

## MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS MEETING

April 22, 2021 – 7:00 p.m.  
Video/teleconference meeting

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. Present were Chairman Robert Massey, Jr., Commissioners LaCroix, Clem, Riccio, Fox and Ahern. Also present were Chief Mahoney; Fire Prevention Inspector, Robert Dobuzinsky.

Motion made by Commissioner Clem to approve the minutes of February 16, 2021. Seconded by Commissioner Fox. Vote unanimous.

**Finance** – Commissioner Riccio provided a brief update. The 2022 budget was approved by the Board of Finance; \$25,000 was cut from the Apparatus fund and \$10,000 was cut from the Ambulance fund. Public Services is expected to vote on the budget tonight. Currently the budget is over in the overtime, educational incentive, sick, and medical supply accounts. Three firefighters have been out for extended injury leave for most of the year along with illness leave for COVID-19 and other shorter team injuries that have caused these overages. Recent changes to the Statewide Paramedic Protocols require us to add additional medication to our formulary also contributing to the shortage in the medical supply account. This Fiscal Year we've received a total of \$317,582.00 in SAFER Grant reimbursements. The total received from through the grant to date is \$1,119,434.71. This is the final year of the grant. Discussion took place concerning the shortages. The Chief stated that the shortages will be covered within the Fire Department budget. The department will need \$75,000 - \$100,000 to get through the remainder of the year without cutting services. Motion made by Commissioner Riccio to go to the Board of Finance for a transfer from contingency. Seconded by Commissioner Fox. Additional discussion took place. Chief Mahoney stated he will seek guidance from the Finance Department. Vote unanimous.

**Personnel** – Commissioner Massey reported that there is currently 1 firefighter out on injury leave. The two firefighters recovering from long term injury have returned to full duty. Currently there is one vacancy. The Fire Marshal, Deputy Fire Marshal and Deputy Chief of Administration and Safety positions have been posted. The written exams will be held May 25 and 26. Retired Assistant Chief Robert Andrew will proctor.

**Training** – Commissioner Clem provided a brief update. Members participated in more than 73 hours of training in 58 separate sessions last month. All COVID training restrictions have been lifted. Members are to follow distancing, masking and disinfecting procedures at all times. Peter Gavin donated the use of his property at 265 Pine Orchard Road for training prior to demolishing. Every shift almost every day have been participating in the training except for Co. 5. In addition to our regular on-going training, Boat Operators will attend joint BFD/Coast Guard Training in May consisting of both classroom and on the water training. Also in May, our 12 Hazardous Materials Technicians will be doing their required 8 hours of annual training with the New Haven Area Special Hazards Team East in Guilford.

**Apparatus** – Commissioner LaCroix reported that everything is going well. The new Engine 5 has arrived and is in service. Engine 1 received new brakes. We applied for the 2020 Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) to fund a new pumper.

**EMS** – Commissioner Fox provided a brief report. YTD ambulance revenue is \$1,426,142.00. There have been 3,629 EMS incidents from July 1, 2020 – April 21, 2021, resulting in 2,639 transports to area hospitals, 73% transport to 27% non-transport. Overall call volume is down slightly and we are averaging 4% fewer transports than our historical average due to COVID-19. This has resulted in a decline in revenue which could leave us slightly short of our budget target

**Buildings** – Commissioner Ahern provided a brief report. New Station 9 update- We have the CO and final approval from the State. There is approximately \$30,000 left in the account hopefully they can proceed with the stone veneer. The shifts have been busy with spring cleaning at Fire Headquarters and many on-going projects in addition to normal duties and training. Chief Mahoney also mentioned that plantings have been done for the Pollinator Pathway. A brief discussion took place concerning the recent active shooter incident. The board commended the police department, fire department, 911 dispatchers and all the other units for their rapid, professional and effective response.

**Pension & Communications** – Commissioner Clem provided a brief report. The pension committee met and approved the list of members qualifying for stipends and pension credit; it has been forwarded to HR for payment. A reduction in qualifying points of 25% was authorized by the Board of Selectmen to account for restrictions placed upon members due to COVID-19. 34 volunteers qualified for stipend after the 25% reduction was made. Chief Mahoney reported that although the volunteers are very dedicated they have other priorities.

**Chief's Report** – The Chief Mahoney provided an additional brief overview of the recent shooting incident and commended everyone involved in this incident and again commended everyone for their extraordinary response.

**Assistant Chief's Report** – no report

Report from Fire Prevention Inspector – Robert Dobuzinsky provided a brief report. He stated that 724 documented inspections were conducted. There is an increase in tents being erected requiring inspections. There was a local 4<sup>th</sup> grade student that won first place in the New Haven County State of Connecticut Fire Prevention Poster Contest. The office is continuing with multi family inspections. The board extended its congratulations to Bob for completing his Bachelor of Science in Public Safety Administration degree.

**Old Business** – Chief Mahoney reported that the Fire/Police have settled into the new routine. They are looking at making an adjustment to the required participation hours.

**New Business** – Discussion took place concerning the decline in volunteer membership and response from current members. There are currently 41 total members divided between 4 volunteer companies, only 25 of whom are fully certified interior firefighters (6 are currently training deficient and unable to respond). These companies are not simply back-up to our career staff but an integral part of the Town’s fire protection. Engine Company 4 in Short Beach has missed more than 90% of all calls to which they are dispatched, including structure fires and mutual aid. The town needs to look for ways to fill the need. We need to come up with a plan. The Chief and Assistant Chief will develop a recommendation.

Motion made by Commissioner Clem to adjourn the meeting at 8:18 p.m. Seconded by Commissioner Ahern. Vote unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,

Trista Milici  
Clerk