

**Chester Board of Fire Commissioners
Minutes - September 21, 2022 meeting
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The Chester Board of Fire Commissioners held its regular meeting on Wednesday, September 21, 2022 at the Fire House, 6 High Street. In attendance were Bob Quale, Rick Schreiber and Bettie Perreault. Ex-officio members attending were Fire Chief James Grzybowski and Fire Marshal Dick Leighton. Also present were TFC Matt Warren, Constable Matt Spina, Deputy Chief Charlie Greeney, Assistant Chief Dylan Grzybowski, Asst. EMS Chief Parker Divis, Battalion Chief Ben Belisle and President Rich Tsou.

Item 1: Call to Order

Chair Bettie Perreault called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. followed by self-introductions of those present.

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

Item 3. Report of Board of Selectmen

First Selectman Charlene Janecek was unavailable to attend.

Item 4. Report of Fire Chief

Chief Grzybowski distributed the Activity and Incident Reports for July, noting a total of 65 calls were answered. There were 75 calls responded to during August; the monthly report will be provided at the October meeting. Activity for September continues to be strong, with a total of 53 calls reported through September 21. Mutual aid responses made and received were also reviewed. Income for July and August reflected that activity level, with a total income of over \$51,000.

Events which have occurred since the July meeting for which the Department participated or provided services for included, among others, the following:

- Chester Fair, which generated very successful fund-raising. No major responses were required, although minor ones were covered.
- Deep River Muster: both ambulances and the Polaris provided coverage for both the parade and most of the Muster events. One transport was provided.
- Closer to Free Ride: Department personnel provided support for participants at the United Church. “Band-Aids were the only responses required.”
- Trail Run, which included Cockaponset State Park had a “big turnout” and both responders and the Polaris were available as support.

The Polaris and personnel will be available for the upcoming Durham Fair, and the Department’s Craft Fair will also be held. The Department’s Fall Banquet will be held on October 22 at Pattaconk Yacht Club.

Chief Grzybowski announced the awarding of grant funding for Assistance to Firefighters, with \$6,371.43 as Chester’s matching 5% portion of the Grant. The funds will provide the Department with Scott Air Packs as well as gear and equipment which would not have been possible to purchase within current funding.

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A Town Meeting is scheduled for October 15 to vote on approval for ARPA funding, which will include funds for the Department's radio system. That funding has already been reviewed and approved by the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance.

Construction of the new marine vessel has now proceeded to having the flooring sealed and the cabin substantially completed, while windows continue to be on backorder. A walk-through of the vessel is planned for the second week of October for Department personnel and Commissioners.

An RFP for the purchase of a new engine is scheduled for November 1, with a bid due date of January 1, 2023, giving vendors 60 days to prepare and make their submission. The timing of the bid process works well with the Town's budgeting process. The rapid and significant price escalation associated with the vehicle may warrant an earlier purchase than originally anticipated if funding and approvals can be achieved. It was noted by more than one official present that ISO rating of the Department and its equipment would seriously impact insurance rates for Chester residents and businesses if equipment levels dropped due to failure of older equipment without replacement(s) being actively in service.

Annual inspections of vehicles are currently underway; Engine #1 is presently out of service because of intermittent ignition problems. Inspectors for vehicles will have items which may be required available before the vehicle is taken to them for the inspections. The doors at the Fire House which have been back-ordered and/or replaced to meet standards has now been completed, and new lock fobs have been ordered for additional locations in the Fire House for specified personnel.

Item 5: Report of Fire Marshal:

Fire Marshal Leighton distributed activity reports for July and August, with note that the activities of the Building Official position are closely linked in many instances. Leighton is working with the Assessor to inspect "exempt" (tax exempt) buildings to, among other things, determine if they qualify for exempt status; those which are found to not qualify may be back-charged for up to three years of taxation.

Item 6: Report of Resident State Trooper

TFC Warren introduced newly-appointed Constable Matt Spina, who briefly provided bio and employment history, training and experiences. Statistically, the Police Department responded to a total of 1136 calls during the months of June, July and August for a wide range of incidents, with only two officers in service at the time. The recent addition of Spina and the pending employment of an additional officer will provide expanded hours of patrol coverage. Security improvements of the Police Department and other Town Hall areas continues, with cameras now installed and operational, and more structurally secure doors and hardware for areas within the Town Hall.

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New State-mandated certification inspections will be conducted by State Police personnel in the coming fall. Current Chester personnel are familiar with the State's personnel assigned to Chester and has the experience and background to meet requirements.

Regional District #4 Supervisory District is initiating a security audit for the schools in the District. TFC Warren advised that the Chester Elementary School has already taken actions to ensure that security measures are in place and actively administered by personnel familiar with both the requirements and the Town.

Item 7: Financial Reports

Chief Grzybowski advised year-end reporting of income for the 2021-2022 budget year showed ambulance receivables at approximately \$219,000, nearly \$20,000 above the original budget estimate. At present the 2022-2023 Department budget is 22% expended. Expenditures to date include expenses for the new Department computer program(s) and system(s), which will include the ability to coordinate with the systems of the Fire Marshal's office and also provide Community Connect to allow residents and businesses to provide individually-specific and secure information for Department personnel during an incident or activity. Notice for a new EMT staff person has been made available, with responses having been received almost immediately.

Fire Marshal Leighton reported the Fire Marshal budget remains "in the black" at this time.

Item 8. Old Business:

Nothing was brought up at this time.

Item 9. Approval of Minutes of July 20, 2022 Meeting.

On motions by Rick Schreiber, seconded by Bob Quale, the minutes of the July 20, 2022 meeting were approved.

Item 10. Reports:

There was nothing to report at this time.

Item 11. New Business: Nothing was brought up at this time.

Item 13. Correspondence: None received.

Item 14. Adjournment: there being no further business brought up,

Motion by Bob Quale, seconded by Rick Schreiber, to adjourn at 7:58 P.M. was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Bettie Perreault, Chair