

Chester Board of Fire Commissioners
Minutes, July 19, 2016
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The Chester Board of Fire Commissioners held the rescheduled July meeting on Tuesday, July 19, 2016, at the Chester Fire House, 6 High Street, Chester, Connecticut. In attendance were Joel Severance, Rick Schreiber, 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 and Peter Terenzi. Chairman Severance called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM.

Item 1: Approval of Minutes of June 15, 2016

Motion by Schreiber, second by Zanardi, to approve June 15, 2016 Minutes as written. Unanimously Approved.

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 month of June was distributed and details discussed.

Item 4: Report of Fire Chief

The Chief reported that vehicle #3 is currently out of service while maintenance of valves, compressor, regulators and other items are being completed. The Department's "duce" has been returned following maintenance and installation of new tires. Rear and side-view mirrors and equipment have been installed on the tanker, enhancing safety for personnel. The recent election of Department officers was presented and reviewed. The Department's energy team needs additional information to continue its review of future needs; a contractor involved in earlier work on the building has been contacted to get structural details to coordinate with requirements for future work. Financial considerations may limit the extent to which energy requirements can be reduced.

The potential for drone use by the Department and other town emergency services was extensively discussed, along with funding sources. The possibility of securing grant funding as well as the requirements for eligibility, what may or may not be available and alternative budgeting considerations were reviewed. Should the initiative be pursued, it is important to recognize the grant funding would be on a matching basis, with Town funding being required. As a result of this conversation the following motion was made:

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Motion by Perreault, seconded by Zanardi to instruct the Board Chair, the Chief and Office of Fire Marshal to investigate and prepare a report of the grant process to achieve approval for grant of funds to secure drone capabilities for the Town of Chester emergency response agencies, report to be presented at the September meeting of this Board. Motion was approved on affirmative vote of Schreiber, Zanardi, Divis and Perreault; Severance abstained.

Item 5: Report of First Selectman

Janacek provided contact information for health care facilities Aaron Manor and Chesterfields to EMD Severance. Potential future events which the Board of Selectmen may become aware of were reviewed with the Office of Fire Marshal, which requested that that office be notified of any events that become scheduled. The activities of the Triathlon events held at Cedar Lake and their impact on local agencies, officials and personnel were discussed. Note was made that local officials have attended, observed, reviewed and discussed one recent event, which may lead to changes to that event's future activities at that location.

Item 6: Report of Emergency Management Director

The activities of the Emergency Management Director are reported as parts of activities of the various other items at this meeting. Updated information identified in a recent emergency management exercise was received by the EMD.

Item 7: Financial Reports

Chief Schafer distributed 2015-2016 year-end budget report, with note that final budget adjustments will be forthcoming and will be reported at the next meeting of this Board.

Fire Marshal Leighton reported that office ended the fiscal year with a reported and anticipated over-expenditure of \$6,020. The evolution of activities for that office, which in the past have been primarily in response to incidents and activities, are now often in response to requests from property and business owners for advice and directions, rather than reacting to complaints or violations. Budgeting processes, the fluctuation of activities and the unpredictability of events mean the Office has limited control over its expenditures for other than routine activities.

There was extensive discussion about the financial impact from the Town's mandate to fund relocation costs of up to \$4,000 per individual as the result of an official action by Fire Marshal or other official, or an event, such as fire, etc. The potential causes, actions that can or must be taken and the effect/cost were discussed in detail.

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Item 8: Old Business

There was none brought forward.

Item 9: New Business

Chief Schafer reviewed with the Board the need of the Department for someone to act in a supervisory capacity to oversee paid personnel and their activities in connection with ambulance functions within the Department. This would be a non-compensated position, reporting to the Chief and acting for the Chief in this capacity to alleviate the work load on that position. Following review of present activity practices and the need to reduce the burden on volunteers, the following motion was presented.

Motion by Zanardi, seconded by Schreiber to authorize the Chief to appoint as a Department officer a person to oversee and administer the paid personnel and activities of ambulance activities, with regular reports to the Chief and the Board of Fire Commissioners. Motion was unanimously approved.

Chairman Severance complimented the Chief and Department for their actions, responses, time and consideration for families and responders during recent events.

Fire Marshal Leighton introduced Peter Terenzi, noting he has completed recent Fire Academy training and certification, following many years of previous training and certification in numerous other fields of expertise. He pointed out that the office of Fire Marshal is not a “safe” occupation and that to be eligible for any possible compensation in connection with an injury, the employee must receive some compensation. Funding that is already included in the annual budget of the Fire Marshal would fulfill that requirement should the need arise. Leighton recommends to the Town that Terenzi be appointed a Fire Marshal to augment currently-serving Fire Marshals Leighton and Roberge, effectively providing the Town with as much as 90 years of experience in a single municipality. Based on the information provided and the accompanying discussion the following motion was presented and passed.

Motion by Perreault, seconded by Divis to appoint Peter Terenzi, with all the duties, responsibilities and authority, to the office of Fire Marshal, and with the details contained in a memorandum dated July 20, 2016, all to be submitted to the Board of Selectmen of the Town of Chester, the record to be made a part of the permanent records of the Town of Chester. Motion was unanimously approved.

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Item 10: Adjournment

Motion by Divis, second by Zanardi, to adjourn at 9:08 PM. Unanimously Approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Bettie Perreault

Acting Secretary