

The Chester Board of Fire Commissioners held its regular meeting on Wednesday, February 15, 2017, at the Chester Fire House, 6 High Street, Chester, Connecticut. In attendance were Joel Severance (Chairman), Peter Zanardi and Bettie Perreault. Ex-officio members present included Fire Chief James Schaefer, Fire Marshal Richard Leighton and Fire Investigator David Roberge. Chairman Severance called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM.

Item 1: Approval of Minutes of January 18, 2017  
**Motion by Zanardi, second by Severance, to approve January 18, 2017 Minutes as written. Approved with Perreault abstaining.**

Item 2: Audience of Citizens – no one was present.

Item 3: Report of Fire Marshal  
Fire Marshal Leighton distributed the Monthly Activity Report for January. He noted it was a routine month (car fire, smoke investigation, snowblower fire, etc.). FI Roberge handled these items during the month in Leighton's absence due to surgery.

Bettie Perreault noted there were a number of issues at the top of Kings Highway. There was a crew there this morning replacing the pole. Transformers have blown several times.

Chairman Severance noted there were several calls at the Mill Building recently. He called the alarm company to see what was going on. It was a comedy of errors. FI Roberge noted because it was serviced, the alarm company should send a summary report to the Fire Marshal's office indicating what they found out, they referred it and what was the status of the system when they got done with it.

Item 4: Report of Fire Chief  
Fire Chief Schaefer reported on the following -

- Engine #3 had the gauges replaced with analog units.
- Chief's car was sent to Saybrook to get several issues fixed (seals, gaskets, minor motor issues, etc.). It's now in good working order.
- 5" Hose will be tossed, couldn't salvage any of it.
- The funeral for Charles Greeney Sr. went very smoothly.
- The S.A.F.E.R. (Staffing for Adequate Fire Emergency Response) Grant application was submitted last Friday. Probably won't hear anything back for about a year. This would help pay for a paid fire officer to help out with day time responses, do paperwork and fill in on the ambulance if someone is out sick.

Schaefer reviewed how the grant works and what the town contributes (25% first 2 years, 65% 3<sup>rd</sup> year and 100% thereafter).

- Haven't heard back from the AFG Grant.

Item 5: Report of First Selectman –

Chairman Severance noted the Administrative Assistant will be on maternity leave as of Friday. Tracy Ohaus will be filling in.

Item 6: Report of Emergency Management Director

Chairman Severance noted there is a CT Emergency Management Board. They now have a lobbyist and get a report on any new Bills to the Senate and House. There are currently 8 Bills that effect Public Safety. He has a copy of the Relocation Assistance Act if anyone wants to see it. FM Leighton noted he and FI Roberge attended a seminar last month on the Relocation Assistance Act. Another Bill for generators for large nursing homes was tabled.

Chairman Severance noted for calendar year ending 2016 there were 591 CERT Volunteers in Region 2. Wallingford has returned to the roster of CERT members. There were 9,104 person hours that CERT team volunteers participated in activities for 2016. Severance reviewed some Team items of interest. He also reviewed SART (State Animal Response Team) volunteer activities of interest.

Chairman Severance noted they still have not received the 16-17 grant paperwork yet for the EMPG from DEMHS. They are upgrading a lot of the emergency operations equipment. He is also working with the response commander at the Coast Guard for the MOA and SOP.

Item 7: Financial Report

(a) 2016-2017 Budget

Chief Schaefer distributed the 16-17 Budget Breakdown. The budget is 64.03% expended. Equipment Maintenance and Supplies are over. He went up a little bit in payroll in order to get the ambulance out the door more as they are missing a lot of calls. There was discussion regarding the number of hours paid personnel can work on the ambulance.

(b) 2016-2017 Fire Marshal Budget

FM Leighton noted the Contract Line Item will officially be out of money after this meeting. This is no surprise. The BOFC were notified of this 3 months ago. The Boards of Selectmen and Finance have also known about this. Leighton indicated most of it was

dur to unbudgeted activities. One can't budget for fires or complaints. That's where the extra hours come in. There was very little administrative time. The First Selectwomen's office gets a lot of complaints. Leighton noted he will be attending the BOF meeting tomorrow night to go over next year's budget.

Bettie Perreault noted it should be said there is a lot of over budget because a lot of people are complaining which is causing the Town x-number of dollars by neighbors who aren't talking to neighbors.

Peter Zanardi asked what would be a type of complaint. FI Roberge noted, as an example, residents were complaining that the house at 42 Railroad Avenue was burning something and every morning the smoke all drifted down into the cul-de-sac. He looked at the property and found an oversized chicken coop with a 6" pipe coming out of it close to the ground. Lots of creosote. The Selectmen's office reported it to the FM. It was investigated. Photos taken. Report written up. Time spent was about 3 hours. The other complaint that is repetitious is on Bokum Road. The homeowner does hand forging. This is not a business, it is a hobby. Neighbors complain to the town hall. FM's visit the site and the homeowner is making trinkets. This individual is within his legal rights to do what he is doing. FI Roberge noted if the FM's receive a call, they have to investigate and write it up. The Health Department should also be following up on these types of complaints. Chairman Severance noted the Town is looking at joining the Health District. FM Leighton noted an Abatement Order to cease and desist was issued by the Building Official to the homeowner at 42 Railroad Avenue as this was not installed in accordance with Building Code requirements and was a non-permitted activity. The activity was stopped.

(c) 2017-2018 Budget

(d) 2017-2018 Fire Marshal Budget

Nothing new to report on the 2017-18 Budgets. The FM's and the Chief will be attending the Board of Finance meeting tomorrow night. Chief Schaefer distributed two updated Capital Budget sheets for the next fiscal year, one for Town Building Repairs/Code Compliance and one for Ambulance Replacement.

There was discussion regarding the Emergency Management Budget. Chief Schaefer suggested starting a Capital Account (say \$10,000) for equipment upgrades, etc. He pointed out it's not fair to be spending money that is supposed to be used for mileage, stipend, etc. to be used for upgrading equipment. FI Roberge pointed out the State keeps putting mandates on everything, times have changed greatly.

Item 8: Old Business

Winter Carnivale, February 19<sup>th</sup> – Chief Schaefer noted the Fire Department is helping out with traffic and monitoring parking lots. Each person will have a radio and they all will be able to talk to each other. There will be 9 police available (trying to get constables instead of troopers in order to keep costs down). FI Roberge stated it should be noted for the record the Fire Department has asked the FM's to work this detail with them as well.

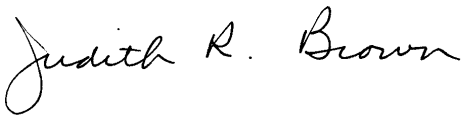
Chief Schaefer noted the Chester Rotary will be doing the Longest Dinner Table on April 1<sup>st</sup> from 6:30 to 10:30 PM. Tickets are \$25.00, this is a Rotary Fund Raising event.

Item 9: New Business – none.

Item 10: Adjournment

**Motion by Perreault, second by Zanardi, to adjourn at 8:55 PM. Unanimously Approved.**

Respectfully submitted,

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

Judith R. Brown, Recording Secretary