

**Chester Board of Fire Commissioners**  
**Minutes, February 19, 2020**  
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The Chester Board of Fire Commissioners held the regular monthly meeting on Wednesday, February 19, 2020 at the Fire House, 6 High Street, Chester, Connecticut. In attendance were Bob Bandzes, John Divis, and Bettie Perreault. Ex-officio member present was Chief James Grzybowski. Also present were Deputy Chief Charles Greeney, Assistant Chief John Ahearn, Lt. Ben Belisle and Bob Quale.

Item 1: Call to Order

Chairman Bettie Perreault called the meeting to order at 7:35 P.M.

Item 3: Audience of Citizens

Bob Quale, pending appointment to the Board of Fire Commissioners by the Board of Selectmen, was introduced. He will fill the vacancy created by the resignation of long-time member Peter Zanardi.

The passing of former Chief Charles Castelli was recognized. Note was made that a gathering in remembrance of him will be held at the Fire House on February 22.

Item 4: Report of Board of Selectmen

Selectman Janeczek was unable to attend but had advised that bids for the Main Street Project would be opened on March 2, 2020. Funding in connection with work that will not be eligible for State funding for some items in the Project will be an item in the notice of a Town Meeting scheduled for March 5, 2020.

Item 5: Report of Fire Chief

Chief Grzybowski distributed an Incident Report Summary for January – December 2019 showing a total of 659 incidents for the year. The majority (534) were rescue and emergency medical service responses. False alarm and false call incidents (69) should be significantly fewer as the result of improved alarm system programming and maintenance. Mutual aid responses from other area departments were also reported, with Chester personnel responding to a total of 50 incidents. Cooperating departments came from the towns of Deep River, East Haddam, Essex, Haddam, Killingworth, Lyme, Old Saybrook and Hartford Hospital (Life Star).

The Chief reported Engine #2 and the Tanker have recently been serviced; Engine #2 also had additional maintenance done at a cost of approximately \$7,000.

Hose Company engineers have recommended that the 1974 Dodge Brush Truck be rebuilt rather than the purchase of a new unit. Because this vehicle is more solidly built than those currently manufactured, rebuilding/refurbishing the vehicle with up-dated electronic equipment where appropriate at a cost of approximately \$5,000 is considered more feasible. The Hose Company Executive Committee has reviewed and approved the recommendation. Based on the information provided,

**On motion by John Divis, seconded by Bob Bandzes, the Commission unanimously approved and recommends the transfer of \$5,000 from an existing Capital Expenditures account for this purpose, subject to review and approval by the Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance and a Town Meeting.**

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Chief Grzybowski reporting the recent letter drive has been “outstanding”, with over \$40,000 raised to date. Funds will be used for the purchase of a Lucas Device and thermal imaging cameras. Additional funding for those purchases will come from the Chili Cook-off event being held at Masonicare at Chester Village. Chief Grzybowski and the Chef for Chester Village will be featured on Channel 8 TV news to demonstrate the new equipment. Members of the letter drive committee were congratulated and thanked for their work to raise the money.

Newly certified Fire Fighter 1 personnel will be receiving new gear being purchased from a new vendor. The gear will be lighter in weight than older items currently in service.

Construction of the loft area in the Fire House has been completed and is being actively used for storage of equipment, freeing up main-floor space. Installation of the recently donated bottle fill station has been substantially completed and will result in savings on re-fill costs.

**Item 6: Report of Fire Marshal**

Fire Marshal Dick Leighton was unable to attend this meeting. A modified monthly activity report listing duties performed was circulated and reviewed. The Commission will request that an additional column be included to show the amount of time allocated to each activity.

**Item 7: Financial Reports**

**(a) 2019-2020 Fire Department Budget**

Chief Grzybowski distributed reports on the current Hose Company and Ambulance budgets, noting that it will be “very tight” for the remainder of the fiscal year. Payroll costs as the result of increasing activity and equipment maintenance costs have or will potentially exceed those budget line items. Increasing revenue generated by the increased ambulance response activity is anticipated to offset the expenditures.

**(b) 2019-2020 Fire Marshal Budget**

No report was available in the absence of the Fire Marshal.

**(c) 2020-2021 Fire Department Proposed Budget.**

Chief Grzybowski reported he is attending Board of Finance budget meetings to be available if questions arise or additional information is requested. The budget for the Fire Department will be reviewed by the Board of Finance at its Budget Workshop meeting on March 11.

**(d) 2020-2021 Fire Marshal Proposed Budget**

Nothing was available to report.

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Item 8: Old Business

There was nothing to report.

Item 9: Approval of Minutes of January 15 and the Special Meeting of January 23, 2020:

**On motion by John Divis, seconded by Bob Bandzes the minutes of January 15 and January 23, 2020 were approved as filed.**

Item 10: Reports and Status of Events

Masonicare at Chester Village West will host a chili cook-off on February 22, with proceeds to go to the Chester Hose Company to assist with the purchase of new equipment and gear.

Item 11: New Business:

The Commission and Officers unanimously went on record to recognize the service of Peter Zanardi to the Commission for his service in his more than a decade on the board, with thanks for his participation and the contributions to the Chester Hose Company.

Chief Grzybowski reported he is pursuing grant applications for the purchase of Scott Air Packs (AFT Grant) and for fire hydrant valves (Connecticut Water Company).

Lt. Belisle reported the Truck Committee had visited the Killingworth Fire Department to view its equipment, noting that that Department's vehicles are typically custom-built to meet the specific needs of their personnel. Belisle noted that what they had was "a good unit", purchased at a "decent price". The Committee will be formulating a schematic of a unit for Chester and working with vendors to achieve the best quality at the best price.

John Divis reported the floors in the Meeting House are being removed and he and Public Works have been working with the Fire Marshal and contractor to ensure safety during the project. The Fire Marshal will be posting notices restrict access to the building. The contractor will cover smoke detectors during the workday to avoid activation during construction activities; detectors will be activated during nights, weekends and other times when there is no construction activity taking place. Note was made of the historic notes found on some of the flooring which showed individual names and dates. These panels have been saved and will be preserved for use in the future by the Historical Society or others.

Item 12: Correspondence – none had been received.

Item 13: From Members or Guests: Nothing further was brought forward.

Item 14: Adjournment

**Motion by John Divis, seconded by Bob Bandzes to adjourn at 8:14 P.M. Unanimously approved.**

Respectfully submitted,

*Bettie Perreault*, Chairman