

TOWN OF SOUTHTON  
BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

Chairperson Bunko called the meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners, held at Headquarters on November 15, 2016, to order at 6:00 p.m. Commissioners Bunko, Baker, Stanforth, Kanute and Robertson were present. Also in attendance was Chief Clark. Asst. Chief Wisner was absent.

Roll Call

NEW BUSINESS:

MOTION: by Baker, seconded by Kanute, to approve the minutes of October 20, 2016, regular meeting as circulated. Motion carried with four ayes and one abstention.

MOTION: by Stanforth seconded by Kanute, to approve payment of bills for October 2016 for \$13,292.51. Motion carried unanimously.

Secretary's Report: None

CHIEF'S REPORT:

CERT:

- Participated in the statewide emergency drill on November 2:
  - The CERT bus was used to transport CERT members and equipment while responding to two different road closures
  - Prior to the drill all sheltering supplies were inventoried
- An indoor parking place for the CERT bus needs to be found to keep it out of the weather.

Recruitment and Retention:

- Three volunteer members Lt. Doug Badgley, FF Connor Wardwell, and FF Derek Gracy, attended a Work Force Solution seminar in Wallingford along with Chairperson Bunko and Chief Clark in October. These workshops are funded through a Safer Grant to assist all Connecticut fire departments with recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters.

Equipment and Apparatus:

- The 14 Portable radios have not been delivered and Chief Clark will contact the company to check on their status.

Budget:

- The AFG grant application was submitted for funds to purchase a live burn trailer and replace aging stabilizing struts. Total cost of the project is \$432,398, and the cost to department is \$39,308. If awarded, the

department's share will need to be paid this fiscal year and funds will need to be found in the current budget.

#### Miscellaneous:

- There was a meeting on November 2 with Connecticut Department of Labor investigator ReAnne Fraczek and her supervisor Dora Senkow, with HR Generalist Theresa Buchanan, Finance Director Emilia Portelinha, Attorney Henry Zaccardi, Chairperson Bunko, and Chief Clark, to discuss the DOL complaint. At the meeting the Town presented the Board's approved Volunteer Nominal Fee Reimbursement Plan, which was reviewed and later approved by the state.
- The plan has been distributed to the volunteer members and after reading it, the question of overlapping calls was posed. Chief Clark is in the process of researching the legality of giving the nominal fee for each call when they occur at the same time.
- Chief Clark went to the VCOS symposium last week and attended many informative classes. The classes included Effective Executive Storytelling, How to Supercharge Your Leaders, Suicide in the Fire Service, Modern Day Firefighting Myth Busters, Recruitment and Retention Issues and Discussions, along with other breakout sessions.

#### Committee Reports

- SOP Committee
  - Deputy Chief Scott DiBattista
  - Assistant Chief Wisner
  - Battalion Chief Alan Zygmunt
  - Lieutenant Chris Martin
  - No activity as of yet but a new SOP is coming out soon that the committee will have to address.
- Strategic Planning Committee
  - Commissioner Wayne Stanforth
  - Chief Clark
  - Deputy Chief Scott DiBattista
  - Battalion Chief Alan Zygmunt
  - Firefighter Ben Hogan
  - Met on October 26, 2016, more progress was made with the next meeting to be held on November 16

Commissioner Stanforth asked for more information on the Work Force Solution seminar and if there were any good ideas. Chairperson Bunko discussed the issues discussed that were very similar to Southington's such as the aging work force and reimbursement plans. Chairperson Bunko feels that Southington is

ahead of the curve but that there is no magic answer. The seminar did identify the effective recruitment medium being direct mail that Chairperson Bunko said was similar to political campaigns.

Commissioner Robertson asked for more information on the need for additional radios. Commissioner Robertson stated that there were communication problems during a few calls recently and wanted to know if that was the reason for new radios. Chief Clark reported that the new radios will replace some of the older Motorola's and the surplus will be given to company officers.

Chief Clark asked the Board to look at the report requested by Commissioner Stanforth, that was compiled to compare medical calls in the past four years and see if there has been a large increase. Commissioner Stanforth noted that the report did not show any significant increase compared to the increase in the other call types.

Chief Clark discussed the Quarterly Training Report submitted by Deputy Chief DiBattista. The report showed an increase in training hours and that the members of the smaller probationary classes had a larger retention rate. There was also a notable lack of ride along hours.

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

#### ASSISTANT CHIEF'S REPORT:

Reported by Chief Clark

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

1. Fire Marshal's inspections – 60
2. CRRs - 1
3. Reports to the State Fire Marshal – 233
4. Damage to property involved in fire - \$0
5. Damage to motor vehicles involved in fire - \$3,500
6. Other losses - \$0
7. Total - \$3,500
8. Total units responded were - 706

Chief Clark also reported there has been a steady collection of inspection fees deposited into the general fund.

#### COMMISSIONS COMMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS:

Chairperson Bunko talked of his attendance at the Work Force Solution seminar and his desire to attend future meetings.

Chairperson Bunko attended the Veteran's Day event at the American Legion on November 11, 2016, that was also attended by Assistant Chief Wisner and members of the department.

Chairperson Bunko stated his appreciation of the members who are a part of the Strategic Planning Committee and the Recruitment and Retention Committee, and is happy to see the SOP Committee is being activated.

Vice Chairperson Baker attended the monthly CERT meeting where Officer Gallo held a presentation on traffic control.

Vice Chairperson Baker apologized to Company 1 members for the confusion that was created by information conveyed at a company meeting and how the reimbursement plan was adopted. Vice Chairman Baker explained on the day of the company meeting it was believed that there was more time to come up with a reimbursement plan and that the members would be able to weigh in on the decision. After the meeting, it was learned that the plan needed to be finalized at the October meeting so it could be presented to the Connecticut Department of Labor in a meeting scheduled for the next week. Vice Chairperson Baker stated that the opinion of one board member does not necessarily mean it is the Board's opinion and that Baker suggests that Board Liaison program be placed on hold and that communication through the monthly company officers meeting will continue. Vice Chairperson Baker also let the members know that she is still available through email.

Commissioner Stanforth expressed his regret with the misunderstanding and miscommunication with Company 2, and that the issues could have been dealt with in a different fashion. Commissioner Stanforth stated that he would continue his work on the Board for the good of the department.

Commissioner Stanforth asked Chief Clark why there was only one CRR done last month. Chief Clark reported that the CRR survey requests come in spurts, usually after a fire prevention presentation. Chief Clark stated that Inspector Hunt had held a presentation earlier in the day and expected that it would generate interest in the program. Chief Clark also reported that the surveys are usually done in the winter and spring. The current inventory of smoke and carbon monoxide detectors was discussed and determined to have sufficient supplies at this time.

Commissioner Stanforth thanked the members who wrote and submitted the AFG grant for the live burn trailer and stabilizing struts.

Commissioner Stanforth asked about the department's smoking policy. Chief Clark reported that the department does allow smoking in the back of the stations.

#### COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC:

Lt. Andrew Rennie thanked Vice Chairperson Baker and Chief Clark for addressing the issues that he had come to the meeting to discuss. Lt. Rennie

also thanked Vice Chairperson Baker for coming to the company meeting on Monday night to meet with the members.

Chairperson Bunko discussed that the reimbursement plan is a living document that can be revised. Any possible revisions would only be approved after the change was thoroughly researched and approved by the town's legal advisors.

Chairperson Bunko asked Chief Clark about the status of the company bylaws. Chief Clark reported that there has not been any progress in creating a universal document for all the companies. Chief Clark stated that he would put it on the agenda for discussion at the next company officers meeting.

Chief Clark stated that dates will have to be scheduled for budget workshops.

Commissioner Robertson asked for clarification on the overlapping call reimbursements. Chief Clark stated that the confusion is that the definition that was conveyed by the DOL is that a nominal fee covers the cost of wear and tear on a member's vehicle and that it is a grey area if they can receive an additional fee for a call that they are already in station for. Chief Clark stated that he wants to make sure that any revision to the plan is within DOL guidelines.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

MOTION: by Baker, seconded by Robertson, to adjourn to Executive Session, excluding the public and the press with the exception of Chief Clark to discuss personnel and contractual matters at 6:35 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

No action was taken.

Return to regular session

MOTION: by Stanforth, seconded by Kanute, adjourn the meeting at 7:06 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Wayne Stanforth, Secretary  
Board of Fire Commissioners