

TOWN OF WOODBRIDGE
Board of Fire Commissioners
Minutes of Regular Meeting
Monday, January 14, 2019 – 6:00 pm
Woodbridge Fire Department

Present: *Chairman Elia Alexiades, Secretary Mike Soufrine, Commissioner Karen Baldwin-Kravetz, Commissioner Bruce Mandell (arr. 7:27 pm), Chief Sean Rowland, Assistant Chief Chris Bahner, Fire Marshal Joe Cappucci, Nate Case (Executive Board Liaison), First Selectman Beth Heller (BOS liaison)*

Absent: *Vice Chairman Michael Horton, Tom Handler (BOF liaison)*

Call to Order

Chairman Alexiades convened the meeting at 6:22 pm.

Public Comments

None

Liaison Comments

First Selectman Heller reported the BOS had a quiet meeting in January and nothing critical to fire was discussed. She recommended the commission be aware of the rising mill rate as the budget request is considered.

Review Current Financial Statements

Year-to-Date FC Operating Budget and Capital Budget

Chief Rowland distributed the FY2019 budget and reviewed the Repair Maintenance line (53510). He noted the average spent for the past 3 years is \$100,000. With \$68,000 in the line he tries to cover the rest with other budget lines later in the year. Everything else will be close but should be okay. Hydrants will be over due to hydrant repairs and increased costs for RWA. Discussion took place.

Operating budget request– FY20

Chief distributed the draft request and reviewed it with the commission. No salary increases are included. Chief explained overtime clerical and buy back sick days. Volunteer incentives shows an increase to \$80,000 (tried to increase this in the past) and it is in line with the increase in call volume and hours as well as a number of new members. Chief explained how incentives and tax abatement are calculated and the eligibility requirements. The Repair and Maintenance (53510) request increased to \$80,000; a more realistic number. Discussion took place on the Radio and Training lines. Technical shows an increase due to increased call volume and use of consumable supplies that come off the trucks. Hydrants will increase an estimated 8-8.5%; RWA to announce in late February. Discussed the capital machinery line items including digital pagers (to read new digital radio system), saws, ventilation fan (intrinsicly safe), and streamlights (flashlights mounted on the trucks). The commission reviewed the number of calls (up 45.5%) and number of volunteer hours (up 56.86%).

MOTION (BALDWIN-KRAVETZ/SOUFRINE) to approve the operating budget request for FY20 as submitted. Discussion followed. Commissioner Baldwin-Kravetz noted the Chief has prepared a conservative budget that for the most part stays the same except where the department does not control, or external forces require increases. Commissioner Alexiades stated it is a practical budget. Chief added that \$80,000 is a more realistic budget number for Repair and Maintenance (53510) and it may come back down with the continued purchasing of new apparatus and lower call volume. Even with new apparatus, a

year with a call volume such as 2018 would create additional costs. Discussion continued. **MOTION** passed unanimously (ALEXIADES/BALDWIN-KRAVETZ/SOUFRINE).

Fire Chief's Report – Fire Chief Rowland

Chief Rowland reported the WVFA was incorporated 90 years ago this year. A special celebration will take place at the installation dinner on May 4th and the commissioners are invited. Charlie Whiting has served for 70 years and several others are in the 40 -50 year range. It is important to have longevity in the department.

Four members are in EMT class for the first time and will bring us to 20 EMTs (the rest must be recertified). One new member is in FFI and one in FFII. E3 is all set; choosing a date with E1 to do a preconference on the truck in Florida. Chief expects delivery this time next year.

The 20th Annual Snowflake Dance & Auction is 2/23/19 at the JCC. Ads and auction items are needed.

FIT testing will finish this week – within the OSHA timeline.

Santa and Mrs. Claus were a big success again this year. Thank you to Emil, Dwight and Beth.

Chief met with Tony and Fire Marshal Cappucci about securing the country club. The town will drain the system and get it secured as a vacant property to save money on heat, oil, and water.

The Radio Committee did not meet; the next meeting will focus on costs.

Commissioner Baldwin-Kravetz followed up on the December meeting when members came with their families to speak about not feeling safe on calls, not reliably getting information on where and what is the call nature, delays, and other issues. She met with First Selectman Heller and talked about action items. Several of the action items came to fruition and are in progress. The card set was implemented today and there is an agreement to move forward with ordering and implementation of ProQA. Weekly conference calls with the Fire Chief, Police Chief, First Selectman, and members of the Police and Fire Commissions will take place. The purpose is to deal with any issues that come up during the week and then follow up to make sure it does not happen again. Commissioner Baldwin-Kravetz explained while in short term the goal is to try to improve the safety of the system, the long-term goal is to address the structural and institutional issues plaguing dispatch for many years. Chairman Alexiades is very happy to see progress and is cautiously optimistic. First Selectman Heller thanks everyone who has participated.

WFD Activity Report – Assistant Fire Chief Bahner

Receive Activity Reports, Statistics, & Vehicle Response Report (attached)
Distributed and reviewed the report for the year.

Fire Marshal's Report – Fire Marshal Joseph Cappucci

FM Cappucci distributed and reviewed his report (attached). From November 19, 2018 to January 10, 2019 he conducted 77 inspections, 3 public ed, 2 fire investigations (reviewing the end of the year report from the State), 15 consultations, and 1 plan review. Discussion followed.

Chairman's Report

Chairman Alexiades thanked Commissioner Kravetz for pitching in when his availability was limited in the past few weeks. In addition to the 90th anniversary, Chairman Alexiades urged all to attend the upcoming Snowflake Dance & Auction on February 23, 2019.

Executive session

None

Correspondence

None

Approval of minutes

MOTION (MANDELL/SOUFRINE) to approve the minutes from October 22, 2018 as presented;

MOTION passed unanimously (ALEXIADES/BALDWIN-KRAVETZ/SOUFRINE/MANDELL).

MOTION (SOUFRINE/BALDWIN-KRAVETZ) to approve the minutes from November 19, 2018 as

presented; **MOTION** passed unanimously (ALEXIADES/BALDWIN-KRAVETZ/SOUFRINE/

MANDELL).

Commission deferred approval of the 12/12/18 minutes.

Next Meeting Date

February 11, 2019

Adjournment

MOTION (SOUFRINE/MANDELL) to adjourn. With unanimous approval, the meeting adjourned at

7:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Secretary Michael Soufrine
Board of Fire Commissioners

Aimee Cotton Bogush, Clerk
Board of Fire Commissioners