



COMMISSION MEETING

February 6, 2018

The Westfield Fire Commission met at the East Street Firehouse, Middletown, CT on February 6, 2018. Chairman Jones opened the meeting at 6:35 p.m. with the following Commissioners present – Lockwood, Williams, Bysiewicz, Zieller, Alderman, Scarrozzo, Augeri and White.

Others present were: Chief William Balch, Deputy Chief, FDA Linda DeManche and Ross Andrew.

-The Chairman opened the public session on a **MOTION** by Comm. Williams, with no public comment closed on a **MOTION** by Comm. Zieller, all in favor.

-The Chairman called for a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Commission Scarrozzo stated he wanted the reason he opposed the motion regarding payment for the EMS Annual Stipend Incentive program to be on record; “he was in favor of the concept but not in favor of the final wording of the motion”. On a **MOTION** by Comm. Lockwood and seconded by Comm. Zieller it was approved to waive the reading of the January 9, 2018 regular meeting minutes and to accept the minutes as corrected, all in favor.

- The bills for January 2018, including the detailed Liberty & Lowes statement were reviewed; after all questions were answered the bills were approved on a **MOTION** by Comm. Zieller and seconded by Comm. White, all in favor.

Tax Collectors Report

-The January Tax Collector report submitted by Tax Collector Cynthia Augeri was reviewed. On a **MOTION** by Lockwood and seconded by Alderman the report was approved, all in favor.

-On a **MOTION** by Williams and seconded by White it was approved to forward the delinquent accounts that meet the criteria over to the attorney; no more monies will be accepted in the tax office on the accounts turned over for collection, all in favor.

-Linda reported that an adjustment was applied to the property at 79 Bradley based on a City ordinance that approved an exemption for a portion of the property subject to a 50 year lease. The taxpayer had paid the entire tax when due back in July and is now entitled to a refund of \$1,597.51 which is included in the monthly refund report. The Board has asked Linda to find out how long the term of the exemption is or whether it is permanent. The Board has concerns that the City applies exemptions or negotiates abatements, etc. with taxpayers with Westfield having no knowledge of this until after the fact. They would like to see if that can be remedied.

-On a **MOTION** by Lockwood and seconded by Alderman it was approved to issue tax refunds to the various taxpayers on the list provided by the Tax Collector in the amount of \$ 2,064.43, all in favor.

Fire Marshal's Report

-The Fire Marshal's (FM) monthly report for January was distributed and accepted on a **MOTION** by Lockwood and seconded by Williams, all in favor. Additionally, the Annual Fire Marshal's Report for 2017 was presented and available for review by the Board

Chiefs Report

- The Department has an EMT refresher scheduled for the end of March. The Chief stated that believes Harold Holmes is the lead EMS instructor for the refresher but he will confirm.
- Middlesex County Fire School is running a Firefighter 1 class beginning in February which is being hosted at the Westfield Fire Dept. (WFD); there are five (5) WFD members scheduled to participate.
- The Departments annual banquet is scheduled for Saturday, March 24th at Falcon's Pavilion, all Commissioners are welcome.
- The status of training classes for members is as follows: EMT Initial - O. Andrew needs to re-take part of his practical; A. Urcinas passed and is waiting for his number and card to be assigned by the State.
- It was reported that the suction device needed to be replaced on Westfield 9.
- The Chief reported a life saving measure with the use of the Lucas cardiac compression device on a recent medical incident they responded to.
- The application for the 2017 AFG has been submitted. It is a micro-grant application for a cardiac compression device in the amount of \$23,848. If awarded the District's share would be \$2,168.
- The Chief and DFM Kotowski are interested in taking a National Child Passenger Safety Training Program hosted thru St. Francis Hospital. The fees associated with this training are: \$85 per student for the training program and \$40 per student for the safety conference. Upon completion of the course they would be certified to do car seat installs. Fire Departments are at an all-time low for being certified for this type of training. Certification renewal is every two years and there is continuing education credits required. Additionally the Department would need to have specific supplies on hand to administer this program (scale, spare car seats, etc.). Linda contacted the insurance agent to confirm liability exposure. The District's policy provides coverage as long as the District approves the members' participation in the training and the specifics of the program are covered by a Department SOG. On a **MOTION** by Lockwood and seconded by White the training was approved, the funds would come out of the Chief's training budget, all in favor. The Chief will take care of the SOG language.

Commissioner(s) Report

- As of this date there have been no applicants to interview for the Treasurer Position. AR Mazzotta is still working on this and is confident they will find the right candidate.
- On a **MOTION** by Scarozzo and seconded by Zieller it was approved to remove Cindy Augeri for the Short-Term Investment (STIF) account ending in 0270, all in favor.
- On a **MOTION** by Lockwood and seconded by White it was approved for Cindy to attend the CCMC III class which runs from February 14th thru April 11th for a course fee of \$200, all in favor.
- The multi-function Savin copier/fax machine in the Tax Office stopped working. The machine is over 10 years old and replacement parts are no longer available. A quote was obtained from A&A Office Systems for a Savin B/W, multi-function printer/copier/fax/scanner. The cost for an outright purchase off of the State of CT bid is \$1,663 and the 60 month lease cost is \$35 per month which includes a maintenance plan; b/w copies would be billed at .005 per copy which would be fixed for minimum of 5 years. On a **MOTION** by Bysiewicz and seconded by Lockwood it was approved to lease the Savin machine from A&A Office, all in favor. A&A has offered to bring in a loaner until the new one arrives.
- The City's 2017 Grand List (G/L) was released from the Tax Assessor's office. Westfield had an increase of 5.76% over last year's 2016 G/L. Linda spoke to Damon, the City Tax Assessor and he related the growth is due to the assessment increase for the new construction of the building at FedEx Ground Package Systems, Inc. During new construction the assessment is adjusted and the owner is taxed on the entire assessment until they have received their certificate of occupancy (CO), once the CO is received any abatement is then applied to the subsequent G/L. Damon stated that he will try to keep us informed if he learns that FedEx is offered any adjustment to what is recorded on the 2017 G/L. Linda informed the Board of an assessment adjustment to 1125 Middle Street that Westfield was just made aware of. Damon explained that the State has provided new ordinances to municipalities on how they can enact abatements. 1125 Middle Street was granted a fixed assessment during the period of construction. This will result in Westfield reducing the July tax bill by approx. \$4,749. The property is then subject to 4 year abatement (40/40/20). Once again the

Board is concerned about the City not informing Westfield of adjustments to assessment values until after the negotiations have concluded. The Board feels this should be addressed further.

-New CT legislation requires that state income taxes are held on pension or annuity payments. Linda reached out to Hometown Benefits who administers the District's service recognition plan. Their response was that the Service Award program is not a qualified pension plan and service award payments are not distributed from an annuity. The District feels no further action is required.

-CIRMA completed the workers compensation audit on the 2016/2017 expired policy. The result was an additional premium of \$335. This was due to the increase in the actual firefighters/drivers salaries versus what was estimated at renewal.

-The Service Awards Trust (SAT) plan specification document is still under review to make sure it meets EEOC guidelines. Upon completion it will be forwarded to the Committee members.

-Linda contacted Comcast cable again to share that she had learned Middletown & South Fire were receiving a courtesy municipal discount. The representative said he could not explain that but Westfield was not eligible and that was the final decision. A letter of complaint will be drafted to Comcast headquarters and a copy will be forwarded to the public utility that oversees Comcast.

-A financing quote was obtained from Tax-Exempt Leasing Corp. to get an example of current interest rates. The District still needs a final contract price from Custom Fire for the spec'd apparatus. Decisions still need to be made on any pre-pay options and whether a performance bond will be required. Linda will contact Custom Fire to find out about any discount options they offer and an estimated amount for a performance bond.

On a **MOTION** by Williams and seconded by Scarrozzo the monthly meeting was adjourned @ 7:31 pm to attend the Annual Meeting scheduled for 8:00 pm.

On a **MOTION** by Scarrozzo and seconded by White the Board reconvened @ 8:55 pm after the conclusion of the Annual Meeting. David Peterson & Brian White joined the meeting.

The Board thanked Commissioners Jones, Lockwood & Williams for their service to the District.

Before nomination and motions were made for the District Officers Linda stated she received an email from Greg Amy and he asked that she read it after the election; "Unfortunately, due to prior commitments I will be unable to attend the annual election meeting on February 6th. However, I wish to express my interest, if elected and nominated, in serving as Chairman of the Commission during the 2018 session."

The following nominations and **MOTIONS** were made:

Comm. Zieller nominated Gregory Amy as Chairman seconded by Williams; Comm. Scarrozzo nominated Ted Bysiewicz as Chairman seconded by Augeri. Bysiewicz thanked them for the nomination but stated he respectfully declines this year.

Comm. Bysiewicz nominated Jonathan Alderman as Vice Chairman; Comm. Augeri nominated Matthew Scarrozzo as Vice Chairman. Upon Alderman's confirmation that Scarrozzo would accept the nomination he respectfully withdrew his name from consideration.

Comm. Scarrozzo nominated Brenda White as Secretary seconded by Bysiewicz.

The following were the final results: Gregory Amy for Chairman, Matthew Scarrozzo for Vice-Chairman and Brenda White for Secretary; all candidates accepted the appointments, all in favor

-Commissioners Amy, Bysiewicz, Scarrozzo and Brenda White will serve on the Budget Committee.

-Commissioners Amy and Alderman volunteered to serve on the Service Recognition Committee along with the Departments Chief, Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer.

-On a **MOTION** by Scarrozzo and seconded by Alderman it was approved to remove Fred T. Jones, Jr. and John P. Lockwood and add E. Greg Amy and Brenda K. White to the Signature Card & Agreement at Liberty Bank for the accounts ending 1976 and 6959, all in favor.

-On a **MOTION** by Scarrozzo and seconded by Alderman it was approved to remove Fred T. Jones, Jr. and John P. Lockwood and add E. Greg Amy and Brenda K. White to the District's investment accounts at Morgan Stanley, Wells Fargo, CT STIF account ending in 0270 and Empire Bank checking account ending in 1490, all in favor.

-On a **MOTION** by Scarrozzo and seconded by Alderman it was approved to remove Fred T. Jones, Jr. as an authorized Officer on the Liberty credit card and make E. Greg Amy the new Officer, all in favor.

-Linda asked that any previously issued keys be turned in so they can be passed along for use by the newly elected Commissioners.

MOTION to adjourn @ 9:06 pm by Commissioner Scarrozzo and seconded by Commissioner White. Unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda DeManche
Fire District Administrator
as Recording Secretary