

Chester Board of Fire Commissioners
Minutes, January 19, 2022
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The Chester Board of Fire Commissioners held its scheduled meeting on Wednesday, January 19, 2022 via ZOOM. In attendance were Bob Bandzes, Bob Quale and Bettie Perreault. Ex-officio member attending via ZOOM were Chief James Grzybowski, First Selectman Charlene Janecek and Resident Trooper Matt Warren,

Item 1: Call to Order

Chair Bettie Perreault called the meeting to order at 7:02 P.M. followed by roll call of those present.

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

Item 3. Report of Board of Selectmen

First Selectman Janecek reported the Town had held two drive-through distributions of COVID test kits and masks at the Town Hall, having worked with Chief Grzybowski and EMD Ray Guasp to obtain the kits and masks. Nearly 400 were distributed; masks are still available through the Town Hall.

Item 4. Report of Fire Chief

Chief Grzybowski had provided reports to Commissioners and displayed them as each was reviewed. Call activity report showed increased activity, with a dramatic increase in calls for the month of December with a total of 79 responses recorded. Graphs showing how activity changes during a week, indicate that Sunday, Tuesday and Friday have the most activity. Mutual Aid breakdown showing aid given/received for other departments was also reviewed and explained. Department training activities have been held with recognition of the need to be diligent about COVID. Ice rescue training is scheduled to be outside; blood borne pathogen training is scheduled; The Fire Fighter One class has started, and includes six members from the department.

Contract for purchase of the rescue boat has been received, with a cost of \$158,745, which includes \$28,500 for a single motor. A fund drive will begin in February for the purchase of additional equipment for the vessel. Contract has been awarded and construction scheduled.

Normal maintenance for vehicles has been taken care of, with some items upgraded to remediate the lack of manual overdrive in connection with a recent event.

The security system for the Fire House has been installed and is functioning. Fobs are being distributed to personnel and will also be distributed to other officials as available.

Mutual Aid agreements will be reviewed and discussed at a Commissioners' meeting once conditions permit resumption of in-person meetings.

Item 5: Report of Fire Marshal:

Fire Marshal Dick Leighton was unable to attend the meeting due to a schedule conflict. Activity reports for November and December 2021 had been distributed but were not discussed.

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Item 6: Report of Resident State Trooper

TFC Warren advised a lot of changes and improvements are taking place in the local Police department. Activity showed 1406 calls for service during December. Changes include revisions to scheduling effective February 1, to include fixed, rotating shifts for local officers to provide greater coverage, with schools and places of worship noted in response to actions occurring throughout the country. To provide greater visibility, officers will now activate red/blue lights on vehicles.

To meet statutory regulatory requirements, Warren is working with First Selectman Janecek to have body cameras available by July 1. Appropriate storage and security of needed equipment must also be secured and maintained. A Town meeting will be required for funding once a definitive budget can be established. (Janecek was specifically thanked for her cooperation and support in helping to comply with these regulatory requirements.)

Security for the Town Hall is a “desperate need” and remedial measures are being researched and implemented. Of particular concern are security of both equipment and records. Chief Grzybowski will cooperate with TFC Warren to provide a single security fob that will work with access gates for specific local businesses and locations, allowing access for authorized responders with a single fob unit code.

Item 7: Financial Reports

Year to Date financial information showed a 48.99% expenditure for the Department, with ambulance income showing a trend that may exceed expectations. Budget for the 2022-2023 fiscal year is being prepared and will be reviewed by the Commissioners before submission to the Board of Selectmen.

There was discussion of the cell phones utilized by the Department, Public Works and other personnel, with both Chief Grzybowski and TFC Warren investigating programs to reduce costs while ensuring needed services are maintained.

Item 8. Old Business

The Chief is finalizing information in connection with the inventory of equipment and will report back to the Commissioners at a future meeting.

Item 9. Approval of Minutes of December 13, 2021

On motion by Bob Bandzes, seconded by Bob Quale, the minutes of the December 13, 2021 meeting were unanimously approved.

Item 10. Reports: There was nothing to report at this time.

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Item 11. New Business:

Chief Grzybowski advised he and EMD Guasp have arranged to hold COVID testing once a week for Department line officers and local businesses from throughout town, of which more than 32 have indicated their desire to participate. The testing program will run through the first of May. Costs of the testing will be fully covered by State funding. Testing will take place at the Fire House, and will be planned so as to maintain separation and minimize contact.

Item 12. Correspondence: None received.

Item 13. Adjournment: there being no further business brought up,

Motion by Bob Bandzes, seconded by Bob Quale, to adjourn at 7:42 P.M. was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Bettie Perreault, Chair