

**Chester Board of Fire Commissioners**  
**Minutes, February 17, 2021**  
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The Chester Board of Fire Commissioners held the regular monthly meeting via GoToMeeting on Wednesday, February 17, 2021 at the Fire House, 6 High Street, Chester, Connecticut. In attendance were Bob Bandzes, Bob Quale, Rick Schreiber and Bettie Perreault. Ex-officio members present was Selectman Charlene Janecek and Chief James Grzybowski. Also present was President/Trustee Rich Tsou.

Item 1: Call to Order

Chairman Bettie Perreault called the meeting to order at 7:31 P.M. followed by roll call of all present.

Item 2: Audience of Citizens – there was no audience of citizens.

Item 3. Update – Main Street Project

Selectman Janecek advised the project was substantially completed. Payment in connection with some private work items remains to be finalized. Work in connection with stone walls has been put out for bids and will be undertaken in the spring.

Item 4. Report on Current Events

Chief Grzybowski reported the Hose Company is considering potential plans for an Easter event that could be held while observing pandemic precaution measures.

Item 5. Report of Board of Selectmen

Selectman Janecek reported that volunteers are contacting citizens 65-years and older to ensure that everyone gets the COVID vaccine shot. Arrangements are being made to provide transportation and other assistance for those who may need it.

Item 6. Report of Fire Chief

Chief Grzybowski distributed the January Call Report of Activities, showing the department had responded to 48 incidents. One recent call had the fire out within ten minutes, with damage to only a single room and its contents. He noted that February call activity has increased, with a significant number of the Chester crew responding to a Deep River call.

The Chief advised that two potential candidates for employment for the ambulance service had been interviewed. One candidate has been selected who will be available for Thursday and Friday shifts once employment requirements are fulfilled. It is becoming harder for volunteers to respond to calls because of time constraints, making paid personnel a necessity that will need to be addressed in the near future.

The brush truck should be ready to return to service in the spring, as volunteers are continuing its renovation, installing equipment provided through donations. The Truck Committee has been reviewing new vehicle specifications and was inspecting a vehicle with a vendor as the meeting was being held. The Boat Committee will resume its vessel search later this month.

What had formerly been a storage closed in the drill room is being converted to sleeping quarters for response crews as needed during emergency and disaster events.

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Item 7: Report of Fire Marshal

Fire Marshal Dick Leighton distributed the activity report for January 2021, and reviewed the status of repairs in connection with an event of late last year. It was noted that residual damage to a structure was under negotiations between the owner and other parties. Typically, a homeowners' insurance policy takes care of restoration costs, seeking reimbursement from other sources if involved. Following this practice generally will expedite restoration work.

Item 8: Financial Reports

(a) 2020-2021 Fire Department Budget: Chief Grzybowski reviewed the current budget, both expenditures and income, noting the budget is "on target" for the current year. While income has recently begun to increase as a result of greater call activity, it can be anticipated that end-of-year income may not meet expectations.

Grant application for \$256,000 has been submitted in connection with the purchase of Scott Packs.

(b) 2020-2021 Fire Marshal Budget: Fire Marshal Leighton reported that the budget remains on track and can be anticipated to remain so for the remainder of the fiscal year. Working with Social Services and Fire Department personnel, officials are seeking measures that will alleviate the number of repeat calls from individuals who might benefit from professional intervention and assistance.

It is anticipated that the State will be implementing new Codes effective July 1, 2021 and funding for this has been included in the budget request for that office.

(c) 2021-2022 Fire Department Budget – Proposed:

Members of the Commission and the Fire Department were reminded that the budgets for both the Hose Company and Fire Marshal are scheduled for review by the Board of Finance and Board of Selectmen on February 24. All members were asked to attend this meeting to support the budgets requested.

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

Item 10. Approval of Minutes of January 20, 2021

**On motion by Rich Schreiber, seconded by Bob Quale, the minutes of the January 20, 2021 meeting were unanimously approved.**

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

Item 12. New Business:

Bob Bandzes inquired about the status of review of private bridges; the Chief advised reviews would be resumed in the spring.

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Bandzes asked what vendor was used by the Department for gas and fuel; the Chief reported they use CITCO stations in Deep River and Haddam, which have extended and reliable hours of operation. The Department utilizes CITCO credit cards, requiring a PIN number for use and allowing documentation of what personnel are using the card.

Rich Tsou, President/Trustee was asked by Bandzes about bank accounts for the Hose Company and was advised the Company utilizes both an auditor and accountant for its financial affairs.

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 Bob Quale, to adjourn at 8:07 P.M. Unanimously approved.**

Respectfully submitted,

*Bettie Perreault*, Chairman