shelter manager.
- Chief Thurz will be out of state attending the International Association of Fire Chiefs' Volunteer Combination Officer Section conference in Clearwater, Florida from November 8th to the 14th.
- Chief Thurz thanked Commissioner Quagliaroli for his last six-years on the Commission, and for his work on the Strategic Planning Committee. Chief Thurz was glad that Commissioner Quagliaroli would be remaining a member of the Strategic Planning Committee, which has made some progress, but still has a lot more work to do.
- Commissioner Longo asked Chief Thurz about the status of the current generator at Station 2 and if it would be either repurposed or sold? Chief Thurz was uncertain as to the Facilities Department intent with the unit. He noted that there were some issues with

the generator, and that finding parts might be a challenge. Commissioner Quagliaroli noted the unit had a head gasket issue, and was closed to 40-years old.

- Commissioner Cafazzo inquired if there was ever any thought in bring a Commission member to the conference in Florida? Chief Thurz noted it's a nationwide conference, attended by members and commissioners of volunteer and combination departments that discuss about the challenges with recruitment and retention, as well as other changes in the fire service including mental health and cancer.
- Commissioner Cofiehl inquired if there were any comments, or a review regarding the incident that occurred at Congregation Kol Haverim? Chief Thurz reported that he and Chief Porter have a meeting scheduled with the director of security on November 15th. Chief Thurz reported the situation, which occurred that day was going across the state. Chief Thurz reported there has been a heighten sense of security, and advised the other commissioners that there was a threat made a few weeks back. Chief Thurz advised the department assisted with the evacuation of the students to Station 4. The decision was to move the students, with the assistance of Board of Education to the fire station so parents could pick up their children. Commissioner Cofiehl asked if this was predetermined before the event took place? Chief Thurz replied no, it was a quick decision to get the students out of the building without alarming them of the situation. Commissioner Cofiehl asked if a plan is going to be established for the future, or is it just going to be something done at a point in time? Chief Thurz inquired what he meant by a plan? Commissioner Cofiehl asked if a Standard Operating Guideline was going to be established? Chief Thurz replied its situational dependent based on the location of the incident. Chief Thurz noted that any decision would be made based on a unified command, and what would be the best based on the situation at hand. For this particular incident, Chief Thurz used Station 4 as a way to not alarm the students of the threat by stating it was a field trip to the fire station because its fire prevention month, and they would see some fire trucks and other firefighters.
- Review of operating expenses for October.
- Commissioner Quagliaroli inquired if fire watch pay is reimbursed to the department directly or the general fund? Chief Thurz replied to the general fund. The department budgets fire watch both as a revenue and expenditure on an annual basis. Commissioner Quagliaroli noted the Department then shows more than what is actually spent. Chief Thurz replied there is also an administrative fee collected, as well as a fee for any apparatus assigned to an event. Commissioner Quagliaroli noted that the Department is making money for the town.

- Commissioner Dutton inquired if the town gets a discounted rate from Eversource? Chief Thurz replied it does, as well as through the solar program established by the town. The associated disconnects fall under the Facilities Department.

Old Business:

- None

New Business:

- Commissioner Longo asked that the upcoming Fiscal Year 2024-25 budget be added to the meeting's agenda for discussion. Commissioner Longo wanted other commissioners to have an opportunity to express their opinions on any budget items. None of the other commissioners had anything they wanted to bring forward.
- Commissioner Longo felt this year's budget would be different given there is a new Town Manager, uncertainty in his approach or philosophy, as well as being an election year. Commissioner Longo had one item to discuss pertaining to the replacement of Tanker 34. His opinion is the vehicle is aging, but is used on a minimal basis. He estimated the cost to replace the tanker at \$600,000 to \$650,000. He asked Chief Thurz if that was reasonable assumption, which Chief Thurz replied today, but not a year from now. Commissioner Longo felt it was a big expense for something that is not utilized that much. His idea was to look at an alternative to replacing the tanker with an engine-tank. Commissioner Longo felt the cost for an engine-tank would be approximately \$800,000. Both Commissioners Cofield and Quagliaroli stated the cost for an engine-tank would be closer to \$1 million dollars. Chief Thurz replied it would be more around \$1.1 million.
- Commissioner Cafazzo liked the thought process, but felt the sole purpose of a tanker is to carry water, where as an engine-tank is a more expensive tanker. The point being an engine-tank would not get used as a pumper as its function would be to shuttle water back and forth. However, he agreed that the tanker doesn't get used, and questioned if the Department really need it.
- Both Commissioners Cafazzo and Cofield felt the discussion was warranted. Commissioner Longo noted that when the tanker comes up for replacement it will be at least three-years down the road, which would put the vehicle at 40 years old.
- Chief Thurz noted eliminating the tanker would result in Station 3 losing 1,500 gallons of water. Engine 32, which carries 1,000 gallons of water, would need to be reassigned as a spare. Tanker 34, which carries 3,000 gallons of water would be eliminated and a new engine-tank would only carry 2,000 gallons of water. In addition, the new engine on order will carry 500 gallons of water. Chief Thurz noted that Engine 42 is scheduled to be replaced next, followed by the tanker, then Ladder 15. Chief Thurz added that Engine 32 would be replaced prior to Engine 21, which is a year older. Chief Thurz recommended that if the Commission elected to move towards the engine-tank concept that it replace Engine 42 with a new engine-tank, then Tanker 34 with another engine tank, then Ladder 15. There is also the exterior improvements that have been proposed for Station 1. The

timeframe would two years for Engine 42, at a cost of \$1.1 million, followed by a second engine-tank at \$1.3 million, and then Ladder 15 at over \$2 million. The replacement of these three vehicles will take over eight years to complete.

- Chief Thurz further stated that when Tanker 34 begins to cost the Department money to fix, or parts are no longer available would be the time to consider replacing the vehicle. Commissioner Cofield was concerned about putting good money into the vehicle knowing it would take over two years to replace. However, Commissioner Quagliaroli noted another factor that needs to be taken into consideration is how often the vehicle would be used during that time period. There are surrounding departments that could be relied upon. Commissioner Quagliaroli felt it was more important to focus on those items the Department utilizes more frequently.
- Commissioner Dutton inquired about the value of the stainless-steel tank on the truck, and if it could be installed on a newer vehicle. Chief Thurz replied he already investigated that as a possibility and was told it would not be cost effective based on the age of the tank. Commissioner Cofield stated that it could be a possibility, to purchase a new tanker on a commercial cab and chassis with a PTO (Power Take Off) pump and it would cost around \$300,000. Chief Thurz replied he recently looked at something similar to what Commissioner Cofield was describing and the cost was \$500,000.
- Commissioner Cafazzo expressed if each engine going forward was an engine-tank there would be plenty of water in town, as opposed to just purchasing one truck. Commissioner Quagliaroli noted it all goes back to how many incidents requires a tanker. Commissioner Cafazzo agreed with Commissioner Quagliaroli, and was simply inquiring what is the cost difference between an engine and an engine-tank?

Committee Report:

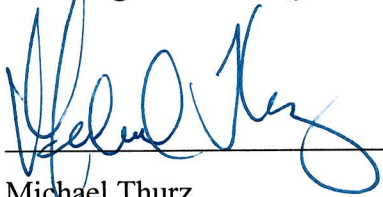
Strategic Planning Committee:

- Commissioner Quagliaroli reported that the Strategic Planning Committee met on October 16, 2023. Initially the meeting was supposed to be a presentation by a vendor as it pertained to annual physicals. However, the vendor was unavailable. Therefore, the committee had a presentation from Joe Truly with Vector Solutions on distance learning. The thought would be to use some form of on-line training to supplement the monthly drill requirements. The on-line platform could be utilized for some of the mandatory training, allowing time for additional hands on training. Commissioner Dutton commented that while the system seemed suffocated, at the same time it appeared to be user friendly. Chief Thurz commented the idea behind the distance learning would allow members to do the cognitive training at their leisure, while focusing on additional psychomotor skills training at the company drills.
- Commissioner Longo questioned if the Department was contractually obligated to use the current physical provider? Chief Thurz replied the Department is not bound to any contractor, and could switch at any time.

- Chief Thurz also noted the Department had completed the requirements identified by Conn-OSHA as being deficient. A new Respiratory Protection Program Standard Operating Guideline has been drafted, sent to the membership for review, and will take effect on November 10, 2023. He also noted the new fire helmets that were ordered have been delivered and distributed to those that needed them. Conn-OSHA will be back after the first of the new year to review the Department's Hazardous Materials in the fire stations, as well as the Department's Standard Operating Guidelines on Hazardous Materials.
- Commissioner Longo noted prior to adjournment he would like to thank Commissioner Quagliaroli for his years of service and dedication to the Commission and sub-committee meetings.

Meeting Adjourned: Commissioner Quagliaroli made the motion for adjournment, which was seconded by Commissioner Cofiell, and passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:11 PM.

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



Michael Thurz
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