

**Chester Board of Fire Commissioners**  
**Minutes, October 21, 2020**  
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The Chester Board of Fire Commissioners held the regular monthly meeting on Wednesday, October 21, 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 member present was Chief James Grzybowski. Also present were Fire Marshal Dick Leighton and Lt. Ben Belisle.

Item 1: Call to Order

Chairman Bettie Perreault called the meeting to order at 7:33 P.M.

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

Item 3. Update – Main Street Project

It was noted that landscape plantings and other finishing tasks have been substantially completed. Traffic signage is currently being reviewed by local police officials and others to better position regulatory signs so that, when necessary, enforcement actions can be taken. As originally positioned, regulatory signage on much of Main Street is unenforceable.

Item 4. Report on Current Events

The Hose Company's annual Craft Fair will be held on Saturday, October 24 as an outdoor event. No access to the Fire House will be allowed. The annual holiday wreath sale will be conducted early in December, also with outdoor locations.

Item 5. Report of Board of Selectmen

There was no report available.

Item 6. Report of Fire Chief

Chief Grzybowski distributed the Activity Report for September, noting that over the past several months medical response activity has been unpredictable, a "rollercoaster" pattern, while other calls have been significantly higher. With the increased activity, mutual aid between towns has been in both directions, with Chester responders providing help to other towns six times while five responses came to Chester. Both of Chester's units have been on calls for which mutual aid was also requested. Lack of available personnel, on the part of both Chester and other mutual aid towns, was a problem in one case. Review of calls responded to, to better identify times of greatest need might require modification of schedules. Billing practices were reviewed and discussed.

There has been an up-tick in COVID-19 cases in Chester in recent days. All were reminded to be diligent in observing and practicing recommended health safety precautions.

Lt. Belisle reported the Truck Committee is scheduling meetings with vendors, with a number returning to provide details for final reviews and pricing. The Boat Committee is currently meeting to establish design and other feature requirements.

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Item 7: Report of Fire Marshal

Fire Marshal Dick Leighton distributed the activity report for the month of September, with note of incidents where he has responded simply because he was on the scene as a part of inspections for other duties. Details and discussion of the details associated with the in-progress construction of a new building at Chester Marina (72 Railroad Avenue), included details of water sources and supply needed to meet fire protection needs; the proposed uses of the facility, which will include a boat showroom, banquet room and restaurant.

With colder weather, restaurants that have outside dining are utilizing heaters, which are under the jurisdiction of the Fire Marshal, requiring that at least one side of a fire-retardant tent or enclosure remain open. Tents typically are rented and are fire-retardant. "Use common sense" was seen as key to safety. All establishments have been inspected and will continue to be checked for safety as the season progresses.

Item 8: Financial Reports

(a) 2020-2021 Fire Department Budget:

Budget reports were distributed. Chief Grzybowski said the budget is "in good shape" at the current time. He noted that income has been up/down so far this year, and that reductions in income were the result of less calls, not missed calls. However, right now activity is picking up. The current year is historically "different" from the past, and the coming months may continue that uncertainty.

(b) 2020-2021 Fire Marshal Budget:

Expenditures to date represent primarily mileage and payroll. There have been no training activities yet this year.

By responding to an offer from Eversource for free batteries, those batteries have been provided to the Hose Company and will be used as a part of a school program, giving the batteries to students for smoke detectors as part of a safety promotion.

Item 9. Old Business – there was nothing to bring up.

Item 10. Approval of Minutes of September 16, 2020

**On motion by Rick Schreiber, seconded by John Divis, the minutes of the September 16, 2020 meeting were unanimously approved.**

Item 11. Report and Status of Events

Rick Schreiber extended thanks to the Chief and the members of the Hose Company for inviting Commissioners to participate in the recent drill featuring a power point

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presentation by the Fire Marshal in connection with the two-house fire event earlier this fall, and the opportunity to see the work members had completed at the grinder booth building at the Chester Fair Grounds. Of particular note was the fine quality of the finished woodworking done by Bruce Sypher.

Item 12. New Business – there was nothing to report.

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 8:21 P.M.  
Unanimously approved.**

Respectfully submitted,

*Bettie Perreault*, Chairman