



COMMISSION MEETING

September 11, 2018

The Westfield Fire Commission met at the East Street Firehouse, Middletown, CT on September 11, 2018. Chairman Amy opened the meeting at 6:32 p.m. with the following Commissioners present – Scarrozzo, White (Brenda), Zieller, White (Brian) Peterson. Commissioner Bysiewicz arrived at 6:42 pm. Commissioner Alderman & Augeri were absent.

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

The Chairman stated that this being September 11th he called for a moment of silence for the Americans and heroes that were lost seventeen years ago today.

-The Chairman made a **MOTION** to open the public session; Ross Andrew stated that it was District Mechanic Andrew's birthday today, Chairman Amy stated a happy birthday to the mechanic from the Westfield Fire Commission and many, many more, with no additional comments it was closed on a **MOTION** by Comm. Zieller, all in favor.

-On a **MOTION** by Comm. Scarrozzo and seconded by Comm. Zieller it was approved to waive the reading of the August 14, 2018 regular meeting minutes and to accept the minutes as written, all in favor.

- The bills for August 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. Scarrozzo, all in favor.

Tax Collectors Report

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

-On a **MOTION** by Zieller and seconded by Amy it was approved to issue tax refunds to the various taxpayers on the list provided by the Tax Collector in the amount of \$ 637.94, all in favor.

Fire Marshal's Report

-The Fire Marshal's (FM) monthly report for August was distributed and accepted on a **MOTION** by Scarrozzo and seconded by Brian White, all in favor. Comm. Scarrozzo asked how FM Higgins was feeling; the Chief reported he was back to work yesterday. It was reported FM Higgins was not feeling well Sept. 6th and was treated at the hospital for dehydration – a workers compensation claim was filed.

Chief's Report

-The Chief is working on ordering the necessary materials for the replacement of the tank on Westfield 10. The lights from Whelan are in; the tank, pump & plumbing have been ordered. The Gary Sinise Foundation is paying the vendors directly. Everything is coming to fruition to get the project done.

-The status of training classes for members is as follows: **EMT Initial** – now that O. Andrew is employed by Middletown Fire he will pursue completion of this course on his own; Lemay needs to do some more tech hours thru Westfield then the Chief can write a letter so he can schedule his written test, he passed his practical's: for Kloc the Chief has written a letter so he can schedule his test, his EMR is due to expire so he will get that scheduled. The Chief reported 4 members are signed up to take a FFII course.

- All the pink t-shirts have been ordered.
- The new saw blades are in and in-service.
- The Dept. picnic was Saturday, everyone had a good time.
- The Chief presented information regarding a 2018 dry hydrant installation grant program thru the CT Division of Forestry. The Department is suggesting locations at Atkins Street & Old Farms. The application is due in December and will be reviewed in January 2019. The grant will be awarded on a 50/50 reimbursement basis so the District would have to be willing to commit to half of the project for approximately \$6,000 for both locations. The District has to pay for the entire project and seek reimbursement after finished. All installations must be completed by December 2019 therefore, if awarded the funds could be allocated in next year's budget and completed after July 1st. On a **MOTION** by Brian White and seconded by Peterson it was approved to apply for the grant, all in favor.
- There has been no official word on the 2017 AFG FEMA grant but it appears it will not be awarded. If that ends up being the case then the Chief is recommending a cardiac compression device again when the 2018 AFG opens in October. The need is to put one on Westfield 3.

Commissioner(s) Report

- It was reported that the desk-review for the 2016 AFG is completed and the letter from FEMA states no findings or recommended corrective actions.
- It was reported that the CCMC III class that was approved for Cindy to take in the spring that was cancelled due to low enrollment has been rescheduled and she will begin this month.
- Linda has requested permission to either miss the December 11th Commission meeting or to reschedule it for December 18th. On a **MOTION** by Peterson and seconded by Brian White it was approved to reschedule for December 18th, all in favor. Linda will notify the Town Clerk's office and update the website, etc.
- Linda reported back on information requested at last month's meeting regarding the underground storage tanks (UST). United Concrete said their quote on the tanks from 2015 has not changed that significantly. They also stated that in their opinion it may be too soon to replace the UST as there are seven years remaining but agrees that if the tanks fail after any testing it could be costly. They also stated that above ground tanks have anywhere from a 20 to 30 year warranty and there is no current mandate after the warranty period ends; you typically rely on visual inspection on how they are holding up. Linda was asked to supply info on the estimated cost (insurance, testing, etc.) for the remaining life of the UST and some dimension to get an idea on where the above ground tanks will be located.
- FedEx's grand opening is scheduled for Friday, September 21st from 11:00 to 1:00.
- Chief Balch & LT Coco met with a Verizon rep regarding their public safety plans that offers wireless priority service (WPS). The 3 phones on the District account will convert to this plan and the lines will be registered with Homeland Security. The overall cost will be reduced by approx. \$30 a month. Unfortunately this cannot be offered to the volunteer's personal phones at this point, the lines would have to be part of the District's governmental account. Comm. Peterson asked why the executive officers are not on the District's account. Linda stated that when some of the past Chiefs stepped down they wanted to keep their phones #'s and when other Chiefs came on board they had their families on their plans and didn't want to carry two phones. Bysiewicz suggested that we could reimburse the Chiefs for a portion that is related to Department use and even possibly consider the Lieutenants'. This will still not allow for the number to have WPS. Comm. Brenda White said it should be kept in mind that any District phone is subject to freedom of information act. The Chief will talk to the Officers to see if there is interest in having their department phone use be covered by the District.
- A memo will be posted accepting a letter of interest for 2019 Chief appointments; they are due by 10/5/18.
- The evaluation committee will meet with the 3 Chief Officers prior to appointments in October.
- Linda asked was it too soon to know who might be attending Command Officer Boot Camp in 2019 as the costs of flights are going up. The Chief stated he will look into it but it has been discussed that he and AC Lube may attend.
- Linda suggested that a date should be set for the committee members to meet for discussion on the proposed schedule change for the daytime employees. She has also suggested that the committee review sections of the personnel policies that may need updating and brought back for the entire Board's consideration and vote. As it was difficult to pick a date for all committee members it was suggested we put this on the agenda for the October 9th Commission meeting.

Telecommunication Committee

-Ross Andrew reported on the status of the public service telecommunication committee. They just signed an agreement with Eversource for the River Road tower; they have to drill down and test the ground for conductivity and then can start building the tower. There is more to do on the Preston Ave site, the Rocky Hill site is all set, more work to do on the site at Cross Street and they still have to work to do at the water tower on the repeater, etc. and still a little work to do on Mile Lane. The other thing that has come up is with the FedEx building. They took a trip over there and found they have some problems with communication coverage. Someone has been hired to do some analysis on the site and report back. This issue could affect fire and police, it's a big building with a lot of stuff in there and getting the signal out is tough. It does not look like right now things will be up and running prior to Thanksgiving like originally projected.

-Chairman Amy stated the Deputy Chief (DC) truck committee did not have a chance to meet so he wanted to open the floor for discussion on the idea on providing a vehicle to the DC. Comm. Peterson wanted to start; he heard way to many things that upset him, that people didn't know about a DC vehicle, people weren't told to do something; back in June it was discussed, everyone was present when it was discussed, Comm. Augeri even made the recommendation that if we do this the Chief's truck gets passed down and the DC would get the older truck. It was Peterson's understanding that someone was going to get some information on a vehicle. Amy stated he thought it was going to a committee for review. Bysiewicz stated that for him this has to do with volunteerism and promoting & supporting it for less money than anything else we do. His goal was to get information. He stated that if we could acquire a truck for a \$1,000 a month that is a 10 or \$12,000 expenditure that would solve a problem. Comm. Brenda White wanted to know what problem; Comm. Brian White stated he didn't see a problem with the DC not having a vehicle. Bysiewicz is talking about giving non officers reason to become an officer and move up the ladder. It was stated that officers get stipends & pay-per-call. Bysiewicz says it sounds like old school thinking for those who used to come here when we didn't do any EMS, you didn't have to have all the certs; it's now a tough game to become a volunteer. He feels our choice here is to promote volunteering or go paid. If we go paid we will at a minimum triple our mill rate. Comm. Brenda White said when it was first brought up a pick-up truck was suggested. Comm. Brian White feels this should be tabled until the time comes the Chief's vehicle needs to be replaced. Comm. Scarrozzo stated we are proposing spending \$60,000 on a new vehicle and he would have thought that would have come up during budget discussions; he believes when it was mentioned about taking some monies out of the fund there was concern about keeping it in the fund for truck replacement which is very important, he doesn't think it is justified to buy a vehicle for the Chief at this point and he would vote no. Bysiewicz agrees and supports not spending \$60,000 of the budget at this point, but he would support \$10,000 a year which is what we should be doing with CNR, we don't have a Chief's vehicle in CNR we lump it in with the other trucks; the first decision is do we want to have two or even three vehicle to give people reasons to be officers. The officers are a \$400,000 annual expense if they were paid. Scarrozzo said he doesn't see a problem getting officers; Bysiewicz & Peterson disagree stating that there is not a list of members waiting to go up the ladder. Scarrozzo feels it would be at the expense of taxpayers; Bysiewicz disagrees, if you have a volunteer compared to a paid person you have actually saved the taxpayer. Peterson understands both side but he feels it could be a good incentive for members. Scarrozzo would rather give them more stipend money. Comm. Brenda White would like a list of all members and their certifications. Bysiewicz feels we have to continually work at acquiring new volunteers and if you are going to continue to be a volunteer officer system you need to give them a reason for that. Comm. Amy stated, for him a truck is a tool, not an incentive. Unless it is an effective tool for the Dept. he feels there are better ways to spend money to gain incentive & volunteers. From his limited perspective he doesn't see how another truck is an effective tool for the Dept. The Chief stated that the Deputy Chief will not take his personal truck to the highway. He stated a Dept. vehicle would be lit; there would equipment on the truck, medical supplies, etc. The only ones allowed to go to a scene in their personal vehicles are the top 4 officers. Amy would rather have this discussion come May. Bysiewicz stated his idea was to do a financing route; it would be approx. \$10,000 for a spectacular tool and volunteer support. Peterson feels we need to do something to make this more acceptable to keep coming and moving up the ranks. Comm. White asked what year we gave the top 3 officers \$500 more in stipend, which was for calendar year 2018. Comm. Brian

White still feels when the time comes, and the time is not right now, to replace the Chief vehicle then we should address this. He stated maybe not have a DC vehicle but rather a duty night vehicle. Scarrozzo asked about the paving project that we put off, why did we put that off. Bysiewicz said the main reason was we have \$2 mil dollars' worth of fire trucks to replace in the next few years; but his personal opinion is he is strongly in support in approving volunteerism, and this has been a really good year for gaining members. The Chairman is willing to sign the credit application with Jackson Chevrolet to obtain some financing information and to get some hard numbers on a vehicle. The decision on a DC vehicle will be tabled until next month.

MOTION to go into Executive Session by Comm. Brenda White, seconded by Comm. Zieller at 8:14 pm, all in favor for discussions regarding: Personnel – volunteerism & incentives: pursuant to Statutes Section 1-200(6)(A) and Section 1-225(a) of the Connecticut General Statutes, as amended. In attendance at the Executive Session were Commissioners Amy, Scarrozzo, Brenda White, Bysiewicz, Zieller, Peterson, Brian White, Chief Balch and FDA Linda DeManche. Scarrozzo excused himself @ 8:42 pm.

MOTION to come out of Executive Session by Comm. Peterson seconded by Comm. Bysiewicz @ 8:46 pm, all in favor.

MOTION to adjourn @ 8:47 pm by Comm. Peterson and seconded by Comm. Brenda White. Unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda DeManche
Fire District Administrator
as Recording Secretary