

**Chester Board of Fire Commissioners**  
**Minutes, October 20, 2021**  
**Page 1 of 4**

The Chester Board of Fire Commissioners held its regularly scheduled monthly meeting on Wednesday, October 20, 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 Janacek, Chief James Grzybowski, Fire Marshal Dick Leighton, as well as Assistant Chief Charles Greeney and Resident State Trooper Matt Warren.

Item 1: Call to Order

Chair 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 – Among the items noted were the following:

- TFC Warren has met with Eversource, Lucas Tree, and Town officials to review the tree removal program through 2022, and noted that communication between all was good. Officials will be following the progress as the projects are executed.
- Public Works Foreman Divis advised that road paving on Goose Hill between Kings Highway and the Williams Water Treatment Plant entrance would begin next week, with the milling of one lane of North Main Street to the intersection with Liberty Street to follow.
- The Hose Company's annual Craft Fair, held last weekend, had a good turnout.
- The Hose Company's annual Wreath Sale will take place in early December.
- Fire Fighter I class will be conducted through the Hose Company on December 2, with eight Chester members in the class and additional personnel from other departments participating.
- The Department will participate in traditional First Friday/Holiday events in December.
- The East Haven Burn Trailer is being used for training of members, with one exercise to be done exclusively by the Juniors. Members from other departments are participating as part of cross-training exercises. Video of a live training drill was shown. Training will continue as long as the unit is available.
- Juniors are preparing a Fire Prevention video for use at Chester Elementary School in connection with Fire Prevention Week.
- Fire Marshal Leighton advised trailer on Liberty Street is scheduled for removal after a long legal history dating back to 2011. Public Works and Police have provided assistance throughout the process. Multiple agencies have or will have liens on the property, which is privately owned.

**Chester Board of Fire Commissioners**  
**Minutes, October 20, 2021**  
**Page 2 of 4**

- Grounds and outside area of the burned house on Ridge Road have been cleared, the structure demolished and removal scheduled to an out-of-state location.
- Private bridges throughout town have been inspected for safety for passage by Department vehicles. Letters will be issued to property owners advising of restrictions required. No apparatus will be allowed to cross most bridges.

Item 4. Report on Current Events

Included under Item 3, above.

Item 5. Report of Board of Selectmen

- Selectman Janacek advised Town-owned property at 59 Winthrop Road known as Skyview, is undergoing environmental investigation. Should the property be found to have no contamination, it could then be sold and put back on the tax rolls.

Item 6. Report of Fire Chief

The call activity report for September, showing 49 calls responded to, was distributed and reviewed.

An informational packet in connection with the planned boat replacement was distributed, with a visual presentation provided accompanied by detailed information. The proposal, developed with the help of a local contractor, showed plans and details for a 26-foot vessel with 9½ foot beam, seven-foot cabin, and 18-inch draft. As a result of the dramatic escalation of the costs of materials, labor and other items, there is an estimated cost of approximately \$160,555. Prices are being negotiated wherever possible. It is estimated that the aluminum vessel would have a life of from 20 – 30 years. (The present vessel has aged to the point where major expenditures are required.)

If bids can be sought during November, with bid awarded during January, it may be possible to have the unit delivered by July 2021. Request will be made to allocate \$160,555 from the Rescue/Relief Plan funding received by the Town. (\$600,250 has been received by the Town for 2021; an additional \$650,250 is to be received in 2022.) TFC Warren stated from his experiences and knowledge of what other municipalities have expended for vessels of similar use, the proposed vessel's capabilities are "excellent", and the detail and information provided very good.

Presentation of the purchase was present to the Hose Company to review and get its approval to go out to bid. Approval was granted. Next required steps will require the approval of the Commissioners, the Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance and approval at a Town Meeting.

**Chester Board of Fire Commissioners**  
**Minutes, October 20, 2021**  
**Page 3 of 4**

**Motion was made by John Divis, seconded by Rick Schreiber, to approve the request for \$160,250 from the Rescue/Relief Plan funding for the purchase of vessel as detailed in information provided, with the \$90,000 currently in the Capital Expenditure fund for that purpose to be retained for vehicle purchase in future years. The motion passed unanimously.**

Bob Bandzes reported the Truck Committee is reviewing the specifications from 1993 truck purchase.

Item 7: Report of Fire Marshal

Fire Marshal Leighton distributed the activity report for September with note that the following had required significant time during the month:

- Complaint in connection with construction activities at 189-191 Middlesex Avenue involving the Fire Marshal, Town, State Building Official and other officials.
- Arrangements in connection with the demolition of building on Ridge Road.
- Removal of trailer on Liberty Street.
- It was noted that annual inspections of restaurants and other uses are underway. Health care facilities are exempt at this time by State order because of COVID.

Item 8: Report of Resident State Trooper

TFC Warren expressed his appreciation for the local help and support received in connection with an activity in Cockaponset State Forest, of which he is in charge. Fire Police secured the scene and “did a really good job”.

Communication associated with removal of trailer on Liberty Street was excellent between all involved officials and agencies.

Calls for service during the previous month were reviewed, with the reminder to local residents that with colder weather, the warming of vehicles prior to driving was likely to attract car thefts. He will be participating in the Halloween event and the flag lowering ceremonies associated with the Veterans event.

Item 8: Financial Reports

(a) 2021-2022 Fire Department Budget: The year-to-date was distributed and reviewed, with the advice that it was “on target” at the present time. Vehicle inspections have been done by DOT and OEMS. TFC Warren reported that police vehicles have also been inspected with numerous deficiencies and out-of-date items found, which are being addressed. Federal funding will be available as appropriate.

(b) 2021-2022 Fire Marshal Budget: The report was distributed and reviewed.

**Chester Board of Fire Commissioners**  
**Minutes, October 20, 2021**  
**Page 4 of 4**

Item 9. Old Business – There was none to bring up.

Item 10. Approval of Minutes of September 19, 2021

**On motion by Rick Schreiber, seconded by John Divis, the minutes of the August 15, 2021 meeting were unanimously approved.**

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

Item 12. New Business: Update of Inventory project

Chief Grzybowski distributed a detailed inventory report providing information on the following categories:

- Firefighter Equipment – prepared by the Trustees
- Apparatus Inventory – all equipment in all vehicles – prepared by the Juniors
- Ambulance Equipment Inventory and Responder Truck Equipment Inventory

While some areas still need to be done, 90% is now completed and most was found to be in “excellent” condition, with age being a consideration in many instances.

Commission members and the officers said they couldn’t say enough in praise of the work the Juniors had done in connection with their part of the inventory project.

Item 13. Correspondence: There was none.

Item 14. From Members or Guests: Bob Bandzes inquired about the blue Charger the Department has. The Chief advised it is classified as the Chief’s car that because of its age needs significant updating, with members currently making repairs and remediating other deficiencies. The vehicle is on the replacement list, and should be replaced by a suburban or Explorer-type vehicle to better accommodate the needs and uses of such a vehicle.

Item 15. Adjournment: there being no further business brought up,

**On motion by Rick Schreiber, seconded by John Divis, to adjourn at 8:57 P.M. Unanimously approved.**

Respectfully submitted,

*Bettie Perreault*, Chair