

Board of Fire Commissioners
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
June 6, 2024

Present: Commissioner Longo, Commissioner Cavanaugh, Commissioner Bemer, Commissioner Cofiell, and Commissioner Nursick

Absent: None

Others: Chief Michael Thurz and Assistant Chief David Thurz

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 May 2, 2024 meeting. Commissioner Bemer made the motion to accept, which was seconded by Commissioner Cofiell. Commissioner Nursick raised a question regarding the approval of the April minutes, as he did not vote. It was explained that because Commissioner Nursick was not appointed to the commission at that time it was not reflected in the minutes. The only members that could approve the April minutes were Commissioners Longo, Cavanaugh and Bemer, as Commissioner Cofiell was not present, and Commissioners Cafazzo and Dutton have since resigned. Chief Thurz added that Commissioner Nursick identified three typographical errors in the prior month's minutes. There was no further discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

Correspondence:

None

Chief's Report:

Chief Thurz reported the following:

- Still working with Facilities staff to close out the remaining punch list items with the contractor for Stations 3 and 4, which are minor. Some of the outstanding items will be addressed internally by Facilities staff. Retainage is still be held back from the contractor. Will be working with Dan Pennington, who is the interim Facilities Director, and Greg Barnett to get the work completed.
- The final inspection trip for the two new apparatus is scheduled for July 7th to 9th. Completion of the trucks is ahead of schedule. The trucks should be in Cheshire, Connecticut by the end of July. Three members from each company, along with two representatives from Marion will review the trucks at the factory. Once the trucks arrive in Cheshire equipment will be installed with delivery to Glastonbury by August.
- A copy of the first quarter report was provided to commission members, which was also emailed to them on May 6, 2024. Chief Thurz provided an overview of the report, which included the different types of incidents for the quarter, comparison of the nine National Fire Incident Reporting System categories year over year, a heat map, number of incidents by day of week, and time of day. The report also included an updated on the

OSHA 1910.156 Fire Brigade comment period, the need to schedule a swearing in for the five new members who recently completed their probation and Firefighter I certification, update on the new apparatus, renovation work at the fire training facility, and the need to work on a plan for the department's 100th anniversary, which will be in 2027.

- A recruitment flyer had been developed that will be included as an insert in the July tax bill. Chief Thurz stated the flyer was another way to promote recruitment efforts. The flyer was established with the help of the Town's Communication and Marketing Specialist.
- The department held two meetings to introduced the new stipend program, which takes effect July 1st. A total of 47 members participated between the two meetings, 41 at the first meeting and six at the second. Commissioners Bemer and Nursick attended the first meeting, with Commissioner Bemer attending the second meeting.
- The Department will be participating in the first Pride Festival, which will be held on Sunday, June 9th at the Hubbard Green. The department will utilize this opportunity to promote recruitment and fire prevention efforts. Firefighter Sarah Chaffee will be the lead for this event.
- With the changes to the stipend program there are some minor revisions that need to be made to the By-Laws. There are references within the By-Laws to "units, hours and compensation" that should be removed. There are seven references to "units", nine references to "hours", and one reference to compensation. In accordance to the By-Laws, recommended amendments need to be submitted to the Chair of the Fire Commission, and post in each fire station for 30 days. The intent is to have this completed prior to the August meeting.
- On July 23rd, the Connecticut Fire Chiefs Association will hold a dinner in Portland. Chief Thurz invited commission members to be his guest at the dinner. Commissioner Cofield has attended in the past, and welcomed other members to participate as well.
- Commissioner Bemer inquired as to the status of the Utility Terrain Vehicle (UTV) for Station 4? Chief Thurz reported he should know of a delivered date within the next seven to 10 days.
- Commissioner Nursick inquired about the second meeting with department members regarding the new points system? Chief Thurz stated the meeting took place on June 5th. Commissioner Nursick did not know there was a second meeting, and heard by watching the Town Council meeting that it was scheduled for Friday, June 7th. Chief Thurz mentioned he sent an email to the membership through the I am Responding application, which Commissioner Nursick did not have. Commissioner Nursick noted had he known there was a meeting he would have attended as well. Commissioner Nursick thought the Town Manager stated at the last Town Council meeting there was going to be a second meeting. Commissioner Bemer replied the Town Manager mentioned June 6th, which was an error, the meeting was June 5th. Commissioner Nursick asked if he should

have access to the I am Responding application? Chief Thurz stated the application sends out notifications by email, text message and the application itself. Most members rely on their phones, so the application is all encompassing. The notification was sent to all members through the application, which Commissioner Nursick would need to get registered. Chief Thurz will work with Commissioner Nursick to get him access.

- Commissioner Longo inquired about the buildings, and how he doesn't understand why there are still outstanding items on the punch list? Who is responsible, is it Facilities? Chief Thurz replied the town has another interim Facilities Director, and that he is relying on Facilities staff to get the remaining work completed. The remaining punch list item is very minor, e.g., replace small section of VCT tile in a kitchen, install a piece of trim, install mop hangers. Commissioner Longo understands that its minor, but it just doesn't make sense.
- Commissioner Cofiell commented he has heard nothing but good things about the updates completed at the training facility. Members are happy with the way the building came out and the changes made. Chief Thurz replied there is still more work to be done at the training facility. This includes changing the lights on the telephone poles to LED, installing more pavement, and possibly purchasing additional training props. Chief Thurz also mentioned new thermal couples were installed to measure the temperatures inside the building, and going from battery to electric, with both audible and visual warning devices for the monitor. The newer system allows for the temperature readings to be download. In the event of an injury we can download what the actual temperature was inside the building. The addition of a third burn room also allows for more maneuverability inside as well.
- Commissioner Cofiell stated there was talk about making changes to the pond, with the weeds? Chief Thurz replied the department needs to be careful around the wetlands. The Highway Department is asked to periodically come to mow the area.
- Operating expense overview
- Commissioner Longo inquired about the invoice for Ladder 31 from the previous month's meeting, and if there was any additional information? Chief Thurz replied he confirmed with Vehicle Maintenance it was to repair the waterway. Commissioner Longo also inquired about the invoice for Petzold's Marina? Chief Thurz replied it was for a lower unit and impeller on Marine 2's motor. Commissioner Nursick inquired if that was for the Boston Whaler? Chief Thurz replied yes.
- Commissioner Bemer inquired about the physicals, and if they were completed for the year? Chief Thurz replied no, that physicals are on a rotating basis. They are set up to be completed twice a month. For the fiscal year, physicals are nearing completion. Assistant Chief Thurz reported approximately 50 members have completed physicals, with 18 scheduled in June. Commissioner Bemer inquired how they have been going? Assistant Chief Thurz stated they are working well, and that we are trying to schedule physicals on a quarterly basis. Chief Thurz further explained that at the

beginning of each fiscal year an open purchase order is created. Invoices are paid monthly, but the total cost is always encumbered during the first month of each fiscal year. Commissioner Bemer inquired about the process for a new member? Chief Thurz explained they get a physical, then a work skills assessment with Select Physical Therapy. The department does not have an open purchase order with Select Physical Therapy. Any invoices sent by Select Physical Therapy is paid when received.

- Commissioner Longo inquired of those that were placed on medical leave, if any have been reinstated or resigned from the department? Chief Thurz replied no one has resigned. Two that were on medical leave recently received medical clearance. One will serve in a support role until further medical clearance is given. The other will be coming back with no restrictions. Both individuals that required further medical evaluations were responsible in making their own appointments as part of the required follow ups.

Old Business:

- Commissioner Longo stated that none of the other Commissioners expressed any items to be added to the agenda under Old Business. Commissioner Longo noted that Commissioner Bemer did raise some questions about the operating expenses, which were relayed to Chief Thurz. Commissioner Longo asked Commissioner Bemer if he was satisfied with Chief Thurz's report? Commissioner Bemer was, and stated he wanted to make sure that nothing was given back.
- Commissioner Cofiell noted the Vehicle Maintenance account will consume any savings from the other accounts. Chief Thurz replied there are additional vehicle expenses that have yet to be processed, including a new swivel dump chute for Tanker 34 since that vehicle will not be replaced for a while. Commissioner Longo asked if the new swivel dump chute needed to be fabricated? Chief Thurz replied the chute is made by Newton Dump Valves. Some fabrication will need to be made, and First Line in Cromwell will be performing the work. The cost for the new chute is \$7.2K, which is not a bad investment for a vehicle that will still be in service for at least three more years.
- Commissioner Longo inquired about Marine 2, and if a break-even point has been established concerning when enough is enough to continue investing in the boat? Chief Thurz replied when the time comes to replace the entire motor.

New Business:

- Commissioner Bemer inquired about bonding the three new apparatus, and asked if it could be added to the agenda in either September or October so that the commission was informed? He stated the Town Council said either this year or next year. The Town Manager should be advising the Fire Chief or the Fire Commission.
- Commissioner Cofiell interjected stating through conversation he had with members of the Board of Finance that bonding is only a suggestion. There is still some uncertainty, which would also include some Board of Education projects as well. The fire apparatus is minor in comparison to the number of school projects.

- Commissioner Bemer replied maybe, but if there are two items on the ballot, \$16 million for the high school and \$6 million for fire apparatus then its even.
- Commissioner Cofiell replied there is a possibility that could happen, but his understanding its very preliminary.
- Chief Thurz injected that when he meets with Commissioners Longo and Cavanaugh about next year's budget, and if bonding is an option, he will include it on the agenda. If there is no bonding then the apparatus will remain in the Capital Improvement Program. Chief Thurz also noted it is his understanding that if bonding was to take place it would not be until November 2025. Chief Thurz did not feel it was relevant at this time to be added to the agenda.
- Commissioner Cavanaugh stated the decision to bond, or not is not a decision for the Fire Commission to make.
- Chief Thurz felt when the final decision pertaining to bonding is made the department will have a better idea in how to address the matter. One other item to consider for Capital Improvement would be to replace the self-contained breathing apparatus compressor, which is nearing 30 years of age.
- Commissioner Longo stated once the Town has a direction, then the commission should get more involved. The other reason is based on the amount of scrutiny the apparatus faced during the past year. He felt the better prepared the commission is to rebut or provide more information would make it more favorable.
- Commissioner Bemer stated he just wanted to be prepared.
- Commissioner Nursick wanted to address under new business the installation of the new island along Main Street. He noticed that the No Parking areas have been pushed back, and questioned if this would impede apparatus getting through the area? Chief Thurz replied he would take a look at the area. Commissioner Nursick was also concerned if a vehicle was to stop in this area as an emergency vehicle approaches would that be an issue as well? Chief Thurz noted that the apparatus driver would utilize the horns of the vehicle to get the vehicle to move.
- Commissioner Nursick also raised concerns about the security of the fire boat at the boathouse. His concern is that the cameras cannot see the boat when docked at the public safety dock. Chief Thurz advised the cameras are not being monitor, unless there is an incident at the boathouse. Commissioner Nursick felt the boat is a town asset, and like other town facilities there should be cameras to monitor the area, and if not, then there should be for security purposes.
- Commissioner Nursick's other issue is that everything on the boat needs to be locked down

because the public can get onto the boat. He felt that signage should be put in place that indicates the general public is prohibited from boarding the boat.

- Commissioner Longo felt both comments were reasonable, but understands the cameras are not being monitored.
- Commissioner Cofiehl remarked that he remembered a time when Dispatch received a call about people on the boat, and were able to see kids jumping off of it.
- Chief Thurz stated Dispatch can see the boat when its on the public safety dock, but can't when it is relocated to the public dock because it is further down. Because of the amount of silt that ends up at the public safety the boat gets beached. If the high school does not do a summer program, then the fire boat will be relocated to the crew dock where it is closer to the cameras. Chief Thurz is waiting to hear back from the Athletic Director if there will be a summer program. There are funds appropriated to eventually relocated the public safety dock to the bulkhead, which would be closer to the boat house, and would install a door with wings on it to prevent the public from getting onto the dock. Chief Thurz has sent an email to both Dan Pennington and Lisa Zerio on the matter. There has also been complaints from the public about the launch getting filled in with silt.
- Commissioner Longo noted signage is an inexpensive solution, but isn't sure it would be enough of a deterrent. Commissioner Cavanaugh noted if the signage stated no trespassing, enforcement action taken, then the Police could issue a ticket.
- Commissioner Nursick asked if the cameras were a mute-point given the boat might be moved? Chief Thurz replied the boat can be seen on the public safety dock. Chief Thurz stated he would move the boat to the crew dock if there is no summer program. If there is a summer program then the fire boat will stay on the public safety dock. Chief Thurz also noted that cameras were only installed at the fire stations within the last two years.
- Chief Thurz did ask commission members if there is anything they wanted added to the agenda under New Business to let the Chair know the Tuesday before the meeting, or send an email directly to him.

Committee Reports:

Strategic Planning Committee:

- Commissioner Bemer advised that Chief Thurz provided an overview of the PowerPoint presentation of the new stipend program. Commissioner Bemer felt it was well presented. There were some questions that Chief Thurz was able to address. There was supposed to be a meeting in June to discuss any thoughts and concerns that came out of the two department meetings. The committee will continue to review the tax abatement, other incentives for renters, and those that live out of town. The committee will not meet in July or August.

- Chief Thurz advised the next meeting was supposed to be June 17th. However, the officers have been invited to Colchester for a presentation on leadership. There were a few members of the Strategic Planning Committee that expressed an interest in attending the training so the June meeting is either going to be rescheduled or cancelled until September.
- Commissioner Cavanaugh asked how the delivery went of the two presentations pertaining to the new incentive plan? Commissioner Bemer noted there were some people that asked questions. Chief Thurz did a good job with the presentation. Some members brought up items that did not necessary pertain to the topic. Commissioner Bemer felt overall it was successful, and had talked to some before and afterwards who felt it was well presented, and now know where everything stands. Most of the questions were answered during the presentation.
- Commissioner Nursick noted he attend the presentation at the RCC and felt it was overwhelming well received, particularly the conversations afterwards. There were some vocal opinions during the presentation, but felt most that attended were pleased with the new point system.
- Commissioner Longo asked if evaluation were still taking place on an annual basis, and if they were well perceived? Chief Thurz replied they are still taking place, and that the Deputy Chiefs were going over them with the company officers.
- Commissioner Longo noted there is no July meeting because the meeting is near the fourth of July. Chief Thurz replied there was no meeting scheduled for July because it is the Fourth of July. The next meeting will be August 1st.

Commissioner Bemer made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Cofiell. The motion passed unanimously.

Meeting Adjourned: The meeting adjourned at 7:20 PM.

Next Meeting: The next regular meeting will be held on August 1, 2024, at Company 1, 2825 Main Street, at 6:30 PM.



Michael Thurz – Fire Chief
Recording Secretary

c: Fire Commission (5)
Fire Chiefs (4)
Fire Captains (4)
Jonathan Luiz, Town Manager
Michael Makuch, Fire Marshal
Gina Consiglio, Purchasing Agent

