

Chester Board of Fire Commissioners
Minutes, April 17, 2019
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The Chester Board of Fire Commissioners held the regular monthly meeting on Wednesday, April 17, 2019 at the Fire House, 6 High Street, Chester, Connecticut. In attendance were Bob Bandzes, Bettie Perreault, Rick Schreiber and Peter Zanardi. Ex-officio members present were Deputy Chief James Grzybowski, Fire Marshals Dick Leighton and Dave Roberge. Also present were Assistant Chief Charlie Greeney and EMS Chief Jim Schaffer. Cindy Lignar, representing the Democratic Town Committee was present early in the meeting. Chairman Bettie Perreault called the meeting to order at 7:30 P.M.

Item 1: Approval of Minutes of March 20, 2019

On motion by Rick Schreiber, seconded by Peter Zanardi, the minutes of March 20, 2019 were unanimously approved as filed.

Item 2: Audience of Citizens

Cindy Lignar, representing the Chester Democratic Town Committee, brought to the meeting a packet of “thank you” notes addressed to first responders to be presented to members of the Chester Hose Company. She spoke of the contributions made by volunteers who serve as first responders and the many roles they fill in those capacities, noting that her own profession as a nurse gave her appreciation of the services brought to Chester residents by these volunteers. Deputy Chief Grzybowski thanked her on behalf of the Hose Company and will transmit the missives to the Hose Company members.

Update on the status of the Main Street Project was provided by Grzybowski in his position as Selectman. A Public Hearing will be held for the owners of all Main Street properties that will be affected by the Project, providing general information on the Project, to be followed by scheduled one-on-one meetings with individual property owners to address property-specific matters. The Town continues to urge the Connecticut Water Company to replace the water main in the project area prior to initiation of construction activities.

Item 3: Report of Trustees

(a) Cedar Lake Water supply project

President Vin Germini was not present but had advised prior to the meeting that there was nothing to report at this time.

Item 4: Report of Board of Selectmen

Selectman Janecek was out of the state. Selectman Grzybowski reported in her absence. Budgets will be presented to a Public Hearing early in May, with education costs showing a major increase for the Town. A potential tax increase of in excess of six percent or approximately 1.8 mills is anticipated.

Item 5: Report of Fire Chief

In the absence of Chief Brainard, Deputy Chief Grzybowski noted the Chester Hose Company would be holding its Annual Banquet on Saturday, May 4 this year. The annual Easter Egg Hunt will be held this up-coming Saturday, April 20, 2019.

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The Hose Company has participated in demonstrations by four vendors of extrication equipment and has selected Amkus equipment based on a number of factors, including but not limited to price (approximately \$23,000), a smaller profile, interchangeable parts, and an interchangeable battery system that can be used with more than one type of equipment. Funding will come from the budgeted capital account, with additional related equipment purchase planned for a later date. Purchase of replacement hose (approximately \$5,000) will also be covered from the capital account this fiscal year.

Responses to the re-bid for the ambulance remount purchase are scheduled for the end of this month, with anticipated costs to be within the desired budget range.

Item 6, Report of Fire Marshal

Fire Marshal Leighton distributed the activity report for March. In an effort to better identify budget needs, the Fire Marshal's office is working to implement a report that breaks out tasks as either "routine" or "emergency" or similar unanticipated event. Hose Company personnel responding to an incident can notify the Fire Marshal, reducing or eliminating Fire Marshal time responding in person. Deputy Chief Grzybowski advised that he is in the process of reprogramming reporting systems to provide better information for such recordkeeping. Grzybowski also noted the equipment and personnel charges that will be made for events and activities where Hose Company equipment (ambulance, etc.) and personnel are required. He noted the Chester Fair is not charged for either equipment or personnel because the Hose Company has both its dunk tank and booth at no charge for the event. (The Fair will be constructing a new building that will be dedicated (at no charge) to use by the Hose Company as a First Aid Station as well as its traditional booth.

Item 7: Financial Reports

(a) 2019-2020 Fire Department Budget

Deputy Chief Grzybowski reported that there has been little change in the budget, and while some transfers between line items may be required, the fiscal year should end with a small amount to be returned to the Town. This is the result of the lack of staffing by ambulance personnel during the first several months of the current fiscal year.

(b) 2019-2020 Fire Marshal Budget

Fire Marshal Leighton distributed that budget showing year-to-date expenditures, with note that it is anticipated that the budget will have a shortage of approximately \$5,000 at the end of the current fiscal year.

Additional matters Leighton discussed included the following:

- Installation of a single, underground 500-gallon propane tank at 5 West Main Street will resolve the problems associated with flooding that occurred last fall; installation should be completed by the end of the month.

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Item 8: Old Business

(a) Reports and Status of Events:

The Office of Fire Marshal will be present for the first three or four weeks following the start-up of the Sunday Market in early June to ensure that vendors comply with all requirements.

Item 9: New Business

Fire Marshal Leighton briefly reviewed a number of items, including:

- The Hose Company will be reimbursed for equipment damaged in during an incident response several months ago;
- A meeting will be held with Masonicare at Chester Village personnel in connection with protocol associated with untimely deaths; Hose Company representation will participate;
- The Historical Society's Mill Building is moving its furnace to a new location on the first floor; Hose Company personnel should be made aware of this change;
- The recently proposed revised fee schedule that was presented to the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance is the same as that which was recently approved by the Town of Old Saybrook;
- A detailed list of 653 properties identified as "commercial" by the Office of Assessor, which require inspection by the Office of Fire Marshal was distributed and discussed.

Issues associated with "hoarding" were reviewed and discussed in detail, with note of the fact that the problem is more prevalent than many realize, and that hoarding has been identified and named as a mental health disorder.

The Call Report for the month of March reported a total of 46 call responses, of which 38 were ambulance responses. With more personnel employed, the response rate has improved to about 98% according to Grzybowski – a significant improvement.

Past discussions concerning the potential purchase of a drone were noted. The Hose Company does not have one but has access to one through other nearby departments, who also have the trained personnel available if needed. FAA no-fly restrictions associated with Chester Airport effectively reduce the useful area where one can be used.

Item 10: Adjournment

Motion by Peter Zanardi, seconded by Rick Schreiber to adjourn at 8:43 P.M. Unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Bettie Perreault, Chairman