

**Chester Board of Fire Commissioners
Minutes, December 18, 2019
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The Chester Board of Fire Commissioners held the regular monthly meeting on Wednesday, December 18, 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 Selectman Charlene Janecek, Chief James Grzybowski and Fire Marshal Dick Leighton. Also present were Lt. Ben Belisle, and Truck Committee members Brandon Dole, Henry Lane, Julian Norton and Richard Tsou. Chairman Bettie Perreault called the meeting to order at 7:36 PM.

Item 1: Call to Order

Item 2: Election of Officers

Officers for a two-year term are elected at the first meeting following municipal elections. It was reaffirmed that the Ex-officio representative from the Board of Selectmen would serve as the Secretary of the Commission.

On motion by Schreiber, seconded by Zanardi, Bettie Perreault to serve as Chairman. Voting in favor: Bandzes, Schreiber and Zanardi; Perreault abstained.

On motion by Schreiber, seconded by Zanardi, Bob Bandzes to serve as Vice Chairman. Motion unanimously approved.

Item 3: Audience of Citizens

The representatives of the Hose Company's Truck Committee were welcomed.

Item 4: Report of Board of Selectmen

Selectman Janecek reported that the CT DOT has reviewed the plans for the Main Street Project and submitted a list of questions to the town. Many of the questions were already in the process of being addressed. Funding for Maple Street improvements will be included in DOT funding; work on Spring Street will be limited to the area of the present steps, which are not ADA compliant. Town funding will be required for upgrading to wood guardrails. Town officials are meeting with property owners in connection with required easements. Property owner Carol LeWitt will address filling the voids under sidewalk areas with concrete at her expense. It is anticipated that once all details have been addressed the project should be ready to go out to bid before the end of the year.

The property owner of the dam at Lower Jennings Pond will be required to address the safety of that dam, with either repair or potentially removal of the dam needed. There was considerable discussion about the impact removal of the dam would have on abutting properties, the potential loss of value for those properties with water view, the impact on the environment of the pond itself, etc.

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Item 5: Report of Fire Chief

Chief Grzybowski distributed and reviewed the Activity Call Report for November. It showed a total of 60 responses, detailed as being primarily for rescue and emergency medical service (46). An additional 14 responses were for fires, hazardous conditions, service calls and false alarms/calls. Ten mutual aid calls were handled in cooperation with Deep River, Essex, Haddam and Killingworth services. Responses reflect the activity of the expanded personnel roster.

Chief Grzybowski advised the Hose Company's annual letter drive would be going out in January, soliciting funding for a Lucas Device for the second ambulance and for three thermal imaging cameras. (A local physician has expressed appreciation and praise of the Department's demonstration of the Lucas Device at a Sunday Market.)

Donation of a cascade system for filling Scott air bottles has been received from the South District Fire Department in Middletown; additional equipment was donated by the Killingworth Fire Department. (Thanks was extended to Brian and John Ahearn for their efforts in securing the Killingworth donation.) The items donated would have cost approximately \$65,000, Grzybowski said. The Department will spend approximately \$6,000 from its capital account for installation costs. Installation will be done by a certified contractor and annual maintenance performed with certification provided to the Office of Fire Marshal. It is anticipated the system will be on line early in the new year.

Members of the Truck Committee reported they have been looking at trucks in other departments and will start developing specifications for a vehicle. They anticipate they will have met with vendors and should begin to have "hard numbers" available by summer.

- (a) Report of Deputy Chief – there was no report available.
- (b) Report of Assistant Chief – there was no report available.
- (c) Report of EMS Chief – there was no report available.

Item 6: Report of Fire Marshal

Fire Marshal Dick Leighton distributed the activity report for November and reviewed the procedures that office follows to meet the requirements for response coverage 24/7. He updated the status of a new restaurant at 59 Main Street and the conversion of the second floor to a residential use, and noted that a full alarm system has been installed at 33 Main Street. Regular mock exercises are conducted at the health care facilities in Chester and Masonicare at Chester Village West now has generators installed that can provide all electrical power needed for the facility in an emergency.

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Item 7: Financial Reports

(a) 2019-2020 Fire Department Budget

Chief Grzybowski distributed reports on the current Hose Company and Ambulance budgets, noting that expenditures to date are slightly higher than desired and that the department would “tighten its belt” to stay within budget as the year progresses. Ambulance income for December is anticipated to be affected by higher activity. Budgets are currently “...in very good shape right now” he advised.

(b) 2019-2020 Fire Marshal Budget

Fire Marshal Leighton advised he did not have a current budget available at this time. Installation of a Knox Box and remote panel at the front door of Aerocision on Inspiration Lane has been accomplished.

Item 8: Old Business

(a): Approval of Minutes of November 20, 2019

On motion by Zanardi seconded by Schreiber the minutes of November 20, 2019 were approved as filed.

Item 9: New Business

(a) Correspondence – none had been received.

(b) The status of private bridges was reviewed. Notifications are being prepared to be sent to affected property owners. Weight limit postings will be required for all private bridges before any emergency vehicles will be allowed to cross. It is the property owners’ responsibility to address the individual structures.

(c) Driver training is provided through the Department with every new driver trained by a certified driver; CT DMV CDL licenses are required for all vehicles other than the brush truck and the deuce. The DMV notifies the Department if any driver’s license is suspended. All vehicles are required to be inspected annually.

(d) Risk Management is provided for the town through its insurance agency and CIRMA. The Hose Company maintains separate insurance coverage for liability for special events and functions.

(e) The Fire House has exhaust system equipment installed that is operated manually. An automatic system would be desirable but would be very costly to install.

Item 10: Adjournment

Motion by Schreiber, seconded by Zanardi to adjourn at 8:36 P.M. Unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Bettie Perreault, Chairman