

TOWN OF WOODBRIDGE
Board of Fire Commissioners
Minutes of Regular Meeting
Monday, March 19, 2018 – 6:00 pm
Woodbridge Fire Department

Present: *Chairman Elia Alexiades, Vice Chairman Michael Horton, 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: *Commissioner Bruce Mandell*

Call to Order

Chairman Alexiades convened the meeting at 6:09 pm.

Public Comments

None

Liaison Comments

First Selectwoman Heller reported the Board of Selectmen made budget recommendations and forwarded them to the Board of Finance. Ms. Jacobs reported the Board of Finance voted on some cuts; they were not unanimous. The goal is to get as close to a 1% increase as possible. They want to come back to the Fire Commission for more information. Tony Genovese will reach out and report back. The board was unanimous in applauding the wonderful job the Department did for the last 3 storms in two weeks.

Review Current Financial Statements

Year-to-Date FC Operating Budget and Capital Budget

Chief Rowland distributed and reviewed the budget reports. He explained the \$22,600 overage in Repair and Maintenance (53510). A portion is due to the Inwood fire and is expected to be reimbursed from insurance. A request of \$35,000 was made to the Board of Selectmen/Board of Finance to bridge the gap until the end of the year. Chief expects that number to go up. There was an issue with Engine 3 during the storm and it required repairs to the radiator, tank fill, and hose reel. First Selectman Heller said the Department has been given the go ahead on purchasing a new Engine 3 and requested the specs. Chairman Alexiades stated those working on the specs have been very busy this month. Chief Rowland mentioned other repairs that were needed due to the amount of calls. One set of Amkus tools broke during use at an extrication on the Parkway; waiting to find out if a repair or replacement is needed.

Another line Chief is watching is Technical (55120). The everyday consumables come out of this line. We are was up on calls, so it is not a surprise that we will run over that line this year based on call volume.

The Tire line will be close; there is no wiggle room. Once the tires are 7 years old from the date of manufacture, they have to be replaced per DOT. The old ones are given to Public Works for the dump trucks, providing savings to that budget. Tires are on order and expected in the next 2 weeks. The cost for Engine 9 alone, is \$5, 000.

The overall budget is close, but Chief will work try to stay within and cover overages from our budget with line item transfers. Repair and Maintenance (53510) was cut from \$68,000 to \$57,000 last year. He is not sure what the BOF recommendation was for next year – the request was for \$68,000 again.

Fire Chief's Report – Fire Chief Rowland

Receive Report

Storms

Chief distributed a call volume comparison for 2017 to 2018 and reviewed it with the Commission. There were 77 calls during the first storm and 165 during the second (a 48 hour period). The firefighters and apparatus were busy; there was a lot of use and abuse from the use in the storms. Discussion took place on the types of calls which included downed trees, downed trees with power lines, roads blocked off with no access, power lines burning on ground, services ripped off the houses (fire hazard), trees on houses, motor vehicle accidents, activated alarms, make safe crew work, primary wires on ground arcing and burning. Underground wires were mentioned; they are prohibitively expensive. Approximately 25 firefighters responded and during another storm last week, 20 firefighters took off work and stood by. Another storm is expected this week with 5-7 inches of snow accompanied by wind. The Department has been extremely busy.

Dispatch –

Dispatch remains an ongoing issue.

Radio System Upgrade –

Chief reports the Radio Committee is meeting tomorrow at 5:30 pm at Town Hall. They are getting to the point of ordering some Phase One items to be shipped; most likely the consoles (2 for PD and 1 for FD). Once ordered, expect them to take 120-180 days. Continued work is being done to secure agreements with other tower sites; to get them spec-ed, and bid out.

Chief reminded the Commissioners there were multiple injuries at the Inwood fire. One firefighter received bills from AMR and Yale. Chief would like to see the bills go directly to the town rather than the individual's house. The Town should follow up and make sure the bills don't go to the firefighters; it is stressful to receive them. This remains a very sensitive issue in the Department because of the threat of collections in the past. It is better now with the current company, but flags are raised easily due to the history. First Selectwoman Heller will find out what the Town can do in the future and will report back to the Chief tomorrow.

Chief reported that he submitted AJ Pocwierz for the First Selectman's Youth Award. He described AJ's service to the Department.

WFD Activity Report – Assistant Fire Chief Bahner

AC Bahner distributed and reviewed his report for February. Calls of note were discussed.

Fire Marshal's Report - (See attached report)

FM Cappucci distributed and reviewed his report. He conducted 16 inspections, 7 consultations, 2 plan reviews, and 3 fire investigations in not quite a month. Discussion took place on the consultation for a dry standpipe at the JCC (requested by the FD to enhance firefighting capabilities at the location).

Chairman's Report

Chairman Alexiades added his voice to the chorus of thanks to the firefighters - the officers, the volunteers, and their families for their hard work over the past month. He did a ride-around with the Chief one night – he knew from the outside what was happening, but to see the trees down and the trees and wires across the road was really something.

Executive Session per section 1-200

Deferred to end of meeting.

Correspondence

Thank you's from residents for assistance in recent storms were shared. Discussion took place regarding power line safety and downed wires. There were numerous close calls during the storm; people were attempting to clear wires and trees from their roads and property. The Fire and Police Chiefs contacted the Superintendent to keep children home one more day. Nate Case described what he witnessed while assisting the Make Safe Crew. People were driving around a live wire; a generator was back feeding due to incorrect installation and energizing it. People were driving through barricades as well. Also, some generators were blowing exhaust into windows, causing carbon monoxide conditions. We will make new barricades and also get information out to the public about power line safety in addition to the generator safety information we provide.

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

None

Approval of Minutes –

The approval of minutes was deferred to next meeting. (Heller left at 6:43 pm.)

Next Meeting Date:

The next Regular Meeting will be April 23, 2018.

Executive session:

MOTION (ALEXIADES/HORTON) to enter Executive Session to discuss security and personnel/workers comp issues, with Fire Chief and Commissioners; **MOTION** approved unanimously (ALEXIADES/HORTON/SOUFRINE/BALDWIN-KRAVETZ). Executive Session began at 6:44 pm. The Commission returned to Regular Session at 7:06 pm. No business, motions, or decisions were made during Executive Session.

Adjournment

MOTION (HORTON/SOUFRINE) to adjourn. With unanimous approval, the meeting adjourned at 7:06 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Secretary Michael Soufrine
Board of Fire Commissioners

Aimee Cotton Bogush, Clerk
Board of Fire Commissioners