

Chester Board of Fire Commissioners
Minutes, September 19, 2018
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The Chester Board of Fire Commissioners held the regular monthly meeting on Wednesday, September 19, 2018 at the Chester Fire House, 6 High Street, Chester, Connecticut. In attendance were Bettie Perreault, Rick Schreiber, Peter Zanardi, John Divis and Bob Bandzes. Ex-officio members present were Fire Chief John Brainard and Selectman Charlene Janacek. Also present were Deputy Chief James Grzybowski, Assistant Chief Charles Greeney, EMS Chief Jim Schaffer, and Trustees Vin Germini and Ben Belisle. Chairman Bettie Perreault called the meeting to order at 7:30 P.M.

Item 1: Approval of Minutes of August 15, 2018

Action on the Minutes was inadvertently omitted during this meeting; it will be on the Agenda for the October 17 meeting.

Item 2: Guests

Members of the Board and Guests spoke of concerns associated with safe passage of public safety and emergency vehicles impacted by parking issues on North Main Street. It was pointed out the situation has been an on-going issue associated with Sunday Market events, performances at the Goodspeed at Chester Theatre, First Friday events and similar activities.

On motion by Divis, seconded by Schreiber, a letter from the Board of Fire Commissioners will be sent to the Board of Selectmen requesting that Board to address parking issues on North Main Street, including review and consultation with the Office of Fire Marshal, the Fire Department, Police Officials and other public safety officials to ensure that public safety and emergency vehicles have adequate traffic lanes for safe and expeditious passage at all times. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 3: Report of Trustees – Vin Germini, President

(a) Cedar Lake water supply project

Trustees President Germini and Ben Belisle reviewed the information gathered in researching the proposal to install a new water supply facility for fire protection at Cedar Lake. The proposed project was presented to the Inland Wetlands Agency earlier in the month. That Agency will require review of the specifications of proposed tank and installation details; the Inland Wetlands Officer has offered to assist in the planning process.

Weed control will be required; it has been estimated that a water depth of at least 20 feet would be needed to naturally inhibit weed growth. Installation of a shield known as a Benthic barrier on the lake bottom could retard weed growth in the area of an intake pipe. Such a barrier would need to be changed or replaced annually but could be used at lesser depth. Prior to installation, existing weed growth would need to be removed/minimized. Cost estimates have not been obtained; a Grant application is being prepared for a portion of any funding. Hose Company personnel have reviewed an additional existing installation and will be

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obtaining cost estimates for a tank and associated materials. It was again agreed by all that access from Route 148 was desirable, providing not only adequate road clearance for emergency vehicles but also convenient staging area in the nearby parking lot.

Item 4. Report of Board of Selectmen

Selectman Janecek reported that earlier this month the Planning & Zoning Commission had adopted short-term rental regulations. It was noted that the decision was made following the advice and recommendations of legal counsel, and allowed the Town to have jurisdiction over such operations.

Plans provided by the Main Street Project Committee for proposed parking configuration on Main Street in front of the existing stone wall were reviewed. The plan indicates inclusion of a sidewalk to provide pedestrian access to adjacent open space adjacent to 16 Main Street, currently the Little House Brewing Company. Based on the apparent scale of the plans, there does not appear to be adequate lane clearance for emergency vehicles or other larger vehicles, such as delivery trucks, etc. and members questioned why earlier observations and recommendations did not appear to have been addressed.

Board members and Hose Company personnel again expressed their strong concerns about the proposed configuration of designated parking spaces as shown on the most recent plan. In the opinion of Hose Company members, the proposed configuration of designated parking spaces does not provide adequate travel lane width for the safe passage of public safety, emergency response or vehicles larger than customary passenger sedans. These concerns will again be relayed to the Board of Selectmen as a request that the Board of Selectmen review the proposal and consult with public safety, Fire Department and Fire Marshal personnel before any further actions are taken relating to the proposed project, and that the Main Street Project Committee be included in the transmittal of that correspondence.

Item 4: Report of Fire Chief

Chief Brainard reported that all trucks are now back in service. One Ambulance will be having new door straps installed. In connection with Ambulance responses, Grzybowski and Schaffer reported that while weekday coverage has been met, securing weekend coverage has been challenging. There are not enough volunteers available to fill crews and it may become necessary to hire additional paid personnel. Being able to respond to all calls without relying on mutual aid responses will also improve the economic operation of the department.

Item 5: Report of Fire Marshal

Fire Marshals were unable to attend and will provide reports at the October meeting.

Item 6: Report of Emergency Management

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No report was available.

Item 7: Financial Reports

- (a) 2018 - 2019 Budget – Fire Department

Copies of the budget were distributed and reviewed. Chief Brainard called on Deputy Chief Grzybowski for the report.

- (b) 2018 – 2019 Budget – Fire Marshal

No report was available; it will be provided at the October meeting.

Item 8: Old Business

Reports and Status of Events

- (a) Sunday Market – There was nothing to report.

- (b) Triathlon - The event has completed its schedule for the current season.

- (c) Other - A Fife & Drum Corps Muster will be held at the Chester Fair Grounds on September 22, 2018. Ambulance and EMT personnel will be available on site if needed.

Item 9: New Business

Nothing was brought forward.

Item 10: Adjournment

Motion by Peter Zanardi, second by Rick Schreiber to adjourn at 8:31 P.M. Unanimously approved.

Board members and Hose Company Officers adjourned to participate in a tour of Fire Department vehicles in a move to have Board members become more familiar with the equipment, its functions, capabilities and operations. The vehicle reviewed this evening was the Tanker with Hose Company member Dan Roscoe and other members providing the details. These tours will be held as a part of monthly meetings until all vehicles have been seen. No other business was or will be conducted as a part of these after-meeting tours.

Respectfully submitted,

Bettie Perreault

Chairman