

Chester Board of Fire Commissioners
Minutes, September 16, 2020
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The Chester Board of Fire Commissioners held the regular monthly meeting on Wednesday, September 16, 2020 at the Fire House, 6 High Street, Chester, Connecticut. In attendance were Bob Bandzes, John Divis, Bob Quale, Rick Schreiber and Bettie Perreault. Ex-officio members present were Selectman Charlene Janecek and Chief James Grzybowski. Also present were Fire Marshal Dick Leighton, Deputy Chief Charles Greeney, Rich Tsou, Hose Company President and John Ahearn, Assistant Deputy Chief.

Item 1: Call to Order

Chairman Bettie Perreault called the meeting to order at 7:32 P.M.

Item 2: Audience of Citizens - There were none present.

Item 3. Update – Main Street Project

Selectman Janecek reported items on the “punch list” were substantially completed. Still to be done are guardrails on Spring Street, balustrade for the steps in the Chester wall, painting of cross walks (to be done this week), traffic lane striping, landscaping, with trees to be planted mid-October.

In celebration of the substantial completion of the Main Street Project, the Town will hold a Reopen Chester event on September 26, with a ribbon cutting and other events throughout the town.

Item 4. Report on Current Events – There was nothing to report.

Item 5. Report of Board of Selectmen

Information from the Board of Selectmen is given above in the Main Street Project update.

Item 6. Report of Fire Chief

Chief Grzybowski introduced Rich Tsou, newly elected President of the Chester Hose Company.

The Activity Report for August was distributed, showing responses to 100 incidents. Of those, 56 were in response to power lines down during Hurricane Isaias. There were five mutual aid responses, with Chester providing three responses to other towns.

The planned water hole at Cedar Lake may be relocated for better access to deeper water, with plans under review by the engineers. Delivery of parts for refurbishing of the Brush Truck are pending; the unit is currently out of service awaiting department personnel to remove the transmission for servicing. Upon receipt of the parts, it will be reinstalled along with the new parts.

Chief Grzybowski advised the Annual Banquet would not be held this year because of the COVID-19 pandemic; it is planned to hold the event in May 2021. The Chester Hose Company will have a dinner meeting with awards given to honor the long-term service

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of John Divis (50 years), Dan Roschko (45 years), and Steve Seferlis (40 years). The annual Craft Fair will be held on October 24 but will be an outdoor-only event; there will be no access to the Fire House and porta potties will be available. The Auxiliary's annual Pie Night has also been cancelled for this year.

On October 5, the Fire Marshal will provide a PowerPoint presentation at a department meeting of the recent fires on Straits Road, providing a critique from a Fire Marshal's perspective of the event from arrival through the end of investigation.

The department will hold a medical drill on October 12 at 7:00 PM at the Chester Fair Grounds, utilizing the newly completed grinder booth and medical station; Commission members were invited to attend.

Item 7: Report of Fire Marshal

Fire Marshal Dick Leighton distributed the activity report for the month of August. He spoke about the fires on Straits Road and the length of recovery time for the structures to be habitable and owners allowed to return. Leighton noted that as both Fire Marshal and Building Official, he is able to cover responsibilities for both positions in a single inspection of a site.

Asked about problems with generators, he said there are problems with CO poisoning. 90% of the problems are associated with CO poisoning. Generator installations are supposed to be made according to manufacturers' recommendations but property owners often use landscaping and/or furniture to provide visual barriers, reducing air circulation and allowing CO to build up inside a structure.

Item 8: Financial Reports

(a) 2020-2021 Fire Department Budget:

Budget reports were distributed, with note that at 18.67% expenditures, year-to-date was on target. Income shown included receipt of the first of the CARES grant reimbursements; a second CARES grant application has been submitted with a third currently in preparation.

(b) 2020-2021 Fire Marshal Budget:

There have been no expenditures from the Fire Marshal Budget to date since it is not yet known if updated Codes will be published this year.

Item 9. Old Business:

Review of private bridges in town has been deferred until spring because of COVID-19. Property owners will be notified by certified mail of restrictions that will affect the ability to respond to those locations. At the present time, most bridges will not pass inspection of their structure to safely support a response vehicle. Only one bridge is known to have passed inspection and be certified.

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Item 10. Approval of Minutes of August 19, 2020

On motion by Rick Schreiber, seconded by John Divis the minutes of the August 19, 2020 meeting were unanimously approved.

Item 11. Report and Status of Events – there was nothing to report.

Item 12. New Business

New lighting has been installed in the Fire House, converting all to LED fixtures. Lights in the drill room are “soft lights”; those in the rest of the building are “daylight” fixtures.

The main parking lot has been sealed and new traffic lines have been laid, with thanks to John Divis for the work done. The remainder of the paved area behind the building will be crack sealed and surface sealed as funding allows.

The Truck Committee is meeting regularly, having looked at trucks at other companies in the area. Currently they are looking at trucks with vendors.

Note was made of the volunteer efforts, particularly of Brian and Michael Ahearn, during the installation of the new floor in the bay area. Assistant Deputy Chief John Ahearn stated, “I have a lot of pride in this place” continuing with praise for the Hose Company members and their willingness to volunteer and work to make the Hose Company building and the department the best possible.

Item 13. Correspondence: There was none.

Item 14. From Members or Guests: Nothing was brought forward.

Item 15. Adjournment

Motion by Rick Schreiber, seconded by John Divis to adjourn at 8:10 P.M. Unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Bettie Perreault, Chairman