

TOWN OF SOUTHWINGTON  
BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

Chairperson Bunko called the meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners, held at Headquarters on October 18, 2018, to order at 6:00 p.m. Commissioners Bunko, Baker, Kanute, and Robertson were present. Commissioner Moise arrived at 6:05 p.m. Chief Butler and Assistant Chief Paul were also in attendance.

Roll Call

Pledge of Allegiance

Chairperson Bunko discussed the need to change the agenda.

MOTION: by Baker, seconded by Robertson, to move item 7.B. to item 9.D. as an action item and add an Assistant Chief's Report to the Committee Reports, section 7. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION: by Kanute, seconded by Baker, to approve the minutes of the September 20, 2018, special meeting as circulated. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION: by Kanute, seconded by Baker, to approve the September 20, 2018, regular meeting as circulated. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION: by Kanute, seconded by Baker, to approve the minutes of the September 20, 2018, special meeting as circulated. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION: by Robertson, seconded by Kanute, to approve payment of bills for October 2018 for \$45,615.48. Motion carried unanimously.

Secretary's Report:

Memo from Chief Butler recommending requesting a special appropriation of \$60,000 for security enhancements

Memo from Chief Butler recommending FF Robert Ouellette's leave of absence request

Memo from Chief Butler recommending applying for an AFG grant

CHIEF'S REPORT:

Chief Butler reported:

***Master Planning for the Southington Fire Department***

- Evaluation of Current Conditions
- Training Program
- Staffing and Personnel Management
- Fire Prevention and Public Education Programs

- Capital Assets and Assessment of Current Infrastructure
- Service Delivery and Performance
- Insurance Services Organization (ISO) Community Fire Service
- Future System Demand Projections
- Future Delivery System Models

**Community Risk Reduction** – The Department is renaming the Fire Prevention Division to the new title of Community Risk Reduction Division. This name change will better reflect the real job that this division performs. Community Risk Reduction (CRR) can be defined as the identification and prioritization of risks, followed by the coordinated application of resources to minimize the probability of occurrence and/or the impact of unfortunate events. Essentially, the fire service exists not only to respond to emergency incidents, but also to proactively prevent or mitigate the impact of such incidents within their communities. CRR provides a more *focused* approach to reducing specific risks. In addition, a comprehensive CRR program involving community partners, firefighters, and other staff, can result in an organizational culture that recognizes the importance of reducing risks within a community. It is important that fire service leaders, their firefighters, and other staff begin to shift their thinking towards reducing and mitigating risks, as this will ultimately be expected by their communities and elected officials.

**Response Matrix** -The Department has put together a committee to evaluate the current Response Matrix. The committee has met once and has made some significant changes to how we respond to incidents.

The first change was to return to the previous protocol of only utilizing the All Call for incidents Monday thru Friday from 6am-6pm. The ALL Call will only be used after these hours for incidents where the department has the need for all companies to respond, i.e., building fires. The second change is to reduce several other types of incidents to Still Alarms such as Motor Vehicle Accidents, Alarm Sounding without Smoke, and Carbon Monoxide Detector Sounding.

These changes are designed to accomplish two main goals. First is to reduce the workload on the volunteer firefighting force and second to reduce the number of apparatus responding to incidents.

**Overtime** - Currently we are doing a little better than last year with the amount of overtime being paid. One of the effects from changing the response matrix is a reduction in the amount of callback overtime. Additional ways will be looked at to further reduce the amount of overtime.

The issue of overtime has been the topic of discussion for many years, and there isn't an easy answer for the problem. The main way to reduce the overtime is to increase the number of firefighters. Chief Butler has identified that the department is paying replacement overtime on an average of .9 firefighters per day. If the number of firefighters is increased to one per shift, this would significantly reduce the amount of

replacement overtime. All of the overtime will never be reduced because of the nature of this job.

***Tapestry Report*** - The International Association Fire Chief's National Volunteer Workforce Solutions has been contracted to do the study. The study is based on the premise that a citizen profile analysis will provide information that will improve the ability to identify the types of people who would be the best candidates for volunteer fire service, where they can be found, and how best to communicate with them. The actual process began on October 17, 2018, with a conference call with the report developers. There are several pieces of information that the department needs to provide to the developers. This information includes addresses of our current membership (no name), how far outside of the jurisdiction the report will cover, and the company districts. The process will take several weeks, and Chief Butler hopes to have the report before the next Commission meeting.

***Apple Harvest Festival*** - The decision was made after the last meeting that the department would staff a volunteer recruitment table at the festival. Several of the Commissioners convinced the organizers to allow the department to have a space this year for recruitment. There was difficulty getting companies to staff the table due to other commitments and after discussing it, the decision was made to turn the table into a Fire Prevention display, or Community Risk Reduction display. This effort was a resounding success. The department received a request for 24 Home Safety Audits from families at the festival.

***Social Media*** - The Fire department developed a Facebook and Twitter page. The goal of increasing our social media presence is to inform the public what the fire department is doing and to provide Community Risk Reduction information, such as home heating safety, elderly slip and fall prevention, and other safety information.

The department is establishing a Public Information Group that will be made up from both the Volunteers and Career Firefighters. Guidelines are being developed for our social media campaign to ensure that the information that is placed on social media portrays the department in the best light.

***Developing Accurate Data***- The department is currently having several reports developed to be able to pull accurate data from the Firehouse Software that are utilized for our reporting system. Without accurate data, informed decisions cannot be made, and a lot of decisions in the past have been made on emotions. The Master Plan will depend on having accurate data available to begin to formulate the way forward for the department.

***Electronic Submission Form***- The department is going to develop an Electronic Volunteer Response Submission Form to eliminate the paper document. This form will allow each company to submit their Incident Response Form after each call electronically. This change will improve efficiency and eliminate each company from

having to deliver the forms each week to the office. This change will make it easier for the support staff to log all the information into the system.

**Job Descriptions-** Currently we are developing two new job descriptions for the positions of Deputy Fire Chief and the Deputy Fire Marshal. Chief Butler hopes to have these ready for the Commission's review before the next meeting. The goal is to have all new job description completed before the end of the year.

**135<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Southington Fire Department-** The department will be celebrating the 135<sup>th</sup> anniversary this coming year and the department will be planning several events to recognize the history of the organization. The department has developed a logo for the anniversary and will be proudly displaying it on all the apparatus.

**Office Space-** The department is running out of office space quickly, along with adequate storage areas. Chief Butler is planning on moving the Battalion Chiefs to the old dispatch room which will place them in an office where they can conduct personnel counseling, and privacy when dealing with issues that that need to remain confidential. Currently the office that they share with the Captain is not suitable to accommodate the needs of the position. The plan also calls for the Captains to move into the Fire Hawk office and turn their old office into the ready room for the volunteers and on duty crew.

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

Multiple Board members stated their appreciation for how informative Chief Butler's report was. Chief Butler explained that his work on the Master Plan will determine the direction the organization needs to go in. Chief Butler would like to have the Master Plan in place by the beginning of the next fiscal year.

Vice Chairperson Baker told of her support for his plan and asked if all the companies were considered in the storage issues and the anniversary. Chief Butler reported that he has reached out to all the company captains requesting a list of their needs and that all companies will be a part of the anniversary events.

#### ASSISTANT CHIEF'S REPORT:

Assistant Chief Paul reported:

- Chief Butler and Assistant Chief Paul attended Company 5 and Company 1's Old Timers Nights and he thank the companies for inviting them
- Assistant Chief Paul and BC Donnelly met with the department electrician to discuss repairing Company 3's outside lighting
- Two plumbing issues at Company 3 were repaired by the Board of Education's plumber this week
- The Fleet Committee is working on building two trucks, a new engine and a tanker truck

- Four members of the Fleet Committee attended pre-construction meeting in Dublin, Ohio Sept 24-26, 2018
- The Fleet Committee is working to finalize the specifications for Tanker 2 along with a graphics package; the goal is to complete the specs by the end of November for it to go out to bid
- Chief Butler and Assistant Chief Paul identified a need to improve the curb appeal for all four fire department buildings
- A bay door company has given an estimate for preventative maintenance on all overhead doors at Headquarters and once the work is completed they will be asked to evaluate the outlying stations

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

Commissioner Kanute asked about the gallons in the tanker truck, which Assistant Chief Paul reported.

Vice Chairperson Baker asked if the future Assistant Chief's Report will include the Fire Marshal's report. Assistant Chief Paul stated that he will discuss it with Chief Butler.

TRAINING REPORT: See attached

COMMISSIONS COMMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS:

Chairperson Bunko reported the following:

- Thanked all the members who marched in the parade and told of how supportive the parade attendees were as the department march by
- Attended Company 5's Old Timers Night; thanked the company for a great job
- The annual Awards Ceremony was held on October 16, 2018 to recognize members from the department

Commissioner Moise thanked Commissioner Robertson for his work and time spent both weekends at the Apple Harvest Festival with the fire prevention display. Commissioner Robertson discussed how well the public responded to the fire prevention display and would like the department to continue to have a presence at the festival each year.

Vice Chairperson Baker thanked DC DiBattista for all his work on the Awards Ceremony.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC: None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

MOTION: by Kanute, seconded by Moise, to approve the request for a special appropriation of \$60,000 for security enhancements. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Moise spoke of his support of Chief Butler's request and understands the urgency. Commissioner Moise also agreed that an appropriation was needed because there are no funds available within the existing budget to fund the project. Chief Butler discussed the need to change the department over to a key fob system for security and the current key system has no accurate inventory of keys distributed or returned.

MOTION: by Kanute, seconded by Baker, to approve FF Ouellette's request for a leave of absence providing that FF Ouellette provides a status update within six-months. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Kanute asked if there was a problem with leave of absences. Chief Butler reported that the administration is trying to prevent leave of absence requests being used when a member who has been inactive for a long period of time or has fallen behind on mandatory training requirements, which can add up to the member not participating in training or responding for two years.

MOTION: by Kanute, seconded by Moise, to approve the department to apply for an AFG grant. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Moise asked if the department's cost share will be absorbed in the department budget and Chief Butler stated that it would. Vice Chairperson Baker asked about the training for the rope rescuing equipment and Chief Butler reported that the initial training will be paid for by the grant to a nationally recognized training company and retraining will be incorporated in the regular training schedule.

MOTION: by Moise, seconded by Kanute, to approve the goals for Chief Butler. Motion carried unanimously.

Chairperson Bunko discussed Chief Butler's three year contract that stipulates that Chief Butler would be evaluated by the Board by the goals. The following are the goals identified by Chief Butler:

- Recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters
- Review staffing model
- Develop a master plan by using benchmarks
- Promote an assistant chief
- Evaluate the response matrix
- Develop a comprehensive building maintenance plan
- Develop expectations for the battalion chiefs and captains
- Develop job descriptions

Chief Butler also discussed that he is changing the title of Deputy Chief of Training and Safety to a Deputy Chief of Fire to reflect DC DiBattista's duties that include a broader range of responsibilities. All Board members and Chief Butler told of how DC DiBattista is doing a great job and Chief Butler stated what a tremendous help DC DiBattista has been since he has started.

MOTION: by Baker, seconded by Kanute, to adjourn to Executive Session, excluding the public and the press with the exception of Chief Butler and Assistant Chief Paul, to discuss personnel and contractual matters at 6:59 p.m.  
Motion carried unanimously.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

No action was taken.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:39 p.m.

David Kanute, Secretary  
Board of Fire Commissioners