

Chester Board of Fire Commissioners
Minutes, October 16, 2019
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The Chester Board of Fire Commissioners held the regular monthly meeting on Wednesday, October 16, 2019 at the Fire House, 6 High Street, Chester, Connecticut. In attendance were Bob Bandzes, John Divis, Bettie Perreault, and Peter Zanardi. Ex-officio members present were Chief James Grzybowski, Selectman Charlene Janecek, Fire Marshals Dick Leighton and Dave Roberge. Also present were EMS Chief Geoff Vincelette and Lt. Ben Belisle. Chairman Bettie Perreault called the meeting to order at 7:30 P.M.

Item 1: Call to Order

Item 2: Audience of Citizens

- (a) Update – Selectman Grzybowski reported the replacement of the water main in Main Street is “moving along well”. Activities have encountered some deviations in actual locations of the approximately 100-year old installation but have been able to move forward with minimal disruption to progress.
- (b) Update – In connection with the Main Street Project, Selectmen Janecek and Grzybowski advised the permanent easements mapping has now been approved and the project continues to move along “on track”, with individual easements currently being processed. Release of funds not covered by the grand has been approved by the Board of Finance. The Public Works Department has substantially completed work on the access walk from the Maple Street Parking Lot to Main Street, resulting in a wider and smoother pedestrian walkway.

Item 3: Report of Board of Selectmen

Selectman Janecek advised that the above updates provided the Selectmen’s report.

Item 4: Report of Fire Chief

Chief Grzybowski reported activity for the past month has been slow. Truck #3 required a number of repairs, primarily as a result of the age of the vehicle. Repair of a variety of leaks required retrofitting because parts were no longer available. The unforeseen but necessary repairs cost approximately \$9,200. Because of the expense, the budget line item will be carefully monitored.

The Incident Report for August was distributed, showing a total of 68 responses, 58 of which were for Rescue and Emergency Medical Service incidents. A separate report provided details on a total of 16 mutual aid responses to Chester and by Chester to other towns. There were four calls that received aid to Chester from Deep River or Haddam; the remaining 12 calls were mutual aid calls provided to the towns of Deep River, East Haddam, Haddam and Killingworth.

The refurbished Ambulance has been delivered and final finishing touches are being done in preparation for OEMS inspection. Total cost of the unit was \$109,000 plus an additional \$22,000 for installation of the powerlift unit.

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Upcoming events include a retirement party for Bill Beni following over 50 years of service to the Hose Company, the annual Apple Pie Night on October 22 to benefit the Auxiliary Scholarship Fund and a Craft Fair on October 26.

(a) Report of Deputy Chief

(b) Report of Assistant Chief

Deputy Chief Greeney and Assistant Chief John Ahearn were not present.

(c) Report of EMS Chief

EMS Chief Geoff Vincelette advised that he and Assistant EMS Chief Sarah Blaschik are completing the restocking of the refurbished Ambulance unit in preparation of OEMS inspection, with close to 98% of the work completed.

Item 5: Report of Fire Marshal

Fire Marshal Dick Leighton distributed the activity reports for September, noting that inspections which have been completed in the past and the remedial measures taken are now showing up as reduced numbers of incidents, indicating that progress is being achieved through the inspection process. Issues involving alarm problems are improving with a reduced number of calls and one restaurant pending approval and installation of a system upgrading. Note was again made of the fact that facilities on Inspiration Lane do not have sprinkler systems and there is no available water supply, with insurance companies reluctant to issue insurance. The Department is working with the Fire Marshal and Roto Frank to hold a tanker drill for the industrial development. Currently the identified fill site, if needed, is the brook behind The Brush Mill, for which an intermediary pump on the line and supplemental tanker relays might be required.

With remediation of a number of locations cited for over-the-road icing conditions last winter completed, there are approximately six additional locations identified that may present hazards in the future. A Cedar Lake area property is currently under condemnation by both the Fire Marshal and Building Official, who are working with the out-of-state property owners.

Item 6: Financial Reports

(a) 2019-2020 Fire Department Budget

Chief Grzybowski distributed reports on the current Hose Company and Ambulance budgets. He noted that the over-expenditure for Data Processing was the result of the switchover to new systems; that the Equipment Maintenance line item includes the unanticipated expenses in connection with Truck #3, and that the Supplies line item includes expenses related to supplies for the Ambulance.

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(b) 2019-2020 Fire Marshal Budget

Fire Marshal Leighton distributed the budget, noting it is “still in the black” but it may become over-expended prior to the end of the fiscal year. Expenditures include the cost of new NFPA Code book, providing required information in connection with Hose Company Medical Director Requirements. (Pending retirement of the current Medical Director, a replacement is being sought.) Department drivers with CDL driver licenses must have physicals prior to license renewal, with significant requirements a part of the process. It was noted that other departments have seen substantial loss of certified drivers as a result of the various medical and license requirements, acerbating the existing and widespread shortage of volunteers.

Item 7: Old Business

(a): Approval of Minutes of September 19, 2019

On motion by Peter Zanardi, seconded by Bob Bandzes the minutes of September 19, 2019 were unanimously approved as filed. Zanardi abstained.

(b) Reports and Status of Events: Activities and events were reviewed earlier in the meeting.

Item 8: New Business

(a) Correspondence – Bettie Perreault extended her thanks to the Hose Company and its members for the gift basket received following recent surgery.

(b) Lt. Ben Belisle reported the Truck Committee held an organizational meeting and will schedule meetings with departments in Essex, Haddam and Westbrook to review recent purchases of equipment they have made.

Item 9: Adjournment

Motion by Peter Zanardi, seconded by Bob Bandzes to adjourn at 8:06 P.M. Unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Bettie Perreault, Chairman