

Chester Board of Fire Commissioners
Minutes, January 18, 2017
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The Chester Board of Fire Commissioners held the regular monthly meeting on Wednesday, January 18, 2017 at the Chester Fire House, 6 High Street, Chester, Connecticut. In attendance were Rick Schreiber (Acting Chairman), Peter Zanardi, John Divis and Bettie Perreault. Ex-officio members present were Fire Chief James Schaefer, First Lieutenant James Grzybowski, Selectman Charlene Janacek, Fire Marshals Richard Leighton and David Roberge. Acting Chairman Schreiber called the meeting to order at 7:37 PM.

In recognition of the recent passing of Charles F. Greeney, Sr., who was a member of the Chester Hose Company for nearly sixty years, serving in many capacities with distinction, dedication and honor, mentoring and guiding innumerable volunteers entering service with the Hose Company and its affiliated organizations, was recognized with unanimous appreciation and gratitude. **Motion by Perreault, seconded by Zanardi was unanimously passed.** Mr. Greeney will be remembered with respect and honor by all who knew him.

Item 1: Approval of Minutes of November 16, 2016:

Motion by Divis, second by Zanardi, to approve November 16, 2016 Minutes as written. Unanimously Approved, with Perreault abstaining

No meeting was held during the month of December 2016; no minutes were required.

Item 2: Audience of Citizens

There were none present.

Item 3: Report of Fire Marshal

Report of activities of the Office of Fire Marshal for the months of November and December 2016 were distributed. Activities and pending actions in connection with a variety of situations, including those also involving the Board of Selectmen and other regulatory boards, commissions and enforcement officials were reviewed and discussed. Specific instances were noted where activities, events and locations currently are affected by prior, precedent-setting practices and where apparent pre-existing non-conformities exist. Discussion noted and considered whether the longevity of the various non-conformities and/or the extension/continuation of prior precedent-setting practices, activities and events can be minimized in the future through more careful and consistent enforcement of the various appropriate regulations, codes and safety considerations. It was pointed out that compliance with existing rules and regulations is not always consistent and could be improved significantly if Town officials and the various enforcement personnel and agencies were to establish, publicize and promote the appropriate details, application procedures and approval protocols.

Motion by Perreault, seconded by Schreiber, to accept the report of the Fire Marshal, with recognition of their ongoing efforts to establish and maintain safety and compliance with all appropriate regulations and codes.

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Item 4: Report of Fire Chief

Chief Schaefer reported the Ambulance service has faced an increasing number of missed calls because volunteers are not available to respond, resulting in significantly reduced revenue. Note was made that most volunteer services and agencies everywhere are finding it difficult to attract, train and retain volunteers, many of whom now are employed out of the local area, have expanding personal responsibilities, limited available time for required training, etc. As a result, two new employees have been hired, one is now trained and ready to start, the second is awaiting approvals; both are presently certified EMTs with prior experience.

The Hose Company has recently purchased hose to replenish the current limited, diminishing inventory. Engine 3 is currently out of service while gauges, which were original equipment on the vehicle, are replaced.

Services for Charles F. "Pops" Greeney will include calling hours on Thursday, January 19, with funeral service at the United Church on Friday, January 20. The need for personnel and locations to manage the anticipated volume of people and vehicles was discussed.

Item 5: Report of First Selectman

Selectman Janacek advised that the Town have recently been advised of expanded State Police enforcement requirements and costs in connection with Winter Carnivale, scheduled for February 19. The Town's budgeted funds for this event are 25% of what is projected to be required. Event sponsors were notified with sufficient advance information to enable them to raise the amount needed; the Town may be obligated to fund the shortage, resulting in a budget over-run.

Item 6: Report of Emergency Management Director

EMD Severance was not present but provided a summary report, which Schreiber read for the record:

"A. Homeland Security grants come to Connecticut as one Grant. Two for Emergency Management:

1) Emergency Management Planning Grants (EMPG) are (mismanaged) by DEMHS, a division of DPSPP. We (Chester) receive \$3,000 per year. This year we are:

- a. Undergoing a major rewrite of our Emergency Operations Plan.*
- b. Completely updating the EOC communications*

We request the grant in September. Historically they haven't been approved until June. 9 months after the October start date.

2) CERT Grants: These are managed by the Statewide Citizens Corps Council. I am a voting member. Our local benefit is the Valley Shore CERTeam. It's a regional Team of volunteers from our area towns. The sponsor is Valley Shore Emergency Management Association (VSEMA), the fiduciary is the Town of Killingworth

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- B. Dpt of Defense Port Security Grants come to us thru USCoast Guard Sector Long Island Sound. I sit on one of two working groups working the grant. One local success was the awarding \$317,000 to Old Saybrook for a Regional Rescue Vessel. As Paul Harvey used to say: "And now for the rest of the story". The Town opted to not accept the grant....a long (ugly) story.*
- C. We now have 4 more Chester people trained in WEBEOC to help out during EOC Activations*
- D. OH, make sure you read above the fold, on the front page of the January 5th VALLEY COURIER. It's about the CDE preparedness for the handling of residents with functional need during an emergency."*

Item 7: Financial Reports

(a) 2016 - 2017 Budget

- a. Chief Schaefer reviewed the current budget status, noting line items with greater or lesser expenditures posted. It was pointed out that some of the items may show differently from the Hose Company budget figures and may need to be reviewed and/or adjusted.
- b. The Hose Company has applied for S.A.F.E.R. Grant funding (Staffing for Adequate Fire Emergency Response), which, if secured could provide for staffing personnel to be phased in over a number of years.

(b) 2016 – 2017 Fire Marshal Budget

- a. FM Leighton distributed the current budget printout, pointing out that all expenditures for the previous quarter are not shown and that some line items are actually over-expended.
- b. Purchases of required Codes have been put on hold, pending issuance of updated versions anticipated to be available later this year. Only sections of the Codes which are applicable to the Town of Chester are generally purchased; access to other sections often is available through other sources.

(c) 2017 – 2018 Budget

- a. Chief Schaefer reviewed the proposed 2017 – 2018 Hose Company Budget with details of individual line items noted. Increases are primarily employee-salary related costs as the result of the increased number of employees. This should also result in increased revenue from higher response numbers. Annual incremental increases for personnel have also been anticipated.

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- b. The process by which accounting/bookkeeping adjustments are made during a fiscal year was discussed, with note that those who administer the budget for the Hose Company are not always made aware of changes made. Selectman Janacek will work with the Chief and Town officials to clarify the practices; they will advise this Board of what they find.

Motion by Zanardi, seconded by Divis to accept the presented proposed 2017 – 2018 Chester Hose Company budget was unanimously approved.

(d) 2017 – 2018 Fire Marshal Budget

- a. FM Leighton distributed proposed 2017 – 2018 Fire Marshal Budget details along with spreadsheet with annual details for the years beginning in 2011, when the current officials became involved, through the present.
- b. Detail showed increasing activity levels for all functions as a result of more complete compliance with applicable regulations, on-going enforcement for remediation of violations and safety concerns, and higher activity levels throughout the town.
- c. Legislated requirements for municipalities to provide relocation funding for residents dislocated as a result of fire, natural disaster or other applicable reasons was discussed. It was noted that the legislation enacting this requirement is several decades old but is seldom addressed or implemented because of the financial repercussions on local communities. A recent workshop attended by the Fire Marshals called for greater attention to the potential needs, implementation and funding requirements, as well as local resources.

Motion by Divis, seconded by Zanardi to accept the presented proposed 2017 – 2018 Fire Marshal budget was unanimously approved.

Item 8: Old Business

There was none brought forward.

Item 9: New Business

The Fire Marshals reported that during various inspections and visits to both businesses and Town properties and buildings, note has been made of a variety of issues that will require remedial actions by owners as well as the Town in both the near-term and in future years. While discussed in general terms, it was noted that in some instances the costs associated with corrective or remedial measures would require significant capital expenditures, and that for any that will be required for Town properties should be addressed by the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance during up-coming and future budget planning sessions.

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The February 19 Winter Carnivale was again discussed. Fire Marshals will, as in prior years, be on-scene throughout the event to monitor safety and code compliance.

Item 10: Adjournment

Motion by Divis, second by Schreiber, to adjourn at 9:11 PM. Unanimously Approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Bettie Perreault
Acting Secretary