

**Chester Board of Fire Commissioners**  
**Regular Meeting, May 18, 2016**  
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The Chester Board of Fire Commissioners held its regular meeting on Wednesday, April 20, 2016 at the Chester Fire House, 6 High Street, Chester, CT. In attendance were Joel Severance, Chairman, John Divis, Bettie Perreault, Rick Schreiber, Peter Zanardi, and Charlene Janecek representing the Board of Selectmen. Ex-officio members present were Fire Chief James Schaefer, First Lieutenant James Grzybowski, Fire Marshal Dick Leighton and Fire Investigator David Roberge.

Chairman Severance called the meeting to order at 7:30 P.M.

In the absence of the Recording Secretary, Severance requested that a member take the minutes of the meeting.

Item 1: Approval of Minutes of April 20, 2016

On motion by Schreiber, seconded by Divis, the minutes of the April 20, 2016 meeting were approved as written. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 2: Audience of Citizens: there were none

Item 3: Report of Fire Marshal

Fire Marshal Leighton made note of the fact that the Office of Fire Marshal has experienced high expenditures due to more activity and would end the fiscal year over-expanded. Fire Investigator Roberge assured the Commission officials are and will continue to use available resources to best support the community, and that even with efforts to conserve budgetary resources over-expenditure was expected. Both the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance have been made aware of the situation.

Both officials reviewed the activity report for the previous month, with explanation of how on-going activities would be undertaken to ensure compliance and public safety with budgetary limitations in mind. Specific activities of an on-going nature have also been reviewed with Town Counsel John Bennet. Note was made that Bennet has recused himself in connection his representation of one his clients who is one of the parties involved in matters under review by the Fire Marshal.

Item 4: Report of Fire Chief

Fire Chief Schaefer discussed activities in the Center of town now that the Main Street bridge project has progressed to the point where the road has been opened to vehicular traffic. Fire Department personnel will be reviewing access by equipment in various situations, and how events and activities can safely be held in the reconfigured commercial and residential areas. Note was made that the Farmers' Market would resume Sunday operations on June 12 and that the Department would have to review and approve plans and operations to ensure that all safety concerns can be met.

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At 7:38 P.M., on motion by Zanardi, seconded by Schreiber the Commission unanimously voted to go into Executive Session to review authorization and powers invested in the office of the Fire Marshal. The Commission returned to open session at 7:47 P.M.

On motion by Schreiber, seconded by Zanardi, the Commission voted unanimously to authorize the Chairman to submit correspondence to the appropriate State agencies confirming history of actions taken.

Chairman Severance complimented the Chief and the Department on their response to a recent water-related incident, pointing out the complexities of having to deal with multiple responding agencies in similar situations with note of the complexities of a “who’s on first” command chain in a variety of scenarios.

**Item 5: Report of First Selectman**

Selectman Janacek reported, “...the Center is open for business...” following the opening of Main Street to vehicular traffic the previous week. Difficulty navigating a turning radius for some emergency vehicles turning onto Main Street from Route 148/West Main Street was pointed out, with particular note made of the hazards created by illegally or improperly parked or over-sized vehicles, which reduce the available travel lane. The potential for damage to such vehicles is of concern. In an extreme emergency, vehicles impeding access for emergency vehicles would be removed at the owner’s expense. Additionally, charges would be filed against the vehicle owner and, in the case of commercial vehicles making service or delivery calls to local businesses, the business owner would also be charged. Members discussed who does what, why and when, and what mitigation measures might alleviate hazards of any type in the Center as it moves forward with activities, events and projects. Future activities affecting travel on Main Street as a part of further renovation/restoration/improvements should take these concerns into consideration prior to construction, during the planning phase of any future project(s).

At 8:12 P.M. First Lieutenant Grzybowski left the meeting to respond to an ambulance call.

**Item 6: Report of Emergency Management Director**

EMD Severance advised that he has been in communication with the First Selectman in connection with grant applications and how pending or potential grants and applications might be handled.

EMD Severance reviewed again the recommendation that the Town conduct a Functional Needs Exercise to focus on the opening and operation of the EOC for residents and others with special needs in connection with health issues, mobility, language barriers, etc. Details of when/where to schedule such an Exercise and who should participate were discussed, with note of the fact that similar exercises by other municipalities and agencies have met with poor responses from those who would most need such resources.

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Item 7: Financial Report

- (a) 2015-2016 Budget: Chief Schaefer said that despite recent necessary expenditures, the Department should be able to end the fiscal year within budget with some transfers between line items.
- (b) 2015-2016 Fire Marshal Budget: Fire Marshal Leighton confirmed that the budget will end the year over-expended, but that both the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance had been made aware of the situation. Over-expenditures are not expected to exceed \$5,000.
- (c) 2016-2016 Budget
  - a. Chief Schaefer reported that at the recent Public Meeting there had been much comment and discussion about requested expenditures in connection with Middlesex Hospital Paramedic services. He noted that the request for funding for Fire House repairs had not been included in the Capital Expenditures portion of the Budget presentation. The Town Meeting to vote on the proposed budget is scheduled for May 31. At that meeting a vote on changes to V.S.A.P. will also be included in the notice.
  - b. Fire Marshal Leighton said he had not received any report of changes to the budget submitted for the Office of the Fire Marshal.
  - c. There was brief, general discussion about a variety of changes that had taken place during various budget deliberations. The impact of reduced State funding on all levels was also noted and discussed.

Item 8: Old Business: There was no Old Business to conduct.

Item 9: New Business: There was no New Business to conduct.

There being no other business to conduct, the meeting was adjourned at 8:41 P.M. on motion by Schreiber, seconded by Zanardi. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

*Bettie Perreault*  
Acting Secretary

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