

Chester Board of Fire Commissioners
Regular Meeting, April 19, 2017
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The Chester Board of Fire Commissioners held its regular meeting on Wednesday, April 19, 2017, at the Chester Fire House, 6 High Street, Chester, Connecticut. In attendance were Joel Severance, Rick Schreiber, John Divis, Peter Zanardi and Bettie Perreault. Ex-officio members present included Fire Chief James Schaefer, Fire Marshal Richard Leighton, Fire Investigator David Roberge and Selectwoman Charlene Janecek. Chairman Severance called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM.

Item 1: Approval of Minutes of March 15, 2017

Motion by Severance, second by Zanardi, to approve March 15, 2017 Minutes as written. Unanimously Approved.

Item 2: Audience of Citizens - none.

Item 3: Report of Fire Marshal

Fire Marshal Leighton distributed and reviewed the Monthly Activities Report for March. He noted there were 12 ½ hours for fires, 17 ½ hours for commercial inspections, 16 hours for training, and 16 ½ hours for liquor permits. Leighton stated they have now been working for the Town of Chester for 6 years. They basically work for the Fire Chief and the Selectwomen. When they get a complaint from the Selectwomen, they go out and look at it.

Chairman Severance asked what the status was of the sprinkler system at Chester Village West. Fire Marshal Leighton noted most of the problems have now been repaired. CVW is 200% better since they replaced all the sprinkler lines. Fire Investigator Roberge noted there hasn't been an alarm since the massive sprinkler pipe replacement.

Chairman Severance noted Kudos to the Fire Marshals for detection of the CO contamination being generated in the center of Town.

Item 4: Report of Fire Chief

Fire Chief Schaefer reported on the following-

- Engine 2 getting air bags and control module fixed.
- Deuce recently got tank leak fixed.
- Calls for the ambulance are picking up. There was a generous increase in money coming in from last month compared to previous months.

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- Chief noted there are roughly 2 “refusal calls” a month. Maybe we should investigate if its possible to charge for refusals.

Item 5: Report of First Selectman

John Divis asked about status of budget. Selectwoman Janecek noted Capital was lowered and some other items were pushed out.

Selectwoman Janecek also noted the Police will be getting 2 part time people.

Item 6: Report of Emergency Management Director

Chairman Severance reported on the following -

- Fire Department did a walk through of the Mill Building, along with fire extinguisher training.
- Valley Shore Emergency Management Association is hosting an event tomorrow night at Town Hall. They have a River Response Plan for Mass Casualty on the River.
- A Grant for Dredging the mouth of Chester Creek was hand delivered.

Item 7: Financial Report

(a) 2016-2017 Budget

Chief Schaefer noted he has put a freeze on their budget spending wise unless something is a big safety issue or we need something to protect the Town. There is about \$7000 left for the rest of the year. Chief Schaefer noted they may go over a little, but will try not to. The year will probably end with almost nothing.

(b) 2016-2017 Fire Marshal Budget

Fire Marshal Leighton noted the FM Budget is over. He had advised the Board of Finance previously it would be over by about \$10,000. Everything is pretty much mandated. Liquor licenses take up a lot of time.

(c) 2017-2018 Budget

With regard to the Capital Budget, Chief Schaefer noted the parking lot is gone from the Capital budget. Equipment Replacement has been reduced by \$10,000. Truck Replacement got reduced to \$25,000 this year and will start to go back up to \$60,000 in following years. He also had mentioned to the Board of Finance when Engine 2 needs to

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be replaced, they will be putting away \$127,000 a year to replace that truck.

With regard to the Operating Budget, the Board of Finance reduced Payroll to \$5,500. They reduced electricity, heating, water and oil as well. Selectwoman Janecek noted the Board of Finance did that to everybody. Schaefer noted if they go over in Payroll, they will have to go back for more. Public Safety isn't going to change. The Town has 2 nursing homes and assisted living facilities. Chester is an older society and the call volume will be going up.

Fire Marshal Leighton noted Westbrook is charging fees for different things. He stated he could see charging for plan reviews, but not inspections. Waiting to see how that works in Westbrook before bringing it up on the table.

(d) 2017-2018 Fire Marshal Budget

Fire Marshal Leighton noted he didn't think anything had been cut so far in the FM Budget. Everything is mandated. There is no fluff in that budget.

Item 8: Old Business – none.

Item 9: New Business

Chief Schaefer noted the Fire Department Banquet is this weekend.

Fire Marshal Leighton noted a new line item has been added to their budget by the Board of Selectwomen in the amount of \$100 for Hoarding issues. Leighton noted there is a good conference coming up in May covering all the areas and explaining how the departments inter-relate. He is urging those from various departments to attend this class. After the class, everyone will meet to review everything.

Fire Investigator Roberge reviewed 4 recent properties in Town that came in to the Selectwomen's office as complaints from neighbors. In these instances there was excessive accumulation of "stuff" which can attract possible vermin and rodents. He noted the Fire Marshal evaluated all 4 of these properties. Photographs were taken of all these properties. They do a cursory evaluation and refer these to the proper departments. All 4 of these were referred to the Health Department. A cursory review was also done with the Assessor's Office regarding unregistered motor vehicles. He

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further noted this seminar is important because it ties all the town agencies together.

The Unified Relocation Act was briefly reviewed. The line item mentioned earlier is a place holder in the event an Abatement Order is issued and people have to leave the building. The Fire Marshals have the authority to vacate the building. Roberge explained how these type cases involve different town agencies. He also explained once a house is cleared, all the expenses are put together and Town Counsel puts a lien on the property at 1 ½% per month. Sooner or later the Town gets its money back. It was also noted if people have a physical condition or no money to clean these up, the FM's go to Court and get a Conservator appointed. Sometimes volunteers from the community or family members help out. Roberge also noted animal hoarding falls under this same category.

ZCO Brown noted she has been in contact with the property owner at 10 Prospect Street. An inspection date has been set to visit the property and review progress for clean up.

Item 10: Adjournment

Motion by Severance, second by Schreiber, to adjourn at 8:50 PM. Unanimously Approved.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Judith R. Brown".

Judith R. Brown, Recording Secretary