

TOWN OF SOUTHWINGTON
BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

Chairperson Bunko called the regular meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners, held at Headquarters on December 20, 2018, to order at 6:00 p.m. Commissioners Bunko, Robertson, Moise, Shanley-Buck and Wilson were present. Also in attendance were Chief Butler and Assistant Chief Paul.

Roll Call

Pledge of Allegiance

A moment of silence was held for the passing of the 43rd president, President George H. W. Bush, on November 30, 2018, and Firefighter Christopher Roy, of Worcester Fire Department, who died in the line of duty on December 9, 2018.

Chairperson Bunko presented retiring Vice Chairperson Baker with a helmet in appreciation for her two terms of service to the Fire Department. Vice Chairperson Baker thanked the Board and described her time on the Board as being a pleasure to serve and wished good luck to the new Board members. Retiring Commissioner Kanute was not present.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS:

Chairperson Bunko asked for a motion for the position of chairperson.

Commissioner Moise nominated Nathan Wilson as chairperson and described his experience in volunteering in the Town of Southington. Commissioner Wilson accepted the nomination. Outgoing Chairperson Bunko nominated Christopher Robertson as chairperson and Commissioner Robertson accepted.

MOTION: Voting was held and commissioners Moise, Shanley-Buck and Wilson voted for Nathan Wilson and commissioners Bunko and Robertson voted for Christopher Robertson for chairperson. Nathan Wilson won the majority and was named chairperson.

The meeting was turned over to Chairperson Wilson. Chairperson Wilson stated that he was thankful for the role as chairperson and is excited to work together in keeping the community safe.

MOTION: by Moise, seconded by Robertson, to nominate Christine Shanley-Buck for the position of vice chairperson. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION: by Moise, seconded by Bunko, to nominate Christopher Robertson for the position of secretary. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION: by Bunko, seconded by Moise, to approve the minutes of the October 18, 2018, regular meeting as circulated. Motion carried with three ayes and two abstentions.

MOTION: by Moise, seconded by Robertson, to approve the minutes of the November 7, 2018, regular meeting as circulated. Motion carried with three ayes and two abstentions.

MOTION: by Moise, seconded by Bunko, to approve the minutes of the December 6, 2018, regular meeting as circulated. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION: by Moise, seconded by Robertson, to approve payment of bills for October 2018 in the amount of \$27,654.13. Motion carried with three ayes and two abstentions.

MOTION: by Moise, seconded by Bunko, to approve payment of bills for November 2018 in the amount of \$26,529.62. Motion carried unanimously.

Secretary's Report:

A letter from Robert Wales to the Board that will be reviewed and addressed at a later date

A memo from Chief Butler recommending dates for the Board of Fire Commissioners 2019 regular meetings

CHIEF'S REPORT:

Chief Butler discussed the following:

- The department presentation to the Town Council that was well received
- A request to increase the chief's spending approval from \$1,000.00 to \$3,000.00

MOTION: by Moise, seconded by Robertson, add item 15.B. to raise the chief's spending approval to \$3,000. Motion carried unanimously.

- Reduced Overtime:
 - Eliminated 24 hour All Call dispatching that has cut the overtime for callbacks by 49%
 - Transferred day work personnel to shift, using these two positions to reduce the overtime on shift
- Changed Response Matrix:
 - Reduced the number of apparatus responding to minor incidents.
 - Reduced the amount of callback overtime
 - Reducing the amount of apparatus responding on calls reduces the potential liabilities involving accidents with apparatus
- Developed job descriptions for all positions within the Fire Department; the union is reviewing them to make sure there are no conflicts
- Expectation Letters for the Battalion Chiefs and Captains:

- The documents clearly outline the expectations for each of the positions
- Each officer will sign the document and it will be placed in their personnel file
- Training Division:
 - Starting the first of the year the Training Division will be restructured
 - Quarterly officer training will be implemented
 - An Instructor Training Cadre is being developed
 - A quarterly training schedule is being developed
- Staffing Change for Station 5:
 - Starting January 1, 2019, the station will be staffed with an engine crew 24 hours a day
 - The active volunteer force has fallen to four members, with one of the four being an exterior firefighter
 - Staffing Station 5 will mean that the three remaining active volunteer companies will be more heavily relied on to respond to incidents
- Fire Police Program:
 - Current active fire police will be allowed to remain with the department until they age out at 70
 - The current plan is no new fire police will be accepted
 - The decision is based on safety concerns with members standing in the roadway to direct traffic
 - Current standards dictate that apparatus are to be utilized in blocking roadways, even with this change in the standards, every day somewhere in the United States an emergency responder is struck and injured or killed on a roadway
 - Currently, the department has nine fire police
- Exterior Firefighters Program:
 - No new exterior firefighters will be accepted into the program
 - A member responding to an emergency that cannot act as part of a crew creates a safety issue on the fire ground
 - The fire service of today relies on accountability and being able to determine where crews are operating on the fire ground
 - Currently, the department has three exterior firefighters
- Recruitment and Retention:
 - A Tapestry Report has been completed by the Volunteer Workforce Solutions section of the International Association of Fire Chiefs
 - The department received the final report on Friday, November 30, 2018
 - This report will be utilized to develop effective strategies for recruitment of volunteer members
 - The Southington Fire Department needs a strong and viable volunteer firefighting force and this firefighting force needs to be under the control of the fire chief

- Reinstated the Recruitment Committee and the committee had their first meeting on December 10, 2018
 - The department is evaluating if a Cadet Program can be instituted and used as a source of future volunteer and career firefighters
- Evaluating Department Apparatus:
 - Evaluating the current replacement plan for the apparatus and the department
 - Brush Unit at station two will be eliminated
- Development of a Master Plan:
 - The plan will identify one, three, five and 10-year goals
 - Each year a strategic plan will be developed to meet the goals of the Master Plan
 - Building maintenance and capital improvement projects have to be a major part of the ten-year plan
 - This plan will address all areas of the organization and guide the department into the future
 - Once the final plan is completed, it will be presented to the Town Manager and the Board of Fire Commissioners for approval
- The Rules and Regulations for the department are in revision at this time; the current set of Rules and Regulations are outdated and do not meet the needs of the organization
- Standard Operating Procedures are in revision and will be released after the first of the year; two new SOP's will be added:
 - Code of Conduct
 - Disciplinary Policy
- Developing accurate data sets to evaluate department responses:
 - Currently, the data that is available for evaluation does not accurately describe where the organization is currently and does not identify any shortcomings
 - Accurate information and accurate data is needed in order to make accurate decisions on the future needs of the fire department
 - Currently, the data utilized to determine the volunteer members eligibility for a tax rebate is inaccurate
- Community Risk Reduction Division:
 - The Fire Department has changed the name of the Fire Prevention Division to more accurately describe what the division does
 - Life safety education is the cornerstone in helping to prevent fires and injuries from occurring
 - Preventing a fire or injury is far cheaper than it is for the fire service to respond and deal with the consequences of the event
 - Fire plan reviews are another component of this division, and this requires that all new commercial structures have their building plans reviewed to ensure that they meet fire code

- Fire safety inspections are conducted to ensure that commercial structures comply with the fire code to ensure the safety of the patrons
- Staffing:
 - Currently, the department is understaffed and is unable to have an effective firefighting force on location within 9 to 10 minutes of an incident
 - An effective firefighting force would need to be a minimum of 10 personnel on location quick enough to affect a rescue and establish an attack line on the fire.
 - Engine operator- required to pump hose lines
 - Two firefighters for an attack hose line
 - Two firefighters to meet the two-out requirements of the OSHA regulations
 - Incident Commander required by the OSHA regulations and cannot be involved in the direct fire attack and must maintain an overall awareness of the conditions on the fire ground
 - Two firefighters to serve on a backup hose line to meet the current standard of care established in the fire service
 - Two firefighters to perform search and rescue or ventilation operations.
 - Today's fires burn hotter and faster than those of 50 years ago
 - The Underwriters Labs and the National Institutes of Standards and Technologies have performed tests to determine the change in today's fires and determined that 50 years ago a homeowner had up to 20 minutes to evacuate their home when they first smelled smoke versus today they have less than four minutes
 - Under the current operations, we highly depend on the volunteer firefighters to arrive on location in a short period of time
 - When the volunteer response times are examined it shows that there is not a guaranteed effective firefighting force in the required amount of time
 - The Southington Fire Department still needs a strong volunteer firefighting force
 - The department needs to create a lieutenant's position within the organization, to ensure that a supervisor is on each piece of apparatus
 - The department needs to increase the salary of the Deputy Chief's position by \$10,000 a year to reflect the increased responsibility that is being placed on the position including:
 - This increase would enable the department to keep the position as a desirable rank for members of the organization to aspire to.

- In budget year 2020-2021 the plan is to create a second Assistant Chief position and split the responsibilities of the Assistant Chiefs into operations and administration
- Building Maintenance:
 - Currently, the department has many building maintenance needs that will need to be addressed through the CIP and program additions
 - Station 2's boiler needs replacement
 - Air Conditioning needs to be added to several of the fire stations
 - There is a need to improve security at all of the fire stations by changing the exterior doors over to an electronic key fob system
 - An evaluation of the department identified that several of the stations lacked the proper infrastructure for a fire department and these include items such as phone systems and PA systems; the cost of adding these systems to each station will average approximately \$25,000 each
 - After evaluating the building maintenance account and the expected expenses it is projected to have insufficient funds to properly maintain the four fire stations that the department operates from; an increase of at least \$5,000 per year will be needed
 - The department still needs to replace the driveways at Station 2 and Station 5
- Training Facility:
 - The department needs a dedicated training facility that would ensure that our firefighters can maintain the necessary skills to perform the tasks during emergency operations
 - The ICMA report identified that the department needs such a facility
 - This program would need to be added to a future CIP with an approximate cost of \$6 million
- The IAFF Local 2033 contract is currently in negotiations and once ratified it will increase certain areas within the budget
- As a Fire Chief, Chief Butler believes that all personnel should have professional appearance when out in the public, which means:
 - All personnel wearing the same uniform shirts, the same job shirts, the same work jackets and in the summertime the same T-shirts
 - Additional funds are needed in the current budget which Chief Butler feels are important in changing how the public views the fire service

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

ASSISTANT CHIEF'S REPORT:

Activities of the Southington Fire Department for the month of October 2018:

1. Fire Marshal's Inspections – 76
2. CRRS - 3
3. Reports to the State Fire Marshal – 204

4. Damage to property involved in fire - \$100
5. Damage to motor vehicles involved in fire - \$5,650
6. Other losses - \$1,050
7. Total - \$6,800

Activities of the Southington Fire Department for the month of November 2018:

1. Fire Marshal's Inspections – 65
8. CRRS - 3
9. Reports to the State Fire Marshal – 203
10. Damage to property involved in fire - \$0
11. Damage to motor vehicles involved in fire - \$108,550
12. Other losses - \$0
13. Total - \$108,550

Assistant Chief Paul also reported:

Apparatus

- E-61's rear body was repaired from an accident this past summer
- E-11's Federal Q siren is out of service and will be covered under warranty
- E-11 has corrosion issues around both sides of the gear compartment which has been repaired by Turnpike Motors as warranty work
- E-22's fuel tank was replaced
- E-31's rear tires were replaced
- R-3's tires need to be replaced
- Sutphen #4 is in progress; current delivery is expected next summer
- Tanker 2's bid spec is available on the Town of Southington's website, which will be opened on January 15, 2019, at 2 p.m.; the committee and our consultant Jim Lyons of J. Lyons Consulting, LLC, deserve a thank you for all the work done on the bid spec

Building Maintenance

- Station 3's lighting has been repaired with exception of the building lights on the exterior of the apparatus bay
- The Board of Education's Operations Department and the Highway Department have helped the department with several building maintenance issues at Headquarters and Station 5 along with work to prepare Station 5 for 24 hour staffing
- Members of C Shift as well as several other firefighters and Captain Hughes cut trees and brush at Station 5
- Company 5 members have been working to complete the bathroom as well as other work inside of the station
- Company 5's expansion tank and a high vent pump were replaced this week
- The Board of Education's Operation Department was able to repair Station 3's heating issue along with CTC

- The Board of Education's Operation Department electrician and plumber have been prepping Station 5 for the installation of a washer, dryer and dishwasher
- Hartford Steam Boiler inspected all of the boilers in all stations

Equipment Maintenance

- FF Comen and FF Martin have been inventorying the entire department's PPE and recording all of the gear in an online PPE tracker database
- FF Comen and FF Martin have also been working on a helmet replacement plan

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

COMMITTEE REPORT: None

COMMISSIONS COMMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS:

Commissioner Moise discussed the following:

- Company 5's toy and food drive
- Company 2 donating 20 Christmas trees
- The department helping to deliver gifts to the elderly
- Company 3's pancake breakfast
- Appreciation for all the efforts of everyone in the department
- Commended Chief Butler and Assistant Chief Paul on the fantastic job they are doing that includes the reduction of overtime expenses

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC:

BC Glenn Dube on behalf of IAFF Local 2033 members welcomed the new Board members and thanked the outgoing commissioners for all their efforts. BC Dube told of how all the department's members and officers, both career and volunteer, are second to none in dedication and education. BC Dube commends the amount of work that is accomplished with the staff. BC Dube told of looking forward to continuing the positive and collaborative relationship that has been built between the union and management.

FP Nicholas Cutler discussed his disagreement with Chief Butler's decision about restricting the use of fire police based on safety concerns. FP Cutler felt that Chief Butler's safety statistics are not based on just fire police but all emergency responders and if separated, fire police are a much lower number. FP Cutler continued to explain that the number should be even lower by eliminating the fire police who had existing physical conditions that should not have been allowed to be in the service. FP Cutler feels that having fire police on the scene whose sole responsibility is to direct traffic while the firefighters are busy working, creates a safer working environment. FP Cutler feels that Chief Butler is basing his decision on his previous position in Annapolis, Maryland, which is very different demographically than Southington. FP Cutler invited Chief Butler to take a ride with him around the town to see the difference.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Fiscal Year 2019-2020 budget request was discussed along with the CIP items.

Chief Butler told of a town committee that is putting together an HVAC replacement plan for all town buildings. Commissioner Robertson and Chief Butler discussed the needs of the department buildings and how Chief Butler will address it in the Master Plan.

A thank you letter to the Board of Education's Operations Department and the town's Highway Department will be sent for appreciation of all the work they have done for the department.

MOTION: by Moise, seconded by Bunko, to submit the CIP request as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

MOTION: by Bunko, seconded by Moise, to submit the CIP request as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION: by Moise, seconded by Shanley-Buck, to approve raising the chief's spending approval to \$3,000. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION: by Moise, seconded by Robertson, 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 7:15 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

No action was taken.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Christopher Robertson, Secretary
Board of Fire Commissioners