

TOWN OF SOUTHLINGTON
BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

Chairperson Wilson called the regular meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners, held at Headquarters on January 17, 2019, to order at 6:00 p.m. Commissioners Wilson, Shanley-Buck, Bunko, Robertson, and Moise 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 two members of Company 5, Mike Nickolas who passed away this month and Clifford Albert who passed away in October.

MOTION: by Moise, seconded by Robertson, to move item 8. Communications from the Firefighters and Public to Item 3. Motion carried unanimously.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC:

FP Nicholas Cutler discussed his disagreement with Chief Butler's decision about using fire apparatus to block roads. FP Cutler told of his training at the Connecticut Fire Academy that contradicts this procedure and cited reasons for using personnel as being the prevention of a second accident and the backup of traffic causing unnecessary pollution and the loss of commerce. FP Cutler stated that he was not sure what standard Chief Butler is following. FP Cutler would like the reduction of fire police to be reconsidered.

FP Cutler discussed the change in incidents being dispatched by district was made to reduce overtime and but it also limits the volunteers being able to respond. FP Cutler further told how the call volume and the toned out calls have decreased and that it has had a negative impact on the morale of the volunteer members. FP Cutler suggested that changes be made in the union contract to reduce overtime and to have two separate dispatches so only volunteers can be toned out to more calls.

FP Cutler told of his approval of the maintenance being done on the outlying stations and that the bay doors at Company 2 had large gaps that was wasting heat.

MOTION: by Bunko, seconded by Shanley-Buck, to approve the minutes of the December 20, 2019, regular meeting as circulated, minus a revision to the action on the November 2018 bills to "by Moise, seconded by Bunko." Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION: by Bunko, seconded by Moise, to approve the minutes of the January 3, 2019, special meeting as circulated. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION: by Moise, seconded by Bunko, to approve payment of bills for December 2018 in the amount of \$48,908.10. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Moise stated that the monthly amount was higher due to building and vehicle maintenance expenses.

Secretary's Report: None

CHIEF'S REPORT:

Chief Butler discussed the following:

Community Risk Reduction Program

- The program's success was proven during a CRR visit that was promoted during the Apple Harvest Festival. This morning the on duty crew, consisting of FF Chris Fusco and FF Eric Chase, did a home safety survey on Berlin Avenue and found multiple safety problems within the home. While conducting the survey the members noticed problems with both furnaces that included cracked and detached piping and a noticeably deteriorated chimney. Additional areas of concern were found and the building inspector was called out for an assessment. The crew determined that there was not an immediate carbon monoxide danger. Firefighter Chase also spent a significant amount of time speaking with the resident's children about safety.
- BC Dube reported to Chief Butler what a great job FF Fusco and FF Chase did and how their efforts helped mitigate potential safety problems.

Overtime Reduction

- Continuing to monitor the overtime
- Making progress keeping the overtime in line with the budget

Training- See Attachment

- Starting the first of the year, the Training Division will be restructured
- The individual company training instructors will be eliminated
- Implementing quarterly officer training
- Developing an Instructor Training Cadre
- Developing a quarterly training schedule

Station 5 Staffing 24/7

- The plan is working as intended
- Some minor issues have been address

Development of a Strategic Plan

- This plan will identify the direction of the department
- Strategic plan will develop the goals for each year
- This plan will address all areas of the organization and guide the department into the future
- The Strategic Planning Committee will be made up of Volunteers, Career, a member of the Fire Commission, a civilian, and hopefully a member of the Town Council.
- Once the final plan is completed, I will present it to both the Town Manager and the Board of Fire Commissioners for approval.

Miscellaneous

- The Rules and Regulations for the department are in revision at this time
- Standard Operating Procedures are in revision and will be released after the first of the year
- The SOP committee will be meeting soon to finalize the changes.
- Volunteer Officer Appointments - See attachment

MOTION: by Moise, seconded by Shanley-Buck, add to item 11.A to the agenda for action on Chief Butler's proposed Volunteer Officer's Promotion Process. Motion carried unanimously.

Vice Chairperson Shanley-Buck asked about letters to be drawn thanking FF Chase and FF Fusco for the job they had done on the CRR. Chief Butler reported of how all the members work above and beyond their duties.

ASSISTANT CHIEF'S REPORT:

Assistant Chief Paul reported the following:

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

1. Fire Marshal's Inspections – 58
2. CRRS - 2
3. Reports to the State Fire Marshal – 195
4. Damage to property involved in fire - \$0
5. Damage to motor vehicles involved in fire - \$192,000
6. Other losses - \$850
7. Total - \$192,850

General Information

- FF Kevin Guy will start on January 27, 2019; he has measured for PPE and uniforms have been ordered
- Attended the Health and Safety Meeting on January 9
- Training was held today with the CRR Division on Firehouse Software and report writing
- Lockers, beds and miscellaneous other equipment have been purchased and installed at Station 5
- Station 5 is now in operation 24/7

Apparatus

- Sutphen #4 should begin production in March/April 2019
- Squad 1 roto-ray is out of service
- Car 6 is having a new transmission installed and is expected back in service by the end of the week
- Five Star Fire is working on a recall for emissions on E-12
- Service 1 has an engine knock that may be the EGR valve
- Working with the department mechanic for replacement of the pump gauges on E-12
- Bids were opened on Tuesday, January 15, 2019, for the tanker project

Building Maintenance

- The town building official was out at Station 5 this week to check the west side wall where a larger gap at the bottom of the wall, where it meets the floor was discovered; currently the crews will continue to monitor
- Sav-Mor scheduled next week to replace a gasket on the furnace at Station 5
- Station 2 and Station 3 will have repairs and preventative maintenance done to their overhead doors
- Station 5 has had a programmable keypad will be installed on the overhead door behind Squad 1
- Pest treatments at Station 5 are ongoing
- The BOE plumber has installed the dishwasher and the washer and dryer at Station 5
- A temporary dryer vent has been installed at Station 6
- The BOE plumber has also worked on additional plumbing issues at the outlying stations

Equipment Maintenance

- FF Comen and FF Martin continuing to inventory and record all of the department's PPE
- FF Comen and FF Martin have also been working on a department wide helmet replacement plan
- Additional helmets have been ordered and will be distributed between all companies when they arrive
- Quotes from several vendors on flashlights, SCBA bottles, RIT pack and structural boots have been requested
- A new thermal imaging camera quote has been received and will be ordered in the near future
- FF Mastrianni has been working on SCBA bottle inventory and hydro-testing for the past 3 months; updating the inventory in the computer database
- All SCBA packs is due to be tested this summer
- The Equipment Committee has been working on several projects for the department ranging from new E-draulic rescue tools to ice rescue
- The Fleet Committee is busy reviewing the Tanker 2 bids; of the two bids received only one was within budget
- A Southington resident donated 3 pet masks, a thank you has been sent this week
- An Ice Rescue Drill conducted yesterday with BC Donnelly and DC DiBattista along with members of "B" Shift; Media/press covered the drill
- The Equipment Committee demoed a sled from the Ct Fire Academy at the drill

COMMITTEE REPORT: None

COMMISSIONS COMMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS:

Commissioner Moise asked if the ice training was done with the volunteer members. Chief Butler reported that DC DiBattista adopts an annual training calendar that establishes the monthly objective for all members, which ice training is January's mandatory. Company 1 had their ice training on Monday night.

Commissioner Moise thanked Chief Butler for all his work in reducing the overtime.

Commissioner Robertson told the members that they are to contact the administration to report deficiencies in the building.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

MOTION: by Moise, seconded by Shanley Buck, add approve Chief Butler's proposed Volunteer Officer's Promotion Process starting on March 1, 2019. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Moise discussed that there are not any other appointments in the town for life and that the change mirrors other town organizations.

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 6:50 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

No action was taken.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Christopher Robertson, Secretary
Board of Fire Commissioners

Training Division

The Training Division is another area that I have been evaluating and have determined that we will need to make changes to ensure that we are providing the best training to the members of the department. Currently, the department has a Deputy Chief in charge of the Training Division and has the assistance of Training Instructors from each Company to perform the necessary training at the company level. The department cannot ensure that the quality of the training being provided to the member of the organization with the way training is currently being provided. The Southington Fire Department has an obligation to provide the members of the organization with the best training possible. There is a saying in the Fire Service that says: You can never train too much for a job that can kill you.

The Mission of the Southington Fire Department Training Division is to provide the highest quality and comprehensive training and education programs to ensure our members can obtain the knowledge, skills, and abilities to safely and effectively deliver exceptional service in all related disciplines to the community we serve.

It will be the responsibility of the Training Division to monitor the changing requirements continually and implement training programs to ensure the department is prepared to provide effective service. The training division along with company officers will work to identify operational needs, research and develop programs that include the latest techniques to fill those needs and continually evaluate the department training curriculum.

The changes that I'm proposing are designed to meet the mission of the Training Division. This proposal would alter how training is provided and the quality of that training. The decision has been made to eliminate company training instructors and have the company officers perform the administrative duties for each company. The department is going to develop a cadre of Volunteer and Career Instructors to provide the necessary training for the department.

The plan is to have the cadre of instructors assist the Deputy Chief in the development of the annual training plan. The instructors will meet quarterly and do a train the trainer programs for next quarterly training and then they can teach the programs during that period. The cadre would also help develop and deliver additional training programs within the department. These changes will improve the quality and quantity of training being provided by the Southington Fire Department. The goal is to increase the training hours to a minimum of 10 hours per person each month.

Qualifications for Instructors:

Three years' experience in the fire service

Firefighter II

Fire Instructor I or Higher

Responding to 60 percent of company calls

Attend 100 percent of company training

As the Fire Chief, I have an obligation to have training standards established for the organization and to ensure that we are doing all that we can to help our members to meet those standards. In the absence of training standards, the organization can expect inconsistency, disagreement, and substandard performance. Standards that come from the top greatly minimize the potential for operational inconsistencies and go a long way in promoting one mission, one department, and one way.

Volunteer Officers Promotion Process

When I assumed command of the Southington Fire Department, I began the process of evaluating all aspects of the organization, and as part of that process, I found that there was a need to change the process for appointment and reappointment to the officer's positions within the department. Currently, once an officer is appointed to a position that they could remain in the position for as long as they would like to serve. I am proposing a change to this process and adding additional requirements to each rank. The additional requirement will bring the department more in line with the national standards and begin to develop a well-rounded officer, more capable to handle the demands of the modern fire service. The goal of these changes to the Volunteer Officer's promotional system, are to assist individuals and the organization in improving safety, health and operational efficiencies. This change in the program will accomplish the following:

1. Provide Southington Fire Department personnel with a disciplined and uniform approach to learning, skill, and knowledge, aligned with national standards and recommendations.
2. Provide a path to achieve proficiency and skill development to meet the demands of officer positions and ranks commensurate with roles and responsibilities.
3. Provide a systematic approach towards officer development and growth that is based upon recognized curriculum and subject areas.
4. Promote voluntary compliance to achieve uniformity, consistency, and standardization of fire officer training.

The path ahead is one in which we accept the fact our mission is to provide the best emergency services program possible to the citizens of Southington. The department has a responsibility to ensure that each member is capable to carry out the task assigned to them, based on their position within the organization.

The Volunteer Officers Promotion Program needs to have a solid foundation in order to ensure that the best Fire Officers are in positions to lead the department into the future. This foundation includes three areas, Dynamic Training, Academic Education and Continuing Education.

Dynamic Training- This training is what we have learned through doing and seeing

Academic Education- This includes the understanding of why we do what we do and preparing for future positions within the organization.

Continuing Education- This how we remain current in our Fire Department knowledge. The Fire Service is changing very rapidly and the research that is being conducted is

validating some of the assumption that has been made over the years and changing some of the ways we respond to emergency operations.

The requirements build into the proposed changes to the Officer Promotion Process are designed to meet foundation requirements that I believe are necessary for a Fire Officer to be successful in the role of leading the organization forward. These changes are also based in the National Guidelines for Fire Officers.

The Process for Promotions:

Promotions will be made for two years, and the officer can reapply for reappointment at the end of each two years.

Appointment for Captains and Lieutenants from the same company will be made on opposite years.

Captain's appointments will be made Company 1 and 3 one year and then Company 2 and 5 the opposite year

After completion of the Officer Candidate training program, when a vacancy occurs, interested members will be required to submit a letter of intent, resume, and an application. An interview will be conducted by the Fire Chief, Assistant Fire Chief, and Deputy Fire Chief. After consideration of experience, performance record, the Chief will select a qualified candidate and inform the Board of Fire Commissioners about the Officer appointment. Any member completing the Officer Candidate Training program will be eligible for enrollment in Fire Service Instructor I and Fire Officer I.

1. Reappointment can be requested
 - a. A letter of support from the company
 - b. Fire Chief will consider the request and decide whether to approve the request.
 - c. The Fire Chief will notify the Board of Fire Commissioners of their decision.
2. The decision for reappointment will be based on several criteria
 - a. Completion of required continuing education
 - b. The ability to get along with others and support for the departments mission
 - c. Completion of required training as outlined in this document
 - d. Interview with the Fire Chief, Assistant Fire Chief and Deputy Fire Chief

Training Requirements:

1. Must complete Officer Candidate – Professional Development Program as outlined in the Fire Department Manual.

Lieutenant:

1. Five (5) years completed service
(Previous fire service will be considered on a case by case basis)
2. Fire service Instructor I
3. Fire Officer I
4. Incident Safety Officer (within 18 months of appointment)
5. Qualified driver/operator
6. Sixteen (16) hours of training instruction
7. Twenty (20) hours ride time with Career Officer (5 hours per shift within one year)
8. Sixty (60) percent of the available fire calls
9. One hundred (100) percent of the mandatory scheduled drills
10. Complete 10 hours of Professional Education every two years
11. EMR as a minimum within 18 months

Captain:

1. Three (3) years completed service as a Lieutenant
2. Fire Officer II
3. ICS 300 (within one year of appointment)
4. Sixty (60) percent of the available fire calls
5. One hundred (100) percent of the mandatory scheduled drills
6. Complete 10 hours of Professional Education every two years
7. EMR within 18 months for current Captains