

Chester Board of Fire Commissioners
Minutes, January 20, 2021
Page 1 of 3

The Chester Board of Fire Commissioners held the regular monthly meeting on Wednesday, January 20, 2021 at the Fire House, 6 High Street, Chester, Connecticut. In attendance were Bob Quale, Rick Schreiber and Bettie Perreault; Bob Bandzes attended via GoToMeeting . Ex-officio members present was Selectman Charlene Janecek and Chief James Grzybowski. Also present were Deputy Chief Charles Greeney, Assistant Chief John Ahearn, Battalion Chief Brian Ahearn, President/Trustee Rich Tsou, Head Trustee Denise Sypher, and participating via GoToMeeting Fire Marshal Dick Leighton, Assistant EMS Chief Kim Mills, Captain Dylan Grzybowski, Medical Coordinator Susan Currier, and Treasurer Scot Mills.

Item 1: Call to Order

Chairman Bettie Perreault called the meeting to order at 7:31 P.M. followed by self-introductions by all present.

Item 2: Audience of Citizens – Nothing was brought forward

Item 3. Update – Main Street Project

Selectman Janecek advised she and Officer Craig Lee have been reviewing traffic signage on Main Street following completion of the Main Street Project. Some signs will be repositioned to provide better visibility and enforcement requirements. The Town is receiving quotes in connection with remedial aesthetic work on the stone walls in the Project area, with the work to be done in the spring.

Six town volunteers are contacting residents over the age of 75 to remind them of the need to register for and get the COVID vaccine, assisting with the application process, and arranging to provide transportation if needed.

Item 4. Report on Current Events

Chief Grzybowski reported the Hose Company Craft Fair, held outdoors, was a success; the annual wreath sale was virtually sold out in one day – another success. The Santa Comes To Town event was different this year, with visits to families and delivering holiday gifts for children. The event received overwhelming support and praise from all.

Item 5. Report of Board of Selectmen

See Main Street Project report, above.

Item 6. Report of Fire Chief

Chief Grzybowski reported the Fire House was shut down during several weeks at the end of 2020 in response to the pandemic, with training and other activities suspended. Training has now been resumed, ensuring members keep skills up to date and active. Some training is virtual. All members have received vaccine shots, with the second shot scheduled within the coming week. No members have been infected with the virus.

Chester Board of Fire Commissioners
Minutes, January 20, 2021
Page 2 of 3

Ambulance activity reports for the months of October, November and December, when no Commissioners' meetings were held, were distributed and reviewed in detail. Mutual aid calls were also reviewed, with note that Chester received more mutual aid calls than those responded to for other towns. This was primarily the result of lack of responders due to the resignation of two personnel and changes in available hours for others. The total call counts for ambulance, alarm and mutual aid was provided.

The brush truck is in the process of being rebuilt by Hose Company engineers, with electronic ignition, a larger tank, and other upgrades and updates being done. The vehicle, affectionately named "Peaches" will become "Peaches With Hair" upon completion, reflecting its improved strength and abilities.

The Hose Company received an \$8,000 Scott Air Pack donated from Shipman's Fire Equipment of Waterford. That company will also assist the Chief in preparation of a grant application for additional air packs to replace old units that have been decommissioned.

An area off the drill room will be outfitted with two bunk beds for use by crews during emergencies and disaster events.

Item 7: Report of Fire Marshal

Fire Marshal Dick Leighton advised his report would be provided at the February meeting. (He had been out on medical leave following surgery.)

Item 8: Financial Reports

(a) 2020-2021 Fire Department Budget: Chief Grzybowski reviewed the current budget, both expenditures and income, noting that the COVID pandemic has led to fewer medical calls since people were reluctant or afraid to go to a hospital. Additionally, payments are slower coming in, with some being made in installments. It can be anticipated that total income for the current fiscal year will not meet expectations.

(b) 2020-2021 Fire Marshal Budget: Fire Marshal Leighton reported that the budget remains on track and that for the first time in many years he does not anticipate being over-expended at the end of the fiscal year.

(c) 2021-2022 Fire Department Budget – Proposed: Chief Grzybowski reviewed in detail the proposed budget for the next fiscal year, which showed a 4.7% increase. The primary increase is for an increase in payroll costs for ambulance personnel for the addition of two employees plus standard step increases. Changes to other line items were explained: supplies include both medical and fire department expenses; gas and oil reflect lower prices; equipment maintenance includes both maintenance and required annual inspections; and Ambulance Processing includes a fee for paramedic pay, which is an assessment to the Town over which the fire department has no control. Proposed Capital expenditures were also reviewed in detail, with note that if Town bonding becomes an option, some realignment of priorities may become a viable option.

Chester Board of Fire Commissioners
Minutes, January 20, 2021
Page 3 of 3

On Motion by Rich Schreiber, seconded by Bob Quale, the Fire Department budget in the total proposed amount of \$386,666, as presented, is recommended for submission to the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance.

(d) 2021-2022 Fire Marshal Budget – Proposed: Fire Marshal Leighton advised that budget remains essentially the same. Increasing activity and required training, which must be done in person, are included. There are no capital expenditures in the Fire Marshal budget.

On Motion by Rich Schreiber, seconded by Bob Quale, the Fire Marshal budget in the total proposed amount of \$33,375, as presented, is recommended for submission to the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance.

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

Item 10. Approval of Minutes of October 12, 2020

On motion by Rich Schreiber, seconded by Bob Quale, the minutes of the October 12, 2020 meeting were unanimously approved.

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

Item 12. New Business:

Chair Perreault advised that addition to the monthly agenda will be made to allow Commissioners to develop an inventory of items – vehicular, equipment, building, etc. that will be likely to require expenditure at some time in the future. The purpose is to build an inventory of items that are not necessarily a part of the current standard annual budget process. The goal is to anticipate future requirements beyond or outside of the regular annual budget process.

Item 13. Correspondence: There was none.

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

Item 15. Adjournment

Motion by Bob Quale, seconded by Rick Schreiber, to adjourn at 8:27 P.M. Unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Bettie Perreault, Chairman