

Chester Board of Fire Commissioners
Minutes, July 21, 2021
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The Chester Board of Fire Commissioners held its regularly scheduled monthly meeting on Wednesday, July 21, 2021 at the Fire House, 6 High Street, Chester, Connecticut. In attendance were Bob Bandzes, John Divis, Bob Quale, Bettie Perreault and Rick Schreiber. Ex-officio members present were Selectman Charlene Janecek, Chief James Grzybowski, Fire Marshal Dick Leighton, Assistant Chief Charles Greeney and Resident State Trooper Matt Warren.

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 –

- Instillation of water main on North Main Street/Goose Hill Road is progressing, with completion anticipated around the end of August.
- Marker 37 Restaurant is now in operation; traffic has been a concern to area residents. It was noted that marina-related vehicles are a significant part of the traffic and marinas are for the first time in recent years fully occupied this season, with numerous additional trailer-transported boats using the launch area.
- Approval is needed from the Probate Court before demolition of the structure at 27 Ridge Road can take place. Property owners should have personal items cleared by the end of this month.

Item 4. Report on Current Events

- The Chester Fair Committee as well as fire and police are reviewing and updating op plans for the event. Installation of material to the area of the medical unit will insure privacy.
- Triathlon events will be held this year, with the Hose Company providing personnel and equipment during the event(s). Financial arrangements remain unchanged to ensure there are no costs to the Town.

Item 5. Report of Board of Selectmen

Selectman Janecek reported on traffic issues raised by a Cedar Lake Road resident which are being addressed by the Selectmen and Police.

Matt Warren, new Resident State Trooper was introduced and welcomed. He provided a brief bio of his professional and personal background.

Item 6. Report of Fire Chief

Chief Grzybowski and Assistant Chief Greeney reported on a number of matters:

- The Juniors raised \$160 between sales and donations, selling popcorn at the Sunday Market.
- Allison Safrin, a Junior member attended the Fire Academy this year. Her experience was so awesome that now other Junior members want to attend future events.

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- A recent training drill through the Haddam Fire Department for other area departments was very successful; it is anticipated future similar trainings will be planned.
- The recent annual banquet was deemed a great success, with attendance the largest ever. Awards given were appropriate, individualized wearing apparel for members rather than trophies or plaques.
- Department elections held earlier in July returned all officers to another term, with the addition of Jim Skeffington to a three-year term as Trustee, replacing retiring Trustee Chuck Tower.
- Chief Grzybowski distributed Activity Report of Calls for the July 2020 – June 2021 fiscal year as well as a Report for the month of June 2021. Mutual aid calls have been reduced now that two additional drivers have been trained and certified.
- A new EMT has been interviewed and hired (professional history was provided) with additional interview(s) scheduled. Both chiefs and members noted that the fire and ambulance departments work well together and that new staff is selected to continue and support that mutual relationship.
- Vehicle inspections are being conducted during June and July.
- The Truck Committee has elected to engage a consultant in connection with truck specifications, following the successful similar arrangement by the Deep River department. Whether savings versus consultant cost still ensures vehicle quality was questioned and should be a consideration.
- Three new garage door openers have been installed, replacing 30+ year-old units. The new units will allow remote activation by Valley Shore Communication.

Item 7: Report of Fire Marshal

Fire Marshal Leighton reviewed the appointment procedure for the position of Fire Marshal, noting the Board of Fire Commissioners is the appointing body. The Fire Marshal is charged with providing monthly updates of activities to the Commissioners.

Activity reports for the months of April, May and June were distributed, with note that the time required in connection with the fire and fatality at 27 Ridge Road and the associated Probate proceedings had required significant time commitments. It was noted that property at 32 Straits Road was still not habitable and no building permit has been issued. Litigation is probably pending.

Item 8: Financial Reports

- (a) 2020-2021 Fire Department Budget: Chief Grzybowski distributed the year-end financial report, noting that once all outstanding bills have been paid approximately \$500 will be returned to the Town's General Fund. Line item details were noted and reviewed. Ambulance revenue for the fiscal year was below expectations, primarily as a result of reduced calls during the COVID pandemic.

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- (b) 2020-2021 Fire Marshal Budget: Fire Marshal Leighton distributed year-end budget figures as well as report of revenue generated by that office and that of the Building Official. He noted that fees are being reviewed and will be adjusted to offset costs. Information from other towns as well as based on square footage of structures where applicable are being used in setting the fees.
- (c) 2021-2022 Fire Department Budget: There is nothing to report at this time.
- (d) 2021-2022 Fire Marshal Budget: There is nothing to report at this time.

Item 9. Old Business –

- The inventory of equipment and vehicles being conducted by the Juniors is progressing. It is anticipated it will be available for the October Commissioners' meeting.
- Inspection of privately owned bridges is being done with details currently being verified. Notifications are anticipated being sent in the near future.
- Proposed installation of a standpipe (versus the previously proposed vault-type installation) is planned for near intersection of Route 148/Cedar Lake Road and the adjacent flag pole and green. It allows better vehicle circulation and better water access due to depth and proximity to the water flow from the stream.
- The Chiefs explained that Commissioners as well as others at a fire scene are not allowed to impede operations at any time, and should clearly identify themselves to Fire Police or other officials when near operations.

Item 10. Approval of Minutes of June 23, 2021

On motion by Rich Schreiber, seconded by John Divis, the minutes of the June 23, 2021 meeting were approved.

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

Item 12. New Business: There was nothing to report.

Item 13. Correspondence: There was none.

Item 14. From Members or Guests:

John Divis stated, "We all work as one..." which both Commissioners and Officers concurred with. Matt Warren supported that approach, providing information about the training, experience and resources he brings to the position. A spirited general conversation and exchange of ideas from all present ended the meeting.

Item 15. Adjournment

Motion by Rick Schreiber, seconded by John Divis, to adjourn at 8:56 P.M. Unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Bettie Perreault, Chair