

TOWN OF SOUTHTON
BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

Chairperson Bunko called the meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners, held at Headquarters on July 21, 2016, to order at 6:00 p.m. Commissioners Bunko, Baker, Stanforth, and Robertson were present. Also in attendance were Chief Clark and Assistant Chief Wisner. Commissioner Kanute was absent.

Roll Call

Pledge of Allegiance

A moment of silence was held in memory of the lives lost and those injured from the tragic events in Dallas, Baton Rouge, and Nice.

MOTION: by Baker, seconded by Stanforth, to approve the minutes of June 16, 2016, meeting as circulated. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION: by Stanforth, seconded by Robertson, to approve payment of bills for June 2016 in the amount of \$87,508.37. Motion carried unanimously.

Secretary's Report:

Memo from Chief Clark recommending the approval of FF William Britton's one-year leave of absence request

CHIEF'S REPORT:

CERT:

- Battalion Chief Heath went before the Town Council at their June 27, 2016 meeting and discussed the current status and the function of the CERT team.
- The CERT Bike team was activated to aid in a search and rescue during the month.

Recruitment and Retention:

- Recruitment lawn signs were distributed to each company and they are starting to pop up around town.
- The Joinsfd.org web page is now active. Lt. Andrew Rennie will be working with Maureen on improving the page.
- Companies 1, 2 and 3 are still trying to set up a time when they can canvas Company 5's area for recruitment.

Equipment and Apparatus:

- Deputy Chief DiBattista and Jay Baker continue working with Maximum Security on the project to have monitors installed in all the stations to view the I Am Responding and NexGen applications.

- The repair bill for replacing the last set of bearings on R-1's generator has been forgiven by Cummins and the next step is to determine what needs to be done to fix the root problem.
- Ladder testing was completed over the past two days. The testing found no deficiencies.
- The final details of a new engine are being worked out and the contract should be ready to be signed early next week.
- Prices are still being sought for the trade-in value of the 2006 Ford Expedition. This price will be negotiated before ordering a new Ford Explorer.
- The fuel tank from the old generator was removed and the driveway is being repaired this week. The north side driveway entrance will be closed until Monday, July 25, 2016.
- Rugs were installed in Company 1's standby room.
- Sidewalks in front of HQ are expected to be replaced this week.
- L2 will have its nozzle motor replaced, costing \$1,200.00.

Miscellaneous:

- A tree company was hired to remove some of the overgrown trees on Company 3's property and some of the residents of Todd Rd filed a complaint with Attorney Crispino, who contacted Mike Manware, the Tree Warden. All trees removed were on town property. Town Highway did clear away heavy brush under many of the trees. Replanting may be considered sometime in the future.
- A meeting with State Rep Aresimowicz, his aide, Battalion Chief Heath and Chief Clark was held to explore the possibility of creating a "Southington Fallen Firefighter Memorial Highway" somewhere in town.
- Battalion Chief Zygmunt will give a short explanation of how personnel response numbers are calculated

SOP:

- Purposed change to 7-5 Probationary Firefighters:
 - D 9. Allowing White Tag Firefighters to ride apparatus to emergencies after successful completion of FF1. This will shorten the restriction by 3 months.

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

ASSISTANT CHIEF'S REPORT:

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

1. Fire Marshal's Inspections – 60

2. Reports to the State Fire Marshal – 162
3. Damage to property involved in fire - \$308,000
4. Damage to motor vehicles involved in fire - \$28,350
5. Other losses - \$100
6. Total - \$336,450
7. Total units responded were – 516
8. CRRs - 1

Assistant Chief Wisner further reported:

- Structure fire on June 26, 2016, causing \$65,000 worth of damage

Ongoing Inspection Projects:

- The Executive Blvd. job sites for Webster Bank and Black and Decker
- A large addition to CV Tool on Robert Porter Rd.
- O'Reilly's Auto Parts Store on Queen St.
- Apartment building on Liberty St.
- Bread for Life building on Vermont Ave.
- Site plan for multiple buildings on 1095 West St.
- Queen St. project including Chipotle, Starbucks, Aldis, and other retail stores

The Inspection Bureau will begin the annual school inspections at the end of the month.

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

COMMISSIONS COMMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS:

Commissioner Stanforth asked Chief Clark to summarize the probationary firefighter program. Chief Clark reported that the department offers two classes a year, typically one in January and the other in July. The classes run for three months and then the candidate begins FFI. The candidate is eligible to ride apparatus after the three months of classes end for training, and can ride during emergency responses after successfully completing FFI. Classes are held on Monday and Wednesday nights so that the candidate can get to know members of their company. There are now two company lieutenants and a company training officer involved in the probationary class training.

The process for an applicant to become a member is first to be interviewed by both the administration and the company, then they are sent for a physical. Once the applicant passes the physical, they become a social member of the company in their district until the next probationary class begins.

Vice Chairperson Baker spoke of the All Company Picnic Company 5 held last month. Baker stated how well the picnic was attended, and appreciated all of Company 5's efforts.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC:

Battalion Chief Zygmunt spoke of the discussion of manpower that was held in last month's Board of Fire Commissioners and the suggestion of having the low manpower numbers summarized. Battalion Chief Zygmunt handed out a summary of the report he has compiled from 2010 through June 2016. Zygmunt discussed that the numbers are derived from the manpower count the companies report at the end of each call and are reflected in their monthly payroll. Zygmunt also wanted to clear up a misconception that still alarms were counted. Zygmunt stated that only toned out alarms are included in the report. Discussion on the summarized report was held and the trends showing a steady decline in responses. Zygmunt's findings show the leanest response time is 0600 through 1600 weekdays. The findings also show the longer the length of the alarm, the higher the response is. Zygmunt's report was interrupted to respond to an alarm.

Commissioner Robertson asked could the report be broken down by the alarm time versus the time the additional engines responded. Chief Clark reported that at this time the department's computer software does not have the capability to track that but is a high priority to find a way to capture that data.

Commissioner Robertson asked if there has been any success in recruitment since the lawn signs have been displayed. Chief Clark reported that there has only been one applicant, who is a college student that the company met with and advised for the applicant to apply after they complete their schooling. The discussion continued about the current Recruitment and Retention Committee members and their eagerness to look for new marketing ideas. Chief Clark stated that recruitment is a nationwide problem and all the research he has done found that the department is trying all the recommended theories to recruit.

Retired FF Dave Jeffrey asked the board to consider supporting the adoption of an ordinance that would allow retired volunteer firefighters to receive tax abatements if they served 25 years or more. Jeffrey referred to a bill that was approved by the State of Connecticut to allow this benefit. Chairperson Bunko stated that the board had just gotten the information about the bill earlier today and had not discussed it. Discussion was held with all the board members of the process to adopt the ordinance and the impact it would have on the town.

MOTION: by Baker, seconded by Robertson, to add item 10.B., discussion on the ordinance to allow retired volunteer firefighters to receive tax abatements if they served 25 years or more. Motion carried unanimously.

Retired Fire Police Nelson DeAngelo spoke about the confusion on number of responders for the Motel 6 fire. DeAngelo stated that the number that a Company 1 member had spoken of came from the numbers that were relayed over the radio to dispatch as the trucks were responding to the call, and the member felt the report of a low response was not accurate. Assistant Chief Wisner reported

that he was at the fire and there was a shortage of manpower. DeAngelo suggested that the dispatchers would have the information of the times and amounts of manpower responses. Chief Clark stated that dispatch does not keep track of manpower and that the information would only be available by listening to the tapes of each dispatch. Assistant Chief Wisner also stated that not all members report how the total number of members in the engine when responding. Chief Clark stated that with the help of different software there is hope that in the near future the data will be available.

Retired Fire Police Nelson DeAngelo said that he has been asked by a town resident why the bottom of E-11's bay door is a different color. Assistant Chief Wisner stated that the door will be painted in the near future and the delay was because someone had volunteered to paint it and then changed their mind.

Assistant Chief Wisner discussed how at the Motel 6 fire, it was a life safety issue to get the guests out of their rooms as quickly as possible and required all available personnel to assist.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

MOTION: by Robertson, seconded by Stanforth, to approve FF William Britton's one-year leave of absence request. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Stanforth asked what percentage of members who go out on an extended leave return. Chief Clark reported that it is about 50% and discussed the procedure for them to return.

MOTION: by Baker, seconded by Robertson, to move forward with supporting the adoption of an ordinance that would allow retired volunteer firefighters to receive tax abatements if they served 25 years or more. Motion carried unanimously.

Chairperson Bunko stated that he would notify Town Councilwoman Lounsbury of the board's vote.

Chairperson Bunko discussed with the board the issue of his and Chief Clark's not being available to attend the August meeting and suggested cancelling it. The commissioners decided that they would cancel the meeting and if any urgent problems arise that a special meeting would be called.

MOTION: by Baker, seconded by Stanforth, to adjourn to Executive Session, excluding the public and the press with the exception of Chief Clark

and Assistant Chief Wisner to discuss personnel and contractual matters at 7:06 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

No action was taken.

Return to regular session at 7:39 p.m.

MOTION: by Baker, seconded by Robertson, to adjourn the meeting at 7:40 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Wayne Stanforth
Wayne Stanforth, Secretary M.F.
Board of Fire Commissioners