

Chester Board of Fire Commissioners
Minutes, April 18, 2018
Page 1 of 5

The Chester Board of Fire Commissioners held the regular monthly meeting on Wednesday, April 18, 2018 at the Chester Fire House, 6 High Street, Chester, Connecticut. In attendance were Rick Schreiber, Peter Zanardi and Bettie Perreault. Ex-officio members present were Fire Chief John Brainard, Deputy Fire Chief Kim Brainard, and Fire Marshals Richard Leighton and David Roberge. In the absence of Chairman Severance, Rick Schreiber called the meeting to order at 7:30 P.M. In the absence of Judy Brown, Bettie Perreault provides minutes.

Item 1: Approval of Minutes of February 21, 2018. (There was no meeting of the Commissioners in the month of March 2018.)

Motion by Zanardi, second by Schreiber, to approve the February 21, 2018 Minutes. Unanimously approved. Perreault abstained.

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 March and April 2018 were distributed and reviewed. Items noted and discussed included the following:

- In addition to the regular and normal activities of the office, a significant number of additional hours were recorded associated with the events associated with major storms; Town officials were kept advised of the escalated needs;
- Identification of a total of 19 Knox Box installations in Chester had been provided by the Knox Box company, upon request by the Town. Some of the installations did not include property or owner identification. New Knox Box installations will be made at Town Buildings in the near future. There was discussion of keys for Knox Boxes (which are retained by the Hose Company), who currently has possession of them, and the potential to convert to a digital system for emergency access to ensure better control of use and inventory.

Item 4: Report of Fire Chief

- Summary of calls responded to during March was distributed, with note of the increased number of activities as a result of the winter storms, improperly installed or operated generators and activation of CO detectors.
- Report of the difficulty in getting call information from Valley Shore Communications to the Hose Company, with note that the problems occur with the inability of that organization to provide the necessary detail. As much as possible, information which could be obtained locally has been entered manually for Chester

Chester Board of Fire Commissioners
Minutes, April 18, 2018
Page 2 of 5

records. It was recommended that the Chester representatives who serve on the Board for Valley Shore Communications be enlisted to assist and secure resolution of the issue as soon as possible.

- The deuce-and-a-half has been returned to service following extensive repairs to replace radiator, brake lines and other items.
- As the result of non-receipt of renewal forms and information from the CT DOT, registration of the two ambulances expired and both units were taken out of service for approximately 36 hours to get the required inspections and registration renewals processed. Deep River Ambulance covered for Chester during that time. Other municipalities in the state were similarly affected by not receiving the required renewal information.

Item 5: Report of Board of Selectman

In the absence of Charlene Janecek, representative of the Board of Selectmen, there was no report.

Item 6: Report of Emergency Management Director

In the absence of Joel Severance, Emergency Management Director, there was no report.

Item 7: Financial Reports

(a) 2017 - 2018 Budget – Fire Department

Copies of the budget as of January 2018 were distributed and reviewed. Chief Brainard reported that four EMTs and two Fire personnel are scheduled for training this month. Costs associated with data processing, previously allocated to another account, are now being charged to the proper account. Note was made of the expenditures for heat; extreme cold weather and extended emergency activities during winter storms required the Fire House to be occupied and active for longer periods than normal.

(b) 2017 – 2018 Budget – Fire Marshal

Copies of the budget were distributed and reviewed. It was again noted that over-expenditures have been predicted and all appropriate officials so advised. This is a situation which has recurred in previous budget cycles.

(c) 2018 – 2019 Fire Department Budget

There was nothing to report in connection with the proposed budget for the 2018-2019 fiscal year as the budget process is not completed.

Chester Board of Fire Commissioners
Minutes, April 18, 2018
Page 3 of 5

(d) 2018 – 2019 Fire Marshal Budget

There was nothing to report in connection with the proposed budget for the 2018-2019 fiscal year as the budget process is not completed.

Item 8: Old Business

There was none brought forward.

Item 9: New Business

FM Leighton brought a number of matters to the attention of the Commission, distributing documentation with details in each instance, including those listed below. In each instance, Commission members were provided with information and explanation of the matter, progress on items which are currently being pursued, the impact on municipal costs for actions that may require actions or responses from local officials or agencies, the potential for implementing programs and measures which may be of benefit, both financially and for safety reasons, safety-related information on procedures associated with First Responders and others, etc.

- Knox Box locations throughout town, as provided by the Knox Product Installation Report to the Chester Hose Company;
- Permit Fee Proposal and Permit Fee Proposal Addendum, provided at the request of the Board of Selectmen. Includes information on current fees charged for administrative actions through the various departments and suggested fee modifications to better reflect actual costs associated with the duties performed and costs associated with processing documentation;
- Fire Alarm System Maintenance Monitoring reviewed the status of the current fire alarm system at the Chester Meeting House, historic experience on the function of that system, potential steps to alleviate recurring problems, measures to address contractual concerns as well as financial considerations;
- Notice of Codes and Standards Adoption provided information on the multiple Statutory and regulatory codes and standards, which have been considered to be adopted by the State of Connecticut on July 1, 2018, along with the associated fees or lack of fees for activities which require municipal action. It was pointed out that the unfunded mandates and changes to code and regulatory requirements have a significant impact on municipalities and are often unrecognized until an incident or activity occurs with local officials and/or agencies involved, for which the municipality has not included funding or even budget considerations;

Chester Board of Fire Commissioners
Minutes, April 18, 2018
Page 4 of 5

- “OSFM: Family Promise of Central Connecticut Housing” is a regulation which allows for accommodations for “a maximum of 14 guest persons for sleeping, plus two (2) staff members, for no more than 7 consecutive days” of Family Promise of Central Connecticut, at local congregations(s), such as churches. This directive to Fire Marshals is to be considered a change of use in the regulatory process;
- Permit Ordinance – Property Taxes Past Due served as a reminder to officials that the Town adopted a Permit Ordinance – Amended, effective May 30, 2013 requiring that no permits shall be issued for improvements pertaining to real property on which there are property taxes past due. This Ordinance affects all agencies and officials associated with every aspect of permitting for land use purposes, including Zoning Building, Sanitation, improvements, etc.;
- Ordinance Requiring the Numbering of Buildings – enacted March 9, 1998 requires an easily recognizable system of affixing street numbers for identification to permit rapid location by emergency responders and others. It will be recommended that all land use permits issued require compliance with that Ordinance;
- Ordinance providing details of the duties, responsibilities and appointment process of the members of the Board of Fire Commissioners;
- Inspection Software provided information of a data processing program which would facilitate the operations of the Office of Fire Marshal in recording activities during inspections, activities and events, to provide on-scene, virtually immediate availability of information and reports. The information provided would require product/vendor review as well as budget considerations and approvals before purchase;
- Mutual Aid Planning – Evacuation of Convalescent Facilities provided back-up details of the requirements associated with response to emergency situations for the various health care and similar facilities;
- Firefighter Natural Gas – Dos and Don’ts informed emergency responders and others on the procedures required to turn off natural gas connections, which are significantly different than the more familiar propane connections. While Chester does not at this time have natural gas installations, responders may be involved in a mutual aid event where there is a natural gas installation;
- Natural Gas Meter Shut-Down Procedures provided similar information for emergency responders and others should they be involved in an event where natural gas installations were located;

Chester Board of Fire Commissioners
Minutes, April 18, 2018
Page 5 of 5

- Short-Term Rental & Regulated Regulations provided Board members with details of the Fire Marshal's review of pending amendments to the Zoning Regulations affecting short-term rentals.

(a) Nominating Committee for BOFC Chairman

With note of the absence of two Commissioners (Joel Severance and John Divis), discussion of past election history of the Commission, and review of the Town Ordinance *Creating a Board of Fire Commissioners* adopted September 8, 1956, amended December 21, 1993; July 7, 1997; December 7, 2004 and May 7, 2009:

Motion made by Zanardi, seconded by Schreiber to table agenda Item 9 (a) Nominating Committee to the next regular meeting, at which time to place Election of Officers on the Agenda, with an option to vote by paper ballot. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 10: Adjournment

Motion by Zanardi, second by Schreiber to adjourn at 9:08 P.M. Unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Bettie Perreault

Acting Clerk