

Chester Board of Fire Commissioners
Minutes, May 16, 2018
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The Chester Board of Fire Commissioners held the regular monthly meeting on Wednesday, May 16, 2018 at the Chester Fire House, 6 High Street, Chester, Connecticut. In attendance were Rick Schreiber, Peter Zanardi, John Divis and Bettie Perreault. Ex-officio members present were Fire Chief John Brainard, Selectman Charlene Janacek, Fire Marshals Richard Leighton and David Roberge. Also present was Assistant Chief Kim Brainard. In the absence of Chairman Severance, Rick Schreiber called the meeting to order at 7:32 P.M. In the absence of Judy Brown, Bettie Perreault provides minutes.

Item 1: Approval of Minutes of April 18, 2018

Motion by Zanardi, second by Divis, to approve the April 18, 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 April 2018 were distributed and reviewed. Items noted and discussed included the following:

- The opening of the new business at 16-18 Main Street is progressing smoothly and, pending receipt and installation of equipment, the enterprise should be open for business within a few weeks;
- The annual “Duck Race” sponsored by the Rotary Club went well, with cooperation from local businesses and oversight of the various enforcement officials;
- The opening of a seasonal ice cream establishment may be accompanied this year by a request for sidewalk seating, which will require approval of the Planning & Zoning Commission, which if granted must then be referred to the Fire Marshal’s office for review and approval. This again reinforces the urgent need for open dialogue between all agencies and officials as well as a “team approach” to such regulatory matters.
- Property at 70 Maple Street was inspected and found to be “unsafe”. Electrical service was disconnected and the structure boarded up to make it secure. Following the required legal procedures, the Town may ultimately need to demolish the structure. Property owners have been notified.
- Based on Police observation, broken windows and other evidence, property at 33 Liberty Street may also require intervention and action by the office of the Fire Marshal.

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- Other activities included remedial work to ensure safety and access/egress at Aaron Manor as well as activities associated with Eagle Landing.

Item 4: Report of Fire Chief

- The deuce-and-a-half has been returned to service following extensive repairs to replace radiator, brake lines, seals and other items.
- The new furnace in the Fire House is currently being installed.
- Chief Brainard reported that he and another Hose Company member joined a shoreline convoy of emergency responders to the town of Brookfield to assist in operations following the disastrous rain/wind storm that devastated the town and many other areas in Connecticut on May 15, 2018. They performed door-to-door checks for occupants and others who might need assistance. A second team of mutual aid responders took up the task later in the day. At that time, Eversource was estimating a recovery time of as much as three weeks.

Item 5: Report of Board of Selectman

The Annual Reports from the Board of Fire Commissioners and the Chester Hose Company have not yet been submitted.

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.

(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 recurring situation experienced in previous budget cycles.

FM Leighton advised that because the required Codes, scheduled for implementation on July 1, 2018 will not be available until October because of the need to coordinate and merge the details with the Building Code, purchase of the Codes will not be made in the current fiscal year.

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(c) 2018 – 2019 Fire Department Budget

The proposed budget is pending approval at the Town Meeting scheduled for Wednesday, May 30, 2018.

(d) 2018 – 2019 Fire Marshal Budget

The proposed budget is pending approval at the Town Meeting scheduled for Wednesday, May 30, 2018.

Item 8: Old Business

There was none brought forward.

Item 9: New Business

(a) Nominating Committee for BOFC Chairman

Members were polled on the option of voting by paper ballot or by open vote; the unanimous consensus was that paper ballot would not be required.

Motion by Divis, seconded by Schreiber to elect Bettie Perreault Chairman of the Board of Fire Commissioners. Voting in favor: Divis, Schreiber and Zanardi; Abstaining: Perreault.

Noting that membership on this Commission is by appointment and the required position as Secretary should serve in such a way as to ensure continuity from term to term, naming the ex officio representative of the Board of Selectmen would retain the administrative connection that position warranted. After brief discussion,

Motion by Divis, seconded by Zanardi to appoint the ex officio representative of the Board of Selectmen to serve in the position of Secretary of the Board of Fire Commissioners. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 10: Adjournment

Motion by Divis, second by Schreiber to adjourn at 8:09 P.M. Unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Bettie Perreault
Acting Clerk