

TOWN OF WOODBRIDGE
Board of Fire Commissioners
Minutes of Regular Meeting
Monday, January 22, 2018 – 6:00 pm
Woodbridge Fire Department

Present: *Chairman Elia Alexiades, Secretary Mike Soufrine, Commissioner Karen Baldwin-Kravetz, Chief Sean Rowland, Assistant Chief Chris Bahner, Fire Marshal Joe Cappucci, Nate Case (Executive Board Liaison), First Selectman Beth Heller (BOS Liaison), Susan Jacobs (BOF Liaison)*

Absent: *Vice Chairman Michael Horton, Commissioner Bruce Mandell*

Call to Order

Chairman Alexiades convened the meeting at 6:12 pm.

Public Comments

None

Liaison Comments

First Selectman Heller thanked the department for saving the home on Inwood Road. She noted the weather conditions were impossible to describe and the items that broke are crucial to firefighter safety so the town will do what needs to be done to get the department back up and running.

Liaison Jacobs stated the department is on the Board of Finance agenda tomorrow night at 6:00 pm.

Review Current Financial Statements

Year-to-Date FC Operating Budget and Capital Budget

Chief Rowland distributed and reviewed the budget reports. Lines to look at are 53510 and 55120. Repair Maintenance Machinery (53510) is over 100% spent. We knew we would exceed the budget number this year. Last year's budget request was \$68,000 which got cut to \$57,000. We spent \$89,000 the year before and \$120,000 the year before that. We had an issue with Tanker 8 at the Inwood fire. It involves either the pump or the pump cooler. This can be an expensive fix. We hope it is less than \$35,000. The Inwood damage will be covered by insurance. Technical (55120) is getting close. We are going through a lot more supplies when call volume is up. This line covers consumables such as speedy dry, drip pans, gas pads, water, plug and dike, and supplies on the trucks. Discussion followed.

Gear replacement will be close as we have new members joining. They get outfitted with the older gear (younger than 10 years old) until they finish training. During the Inwood fire we lost a lot of structural firefighting gloves; the linings pulled out when they froze.

Chief Rowland shared budgeting graphs. Discussion took place.

Operating budget request

Chief distributed and explained the draft budget request. Discussion took place regarding annual physicals. Every firefighter and driver has to have a physical and paperwork in hand by the town at day 365, per OSHA mandate. We were fined after the JCC fire after which we did away with the grace period. This

involves taking off a day of work to go get their physical. Firefighters under 40 years old have a physical and stress test every 3 yrs., those aged 40-50 go every 2 yrs., and 50 years old and above go every year. Drivers need a current DOT card. There is a lot entailed and then if there is an issue, follow up with their private doctor is required. They then need to provide a letter to Yale New Haven Occupational Health to be cleared before returning to active status.

Chief noted the computer line name is changing. Discussion took place on hydrant charges and volunteer incentives. **MOTION** (BALDWIN-KRAVETZ/SOUFRINE) to approve the operating budget request as submitted; **MOTION** approved unanimously (ALEXIADES/SOUFRINE/BALDWIN-KRAVETZ).

Fire Chief's Report – Fire Chief Rowland

Receive Report

Chief reported on the department's response to the oil tanker roll-over accident and the use of the hydraulic tools for the required extrication.

Dispatch –

Nothing to report

Radio System Upgrade –

Chief reported that he has no idea where things stand with the radio system upgrade. Chairman Alexiades expressed that the Chief should be a voting member of the committee; he feels very strongly about this. Discussion took place and included the importance of having the end users on the project. When the firehouse was being built, the Chief was a voting member of the committee. First Selectman Heller stated the decision is up to her. The next Board of Selectman meeting is February 14th. **MOTION** (ALEXIADES/SOUFRINE) to recommend to the First Selectman that the Fire Chief be appointment to the Ad Hoc Radio System Upgrade Committee as a full voting member; **MOTION** approved unanimously (ALEXIADES/SOUFRINE/BALDWIN-KRAVETZ).

Structure Fire 1/5/18

Damaged apparatus/equipment/gear report

Chief showed a video of the incident. He noted 6 firefighters were injured; one required stitches and others involved high blood pressure and shoulder/knee/back injuries. Many slips and falls in snow and ice occurred. Firefighters are carrying a 45 pound air pack and a halligan bar, while wearing heavy gear and a mask and pulling hose through the snow and ice. There were freeze conditions in the driveway and around the portable ponds. Prospect Fire went and got salt and sand to help. Chief explained some of the damage that occurred and how it occurred. Damage included broken nozzles, the brass tank fill valves on Tanker 5 bent from the ice, Tanker 8 was dumping hydraulic fluid on the ground and its pump cooler froze up and cracked. Valves separated and broke. All the pumps need to be tested and recertified. The tank fill on Engine 3 froze up at the hydrant on the corner of Beecher and Rimmon. At approximately 8:00 pm, air packs started becoming frozen blocks. All packs need to be tested and recertified. Hand lights shattered if dropped on the ground and will need to be replaced. Both tankers are in service; we can pump with 5, but not 8. Both can transport water without pumping. In addition scene lights got wet, froze, and snapped off. Chief has never seen anything to this extent. Hose was solid frozen cylinders and couplings froze and broke. Hose has to be retested. The portable radio batteries wore out in the extreme cold. Structural firefighter gloves came apart when removed. We are still putting a list together on the damage. Seymour Fire broke all three valves on their tanker and it is out of service. A private contractor was hired to start

excavating to help put fire out and do the investigation. That cost will be covered by the homeowner's insurance. It took 2 hours to put fire out. Later, hot spots started catching the attic on fire. Power lines made it impossible to use the tower truck.

Chief reported on an oven fire the following Monday on Robin Road. Last Tuesday, a firefighter was injured while responding to an activated alarm. He got off the truck, slipped on the ice, and hurt his back. In preparation for the blizzard, 22 firefighters stood by. It is hard to respond in heavy snow so Chief called for a standby just in case.

Chief stated the radio went down for 30 minutes today on both the Police and Fire sides. Northeastern was able to repair it. A generator transfer switch at the Center Building for the generator that powers the dispatch console had a loose wire. The system has been failing; it works, but it is spotty.

Chief noted that Tower 1 was used at a recent chimney fire. It provided a safer and more effective response. Chief described the scene and the response. There were 5-6 foot flames coming out of the chimney. Photos showed how tower truck was used; it was fully extended to reach the house.

New apparatus report

Finishing up the spec, but work is on hold since the Inwood fire.

WFD Activity Report – Assistant Fire Chief Bahner

AC Bahner distributed and reviewed his report for November and December. Calls of note were covered during the Chief's report. Discussion took place on charging for alarms by the Police Department.

Fire Marshal's Report - (See attached report)

FM Cappucci distributed and reviewed his report. He conducted 22 inspections, 8 consultations, 2 plan reviews, 2 public education sessions, and 2 fire investigations. The fire at Robin Road involved the stove and is accidental undetermined. The Inwood Road investigation is ongoing, although it was an accidental fire. FM Cappucci brought in the state arson dog and the results were negative. There was a rumor that someone was going around setting houses on fire but these fires were determined to not be intentionally set.

Discussion took place regarding pipes freezing at Beecher Road School. 6 classrooms were damaged and there is a partial blocking of corridors. The goal is to keep everyone safe while also using the school and doing the cleanup. The Fire Marshal and Fire Chief worked together with the school to come up with plan. This is the second time this wing flooded. Issues have included a frozen coil flooding the heating system. The sprinkler has frozen twice. Also there was a backflow preventer problem – the same problem occurred 8 years ago – and the basement area and elevator pit flooded. An alarm should go off if it starts freezing. Further discussion took place. The town is looking into why these incidents are occurring with the new system. FM Cappucci also noted the humidifier in pool area broke and the pool needed to be shut down for a week.

Chairman's Report

None

Executive Session per section 1-200 for personnel matters (firefighter injury report)

MOTION (ALEXIADES/BALDWIN-KRAVETZ) to move into executive session to discuss personnel matters with Commissioners and Chief present; **MOTION** passed unanimously (ALEXIADES/SOUFRINE/BALDWIN-KRAVETZ). Returned to regular session at 8:15 pm. No action taken during executive session.

Correspondence

None

Other Business that May be Voted to be Placed on the Agenda (if necessary)

None

Approval of Minutes

With no objection, approval of the minutes was tabled until the next meeting.

Next Meeting Date:

The next Regular Meeting will be February 26, 2018 (4th Monday).

Adjournment

MOTION (ALEXIADES/SOUFRINE) to adjourn. With unanimous approval, the meeting adjourned at 8:17 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Secretary Michael Soufrine
Board of Fire Commissioners

Aimee Cotton Bogush, Clerk
Board of Fire Commissioners