

Chester Board of Fire Commissioners
Minutes, May 20, 2021
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The Chester Board of Fire Commissioners held the regular monthly meeting on Thursday, May 20, 2021 at the Fire House, 6 High Street, Chester, Connecticut. (The meeting had been postponed in deference to the annual Town Meeting to adopt a 2021-2022 budget.) In attendance were Bob Bandzes, John Divis, Rick Schreiber and Bettie Perreault. Ex-officio members present were Chief James Grzybowski and Assistant Chief Charles Greeney.

Item 1: Call to Order

Chairman Bettie Perreault called the meeting to order at 7:34 P.M. followed by roll call of those present.

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

Item 3. Updates –

Potential detour routings affecting roads in Chester in connection with the pending CT DOT project to replace a bridge on West Elm Street in Deep River were discussed. Detour route(s) selected by the CT DOT may increase vehicle traffic, affecting both neighborhoods and responses by emergency responders.

Pedestrian and vehicle congestion related to outdoor dining in the Main Street area were noted. Local officials have been seeking cooperation from establishment owners and managers to alleviate the situation.

Item 4. Report on Current Events

Chief Grzybowski advised inspection and review of private bridges are to be conducted with Fire Department officials and the Fire Marshal. There are currently between 10 – 12 private bridges. Once inspected, bridges that cannot safely accommodate emergency vehicles will be posted, with owners advised that emergency vehicles will not be allowed to cross the bridge.

The Hose Company's Annual Banquet, which was not held in 2020 because of the COVID pandemic, will be held as an Annual BBQ Banquet on July 10. The event will be held at the Pataconk Yacht Club as an outdoor event.

Note was made of new residential use of property at the end of Dock Road, a dead-end private road, where some utilities and accommodation for seasonal residential use have been installed.

Item 5. Report of Board of Selectmen

Selectman Janeczek was unable to attend. John Divis, Public Works Foreman, advised that the proposed project by the Connecticut Water Company to install a water main on Goose Hill Road to Kings Highway is anticipated later this year.

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Item 6. Report of Fire Chief

The April activity report showing 52 incidents responded to was distributed. Mutual aid received and provided was also detailed and discussed. Hiring of additional personnel can now be pursued following adoption of the 2021-2022 fiscal year budget. Difficulty in securing qualified personnel is a problem for many similar departments.

The Brush Truck has been returned to service after having been renovated by Department personnel at minimal cost to the Town. Bob Bandzes recommended that the Commission express the Town's appreciation for the work, time, commitment and resources of the members who helped to complete the project, showing "a lot of pride" in the work they had done. A letter will be sent to the Hose Company extending that thanks to its members.

Bob Bands, a member of the Truck Committee, advised the group is working with vendors to secure specs for a new vehicle. With that information, the Committee will be able to develop the vehicle to meet the Department's needs in preparation for bid documents.

Chief Grzybowski advised the Department is working on both design and costs associated with replacement of the marine boat. With escalating costs of materials, the purchase will probably be ready for bidding later in the year. It is anticipated the vessel will be approximately 27 feet, with an 18-inch draft, and aluminum for durability. It was noted that installation of standpipe by the restaurant currently under development is in relatively close proximity to the dock area of the Department vessel.

Item 7: Report of Fire Marshal – The Fire Marshal was unable to attend; no report was given.

Item 8: Financial Reports

(a) 2020-2021 Fire Department Budget: Chief Grzybowski reviewed the current budget, noting typical annual inspections and testing of hoses, ladders, Hurst tools, and vehicle maintenance will be conducted in the coming month. Expenditures should remain within budget for the fiscal year. An additional request for reimbursement for loss of revenue as a result of the COVID pandemic in connection with ambulance service has been submitted.

(b) 2020-2021 Fire Marshal Budget: There was no report available.

(c) 2021-2022 budgets for both the Fire Department and the Fire Marshal were approved.

Item 9. Old Business – The building at the Chester Fair Grounds that replaced the trailer previously used by the Fire Department was noted, with praise for the workmanship of Department volunteers.

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Item 10. Approval of Minutes of April 12, 2021

On motion by Rick Schreiber, seconded by John Divis, the minutes of the April 12, 2021 meeting were approved.

Item 11. Report and Status of Events:

The Chief noted that submission of nominations for EMS Awards would be due until September 1, 2021.

Note was made of the convey of fire, police and other responders for the New Haven Fire Fighter killed in a recent fire and was a phenomenal event that shut down traffic on Interstate 91.

Item 12. New Business:

Item 13. Correspondence: There was none.

Item 14. From Members or Guests: There was nothing brought up.

Item 15. Adjournment

Motion by Rick Schreiber, seconded by John Divis, to adjourn at 8:14 P.M. Unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Bettie Perreault, Chairman