

**Chester Board of Fire Commissioners**  
**Minutes – January 31, 2024 Special Meeting**  
**Page 1 of 2**

The Chester Board of Fire Commissioners met on January 31, 2024 at the Fire House, 6 High Street. In attendance were Bob Bandzes, Bettie Perreault, Bob Quale and Rick Schreiber. Also, present were Chief James Grzybowski, Fire Marshal Dick Leighton, Assistant Chief Charles Greeney, Battalion Chief and Fire Investigator Ben Belisle, Captain James Shaffer and President Rich Tsou.,

**Item 1: Call to Order**

Chair Bettie Perreault called the meeting to order at 7:02 P.M. followed by self-introductions by all present.

**Item 2: Audience of Citizens – No one had anything to offer.**

**Item 3. Review of budget for fiscal year 2024 – 2025**

Copies of the proposed Chester Hose Company budget for the 2024 -2025 fiscal year were distributed to all present. It was noted that the “net” budget request was for \$174,864, with expenditures of approximately \$499,000 and income estimated at approximately \$325,000. (Income represents reimbursement for expenditures associated with responses by the ambulance service provided by the Department. The receipts are received by the Town’s General Fund and not shown in the budget of the Department.)

The Chief reviewed the line items in the proposed budget, noting payroll increases represent rate and step increases for ambulance personnel, as well as rate increases for “pay for call” volunteers. Both the Board of Finance and Board of Selectmen have been advised of the proposed increases, with no objections. (It was noted that applications for needed personnel for the ambulance service have already been received for the current year.)

The capital budget was reviewed, with note that the Town may consider a bond issue to fund future capital expenditures. The request for the up-coming fiscal year is more than the previous year since funding for the on-order new vehicle had been applied instead. Looking to future capital needs, purchase of a ladder truck was discussed in considerable detail.

**Item 4. Action on budget for fiscal year 2024 - 2025**

**On motion by Rick Schreiber, seconded by Bob Bandzes, the proposed budget for the Fire Department presented by Chief Grzybowski, and approved by the members of the Chester Hose Company, in the total amount of \$499,865 was unanimously approved for submission to the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance. (The annual budget is then submitted for vote at a Town Meeting or referendum.)**

**Item 5. Review and discussion regarding proposed new tax exemption details**

Legislation by both Federal and State governments increased the amount of tax exemption Department volunteers could be eligible for if local ordinance(s) were amended to match those requirements. The increase would be from \$1,000 to \$2,000, annually, with applicants meeting participation requirements. Approximately 15 Department members are currently

**Chester Board of Fire Commissioners**  
**Minutes – January 31, 2024 Special Meeting**  
**Page 2 of 2**

utilizing this exemption. Revision to the Town's ordinance(s) to match the requirements of the Federal and State legislation will be submitted to the Board of Selectmen for approval and subsequent action by a Town Meeting. (It was noted Hose Company members have approved the proposed change.) At the present time there is no inter-town or mutual agreement for members of area departments in place.

Item 6. Action on new tax exemption details

**On motion by Rick Schreiber, seconded by Bob Bandzes, the proposal to update Town ordinance(s) regarding tax exemption limits for the members of the Chester Hose Company from \$1,000 to \$2,000 to comply with Federal and State legislation, and said ordinance to include language to automatically update other applicable legislation if enacted in the future was unanimously approved for submission to the Board of Selectmen and action by vote at a Town Meeting.**

Item 7. Other – Members or Guests – No one had anything to offer.

Item 8. Adjournment:

There being no further business brought up,

**On Motion by Bob Quale, seconded by Rick Schreiber, the meeting was adjourned at 7:29 P.M.**

Respectfully submitted,

*Bettie Perreault*

Bettie Perreault, Chair