

TOWN OF SOUTHTON
BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

Chairperson Bunko called the regular meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners, held at Headquarters on February 18, 2016, to order at 6:02 p.m. Commissioners Baker, Bunko, Kanute, and Robertson. Chief Clark and Assistant Chief Wisner were also in attendance. Commissioner Stanforth arrived at 6:03 p.m.

Roll Call

Pledge of Allegiance

Commissioner Stanforth arrived.

MOTION: by Kanute, seconded by Baker, to approve the minutes of the January 21, 2016, regular meeting as circulated. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION: by Baker, seconded by Robertson, to approve the minutes of the February 1, 2016, budget workshop as circulated. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION: by Kanute, seconded by Stanforth, to approve payment of bills for January 2016 in the amount of \$40,922.04. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Stanforth asked about the cost of the carbon monoxide detectors coming out of the department's budget. Chief Clark reported that the money donated by Mr. Robinson was transferred into a special account that will be used to pay for the detectors.

Chairperson Bunko asked about the snowplowing expense. Chief Clark reported that the department pays for its own snowplowing through a dedicated account.

Secretary's Report:

Memo from Chief Clark recommending the approval of FF Rolando Rosario's request for a one-year leave of absence.

Memo from Chief Clark requesting to attend the NEIAFC 2016 Annual Meeting, the IAFC New England Conference and the IAFC FRI conference.

CHIEF'S REPORT:

- Chairman Bunko and Chief Clark met with the Town Manager Brumback and Director of Finance Emilia Portelinha to review the department's 2016-2017 budget request. Chief Clark was made aware that Town Manager Brumback's recommendations included two reductions to the operating

budget request totaling \$37,401, and multiple capital items that have been moved to the following year.

- All the alarms that were connected to the digitizer systems have been switched to private monitoring companies.
- Chief Clark met with separately with three Board of Finance members during the month to discuss the department's operating budget request.
- Chief Clark attended a seminar by the Torrington Fire Department with guest speaker Dr. David Griffin. Chief Clark has seen him speak before, and feels that it would be beneficial to the department to hold a class for the members. Deputy Chief DiBattista is researching the cost of the eight-hour seminar.

Commissioner Stanforth stated his disapproval of the changes made to the department's 2016-2017 fiscal budget request.

MOTION: by Kanute, seconded by Robertson, to accept the Chief's Report. Motion carried unanimously.

ASSISTANT CHIEF'S REPORT:

Activities of the Southington Fire Department for the month of January 2016:

1. Fire Marshal's inspections – 47
2. CRRS - 3
3. Reports to the State Fire Marshal – 150
4. Damage to property involved in fire - \$45,000
5. Damage to motor vehicles involved in fire - \$15,000
6. Other losses - \$2,100
7. Total - \$62,100
8. Total units responded were - 475

Assistant Chief Wisner also reported:

- There have been 156 incidents since the January 21, 2016 meeting
- This week there have been 12 incidents for frozen pipes
- There have been two structure fires on February 14, 2106 from residents trying to thaw frozen pipes
- Crystal Bees on Spring St. is expected to open within the next few weeks
- Close Harbor on Meriden Waterbury Rd. will reopen in March
- A new restaurant on Queen St. is planned
- A new restaurant on Eden Ave. is close to opening
- Ongoing construction on Knotter Dr.
- The Fire Marshal's Office received 19 plans to be reviewed

Commissioner Robertson asked about the requirement for businesses to have a lock box installed. Assistant Chief Wisner reported that the requirement is a town ordinance that has been in place for over ten years. The requirement is in the best

interest of the business so the fire department can gain quick access without breaking the door down and causing monetary damage.

MOTION: by Stanforth, seconded by Kanute, to accept the Assistant Chief's Report. Motion carried unanimously.

COMMISSIONS COMMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS:

Chairperson Bunko congratulated Commissioner Kanute for being awarded the YMCA Youth Development Award.

Chairperson Bunko also thanked everyone who helped in the budget process. He feels that the budget presented was a viable budget.

Vice Chairperson Baker congratulated the six members who completed the Fire Officer I class. Those members are Captain Richard Kowalec, Lt. Brian Badgley, Lt. Douglas Badgley, Captain Joel Munson, FF Dan Comen, and FF Benjamin Kiessling.

Vice Chairperson Baker addressed the members in attendance to convey her view on the Board's role in the department. Vice Chairperson Baker spoke of the board being here to enforce the Rules and Regulations that have been established. Baker is open to listening to members' concerns and explained that the board's main duty is to make sure that the department's resources best serve the town. The operational side of the department is managed by the administration with the Board's endorsement. The Board reviews any issues that may arise.

Vice Chairperson Baker encouraged open communication. Baker would like all the members to participate in helping develop plans for the future of the department. Members are encouraged to present ideas to the Board that are not based in criticism. Any plans, especially plans that have a budgetary impact, must be presented to the Board of Finance and Town Council with clear explanations.

Vice Chairperson Baker encouraged all members to attend the public meeting on the town's budget March 7, 2016.

Commissioner Stanforth cited a letter that the volunteer officers had sent to the Board. He had left messages to try to meet with the officers to discuss the letter but he never received a call back. He was disheartened to see the divide in the department and feels personally responsible. He feels that the volunteer members are an integral part of the department and the town. He was surprised by the issues brought up in the letter especially since Chairperson Bunko attends the monthly officers' meeting with Chief Clark and none of the issues were brought up. He would like to see better communication.

Commissioner Robertson discussed his experience as a volunteer firefighter in Cheshire, and what a vital part the volunteer members are to the department. He encouraged any member to contact him with any concerns. He feels that both

career and volunteer members do a great job and the current issues are due to a lack of communication.

Commissioner Kanute discussed his 23 years of service as a member of Company 3, and how his heart is with the fire service. He further explained how the process of the budget request was made and the decisions were not made to demean or lessen the volunteer force. He discussed how the town is growing rapidly, in the residential and commercial areas. He is open to discuss the letter and feels that the solution will not just be one answer.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC:

Captain Alan Zygmunt read a letter from the IAFF Local 2033 and requested that it be attached to the meeting minutes.

Training Officer Kevin Munson spoke on behalf of the volunteer officers and stated that all the members want to help in the process of any changes that are made. He also stated that the members want to make sure they are included in future meetings on these topics.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Budget – Chairperson Bunko discussed that the changes in the 2016-2017 budget request.

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

MOTION: by Kanute, seconded by Robertson, to approve FF Rolando Rosario's request for a one-year leave of absence. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION: by Kanute, seconded by Stanforth, to approve Chief Clark's request to attend the NEIAFC 2016 Annual Meeting, the IAFC New England Conference and the IAFC FRI conference. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Stanforth asked Chief Clark about the conferences. Chief Clark reported that all the conferences are educational opportunities. The NEIAFC and New England conferences are held in New England and FRI will be held in Texas.

MOTION: by Baker, seconded by Stanforth, to adjourn to Executive Session, excluding the public and the press with the exception of Chief Clark to discuss personnel and contractual matters at 6:40 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Chief Clark and Assistant Chief Wisner left the meeting at 7:10 p.m.

No action was taken.

Returned to regular session at 7:40 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 7:41 p.m.

Wayne Stanforth
Wayne Stanforth, Secretary MTF
Board of Fire Commissioners



**SOUTHINGTON PROFESSIONAL FIRE FIGHTERS
LOCAL 2033**

International Association of Fire Fighters

President: Harold Ballard
Vice-President: Robert Moquin
Executive Board: Ed Crandall

Secretary: Eric T. Heath
Treasurer: Rick Molleur
Executive Board: Andy Polzella

February 18, 2016

To: Southington Board of Fire Commissioners

IAFF Local 2033 would like a copy of this letter included in official meeting minutes verbatim.

Local 2033 would like to thank the Board of Fire Commissioners for their support in addressing the department's manpower deficiency. Our local would like to ask two questions.

- 1) Our current budget allows for 8 firefighters on duty during weekdays. We currently only have 7 on duty during this time. With our manpower deficiencies in mind, why do we continue to not replace all of our budgeted personnel?
- 2) If the final 2016 budget does not provide additional firefighters, what operational changes are being planned to address our staffing needs?

Respectfully,

The Officers and Members of IAFF Local 2033