

Chester Board of Fire Commissioners
Minutes, April 20, 2022
Page 1 of 3

The Chester Board of Fire Commissioners held its scheduled meeting on Wednesday, April 20, 2022 at the Fire House, 6 High Street. In attendance were Bob Bandzes, John Divis and Bettie Perreault. Ex-officio members attending were Fire Chief James Grzybowski and Fire Marshal Dick Leighton. Also present were Resident Trooper Matt Warren, Assistant Chief Charlie Greeney, Captain Dylan Grzybowski, Lt. Ben Belisle and Trustee President Rick Tsou.

Item 1: Call to Order

Chair Bettie Perreault called the meeting to order at 7:05 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

There was no Selectmen's report as First Selectman Charlene Janecek was out of state.

Item 4. Report of Fire Chief

Chief Grzybowski distributed Incident Reports for January and February, noting there were 64 in January and 33 in February. Additional information was provided for some incidents; mutual aid was available to cover when needed. Construction of the new fire boat is in progress, with activity on target for, potentially, an early delivery date.

Bob Bandzes reported the Truck Committee has been providing information to address concerns brought up by the Board of Finance, which has been advised that prices are escalating very quickly. It is hoped that bids will be able to go out by early December to take advantage of prices before they increase further.

Chief advised that the third set of replacement doors were rejected upon receipt because they did not fit properly; replacement delivery is expected to take from 10 – 15 additional weeks.

The annual Easter Egg Hunt was very well attended; the annual food drive generated 900 pounds of food toward the 18,000 pounds raised by the shoreline area. Upcoming events include the Angel Ride, a bike charity ride for a children's burn unit, with the Hose Company being one of the stops on the ride's route. Masonicare at Chester Village will be holding a Chowder Cook-off in May with proceeds to be donated to the Hose Company. Hose Company members will sell food at the Beer & Wine Tasting event at the Chester Fair Grounds in June. Triathlon events will again be held this year, with Hose Company personnel providing their services.

Item 5: Report of Fire Marshal:

Fire Marshal Leighton distributed activity reports for February and March, noting that significant amounts of time were required for activities associated with project at 189-191 Middlesex Avenue during February, while most calls during Marsh were "routine". Structure at 32 Straits Road, destroyed in a fire, has been demolished but with a lawsuit in progress, reconstruction will probably take a total of two to three years. The Cherry Hill senior housing complex is also under review for numerous concerns.

Chester Board of Fire Commissioners
Minutes, April 20, 2022
Page 2 of 3

Item 6: Report of Resident State Trooper

TFC Warren advised the Town's IT contractor has begun the work to bring the Town's outdated computer system to a condition to accommodate the requirements for Police body cameras. The Town's Server Room is seriously outdated and among the first steps to be addressed. As work progresses, security upgrades can also move forward. Body cameras have been ordered but delivery may take considerable time.

Scheduling for upcoming events has been set up to provide coverage by local officers. The number of shifts each local officer has had was noted, as well as the fact that the staffing has been set up to be available during a number of coming community events. While there is funding in the current budget, additional staffing and coverage is needed.

Staffing of CT State Police is significantly below what it should be, with Troop F in Westbrook currently staffed at below half of its designated roster. Legislative action may be required to implement changes in the effective date for requirements for body cameras. Grants for funding of the cameras is being pursued.

There was considerable discussion about the regulations and requirements for blue lights on Hose Company members' personal vehicles, with note of the fact that none of those vehicles can have a siren and the light is a "courtesy" with drivers required to follow and observe all rules of the road. Red or white lights are not allowed.

TFC Warren has been working with the Board of Finance to keep it informed of Police Department activities and needs. Officers have also visited the Elementary School.

A Federally-funded Wellness Van with a pilot program for addicts will be located at the Exit 6 parking area from spring to November. TFC Warren ensured it would not be located in the vicinity of the school, but as it is a Federal program it was required to be in town. There has been considerable concern about the vehicle and its mission within the tri-town area.

Item 7: Financial Reports

Chief Grzybowski distributed the Fire Department year-to-date budget, noting that testing for hose and Hurst tool are scheduled to be done; ladders have already been done for this year. The proposed budget of expenditures for Ambulance service has been approved by the Board of Finance, following which it will be part of the Annual Town Meeting approval process.

Fire Marshal Leighton distributed the budget, noting all categories remain "in the black". Purchase of Code books has not yet been done pending approval of an effective date, now expected to be October 1, 2022. However, what year of publication will be approved remains unknown at this time. At the present time, it would appear that this budget may end the fiscal year with minimal or no over-expenditures.

TFC Warren advised that while there is funding in the current budget, additional staffing and coverage is needed.

Chester Board of Fire Commissioners
Minutes, April 20, 2022
Page 3 of 3

Item 8. Old Business: There was nothing to bring up at this time.

Item 9. Approval of Minutes of February 16, 2022 Meeting.

On motions by John Divis, seconded by Bob Bandzes, the minutes of the February 16, 2022 meeting were approved.

No meeting was held during the month of March.

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

Item 11. New Business:

Chief Grzybowski reported that a newly hired EMT had started work this week, with the first call within just a few minutes of arrival. Additional staffing is still needed for the 12 part-time staff currently employed. (A recent Hartford Courant newspaper article detailed the urgent need for EMT staffing for municipalities throughout the state.)

The Hose Company officers attending this meeting were thanked for their participation and urged to continue to attend Commissioners' meetings.

Item 12. Correspondence: None received.

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

Motion by John Divis, seconded by Bob Bandzes, to adjourn at 7:52 P.M. was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Bettie Perreault, Chair