

TOWN OF SOUTHTON
BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

Chairperson Wilson called the regular meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners, held at Headquarters on February 21, 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 in memory of all fallen firefighters.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC:

Retired FP Al Urso Sr. discussed the following:

- Does not understand the reason for moving public communications to the beginning of the meeting
- Wants to know if the Board was given direction from the Town Council
- Concerned that the volunteer force will be gone within two years
- Encouraged the Board to meet with the volunteer members; Chairperson Wilson stated that the Board had planned on visiting the stations
- Commended Chief Butler on the job he has done so far
- Questioned the need for the Fire Department to be dispatched to MVAs with no injuries
- Questioned the duration of the engines being kept on the highway and may have possibly played a role in a secondary accident by blocking a lane
- Noted a discrepancy in the newspaper's incident list

BC Glenn Dube responded to the question about being dispatched to MVAs with no injuries, stating that it being more common than not for the initial information given to the dispatcher being different than what is found at the scene and that it is up to the incident commander to determine if there is a need for a change in response. BC Dube reiterated the Mission Statement of the department is to take care of the town's people and visitors, and the department exists to provide a service for the people who call for help. BC Dube spoke of how all the changes that have been made by the current administration have been first reviewed by all stakeholders before implemented.

Edward Pocock, Jr., of the Board of Finance thanked Chief Butler and Assistant Chief Paul for giving him a tour of all the stations on February 12, 2019, and he has discussed the station conditions at the past Board of Finance meeting. Chairperson Wilson thanked Mr. Pocock, Jr. for touring the stations.

MOTION: by Moise, seconded by Bunko, to approve the minutes of the January 17, 2019, regular meeting as circulated. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION: by Moise, seconded by Bunko, to approve payment of bills for January 2019 in the amount of \$40,523.19. Motion carried unanimously.

Secretary's Report:

A memo from Chief Butler recommending the approval of FF William Orr's request for a one-year leave of absence.

CHIEF'S REPORT:

Chief Butler discussed the following:

- Department Operations Manual
 - Had been updated and is available to all members in the SOP folder on the department computer
 - Every member of the department has been notified by email to review the changes
- Reduced Overtime
 - Continuing to monitor overtime
 - Currently making progress at keeping the overtime in line with the budget
- Training Division Changes
 - Continuing to move forward with the development of the program
 - Expected start date will be July 2019
 - Informational session will be conducted at the next full staff meeting
 - Informational session will be conducted in May for all interested members
- The staffing change was implemented at the River Street Station (Station 5)
 - The plan is working as intended
 - Completing infrastructure changes; hope to have everything completed by summer
- Development of a Strategic Plan
 - Planning an organizational meeting in late March
 - Intended completion is 12-14 months
- 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.
- Volunteer Officer Appointments
 - The first round of reappointments will begin in March
 - There will be flexibility in the first year because of the new change
- New Tanker for Station 2
 - Contract will be going to the Town Council on February 25, 2019, for a vote
 - Equipment Committee has done an outstanding job with this project
- Met with Company 2
 - Answered questions about changes that have been made
- Completed Open Burn Official applications

- All the department chief officers and the deputy fire marshal are now town burn officials
- The last burning official retired
- Working on developing a process for accurate response data
 - Currently a difficult task
 - Without accurate data cannot make informed decisions

Commissioner Robertson asked Chief Butler if the department's software recorded the initial time when a medical call comes in on incidents when the Fire Department is dispatched because of a delay from AMR. Chief Butler reported that the initial time would be recorded in the dispatching CAD and the department's software only holds the time that the engines are dispatched.

- The Town is working on a infrastructure plan for roofs and HVAC
- Social Media Posts
 - Negative posts have been reported and will decide if action is needed
- Updating fee schedule
 - Will submit revised schedule to Town Manager Sciota and if approved will be sent to the Ordinance Committee for adoption
- Job Descriptions and Fire Chief Expectations documents have been completed
 - Job descriptions will be in the appendices of the department manual
- Developing task books for all positions in the department
 - Each position will have a task book and when a firefighter is promoted they will have a task book for that promotion

Commissioner Bunko asked if the Tapestry report can be sent to the Board. Chief Butler said he would send it electronically because it is a large document to print.

ASSISTANT CHIEF'S REPORT:

Assistant Chief Paul reported the following:

Activities of the Southington Fire Department for the month of January 2019:

1. Fire Marshal's Inspections – 68
2. CRRS - 5
3. Reports to the State Fire Marshal – 191
4. Damage to property involved in fire - \$136,700
5. Damage to motor vehicles involved in fire - \$6,025
6. Other losses - \$31,000
7. Total - \$173,725

General Information

- Assistant Chief Paul started fire marshal classes on Wednesday, February 20, 2019, that will run until July 1, 2019.
- There was a house fire on a very cold night that caused significant damage to the home. All companies on scene did a great job in extreme conditions
- FF Comen and FF Martin continue to work distributing new helmets throughout the department.
- Station 5 and HQ diesel fuel treated due to the low temperatures

- Inspector Hunt held an award ceremony for the annual fire prevention poster contest on January 29, 2019, that Assistant Chief Paul attended. The two winners and their families were invited to Headquarters where the winners were given an award and certificate.

Apparatus

- Squad 1 was out of service for a weekend due to two broken brackets on the exhaust.
- Squad 1 had the master intake gauges replaced after freezing up at a house fire.
- Research was conducted on the new department staff vehicle. It will be a 2019 Chevrolet Tahoe purchased from Northwest Hills Chevrolet using the state contract pricing. A lighting and siren package will be installed by Fleet Auto of West Haven.
- The fourth Sutphen engine should begin production between March and April.
- Squad 1's roto-ray is back in service. It will be eliminated in the next engine specification.
- Car 6 transmission replaced.
- Five Star Fire was contacted to schedule service for an emissions recall on E-12.
- Brush 1 from was moved to Station 2 and became B2 on February 11, 2019.
- Brush 2 the 1977 Dodge W40 has been sold by BC Heath through a broker very quickly.

Building Maintenance

- An overhead bay door motor went out of service on February 20, 2019, at Station 3. A quote has been requested for the repair.
- The Board of Education's plumber was able to make repairs at two of the stations.

Equipment Maintenance

- FF Comen and FF Martin are continuing to inventory several items involving PPE.
- A new thermal imaging camera has been ordered.
- BC Heath and Captain Glabau have ordered equipment for the new Squad and billing it against the contingency that was built into the price by the committee.
- BC Heath has coordinated a demo for e-draulic tools through Homaltro. Five manufacturers have been researched by the committee and several have been tested.

Commissioner Moise asked about the UTV. Chief Butler reported that money is not available in the budget and that they are pursuing a possible donation.

Commissioner Robertson asked if there are personal addressing systems in all the outlying stations. Chief Butler reported that that currently only Company 5 has a system that needs to be programmed. Discussion was held on the cost of having that being done being between \$50,000 and \$60,000 for both stations. Chief Butler told that company 3 would be the next station that would be considered and that due to Company 2 being land locked investing a large amount would not be recommended.

Chairperson Wilson discussed that the State of Connecticut is considering a bill to increase volunteer tax abatements from \$1,000 to \$1,500. Chief Butler reported that the Connecticut Chiefs Association sends out regular updates on fire related bills.

COMMITTEE REPORT: None

COMMISSIONS COMMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS:

Vice Chairperson Shanley-Buck thanked Company 2 for inviting the Board to their annual Christmas get together in December.

Commissioner Robertson discussed his attendance at the volunteer officers meeting in January and his support of two items brought up by Lt. August Riedinger. The first item is allowing volunteer members to respond to a call that is toned out for a different district, if they are in close proximity to the incident. The second item is having a company toned out during long duration calls so they are prepared to respond for a second call. Commissioner Robertson does not want money be a deciding factor over safety. Chief Butler reported that a system is already in place to address the need for calling in additional people. Chief Butler told of it being the chief officer on duty to determine the response needs of the department and that he has full faith in their abilities and decision making.

Chairperson Wilson discussed that the State of Connecticut is considering a bill to increase volunteer tax abatements from \$1,000 to \$1,500. Chief Butler reported that he is also kept apprised of fire department related bills through the Connecticut Chiefs Association.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

MOTION: by Bunko, seconded by Moise, add approve FF William Orr's one-year leave of absence request. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Moise asked if the member on leave is contacted throughout the year of their status. Chief Butler reported that they are not. Chief Butler also reported that member's current participation in the department is a factor in his recommendation. This is to make sure that the leave is being utilized for the right reasons.

MOTION: by Moise, seconded by Bunko, 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 7:04 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

No action was taken.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

Christopher Robertson, Secretary
Board of Fire Commissioners