

TOWN OF SOUTHTON
BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

Chairperson Wilson called the regular meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners, held at Headquarters on June 20, 2019, to order at 6:35 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.

MOTION: by Moise, seconded by Bunko, to add Item 3. to the agenda as action on the entry level Firefighter/EMT positions. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION: by Moise, seconded by Robertson, to hire Jeremy Hiriak and Christopher Martin as an Entry Level Firefighter/EMTs, pending passing a physical and a background check. Motion carried unanimously.

Chairperson Wilson told how both were outstanding candidates and the other Board members agreed.

MOTION: by Bunko, seconded by Moise, to approve the minutes of the May 16, 2019, regular meeting as circulated. Motion carried Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION: by Moise, seconded by Bunko, to approve payment of bills for May 2019 in the amount of \$72,549.65. Motion carried Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Moise asked for copies of the last minute transfer requests. Chief Butler stated that they will be in next month's packet. Commissioner Moise asked about transferring money from this budget year and Chief Butler stated that it being the last month of the fiscal year it is too late to transfer and any money that can be carried forward into the new fiscal year is only on existing projects not completed in the old fiscal year.

Secretary's Report:

A memo from Chief Butler recommending the approval of FF Joshua Martin's request for a six-month leave of absence

CHIEF'S REPORT:

Chief Butler discussed the following:

- Training:

- The Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) class is still being held even with the lower number of volunteer members enrolled; there are five members who have signed up
- CIRMA evaluated the department's training and respiratory protection program on May 21, 2019 and OSHA will visit the department on July 23, 2019, to also evaluate the program
- The new training program implementation will begin in August / September, after OSHA's visit
- The individual company training officers have been eliminated and each company will have a cadre of instructors that will be reimbursed for their teaching hours
- Information Sharing:
 - A monthly type newsletter will start in July
 - The executive assistant will compile the information and email it out to the members
- Meeting with the department's partner agencies to discuss how we can better help each other in the following areas:
 - Mutual aid
 - Developing a working relationships
 - Lack of regionalization in communications
- The department is working with the police department to be included in their future radio contract that includes the following:
 - Looking at interoperability with other jurisdictions
 - Working on a communications plan with our partner Fire Departments
- A staff meeting was held on May 29, 2019
- Fire police response changes to include:
 - Will be dispatched when requested by the on duty battalion chief
 - Dispatch will page out the request and any fire police available can respond.
- Directives:
 - Will be issued to clarify current policies or to create new policies
 - Will follow the SOP format
 - Several new directives will be coming out the 1 July including:
 - Driver / Operator
 - Overtime
 - Shift Staffing
 - Parade Requests
 - Fire Police
 - Personal Protective Equipment
 - Fire Marshal's Office Staffing
 - Fire Marshal On Call
 - Volunteer Run Sheets
 - Equipment and Station Issues
- Volunteer Officer Reappointments:

- Of the four positions up for reappointment three applied; one captain and two lieutenants
- The interviews will be held next Monday
- Upgrading phone and radio systems at Station 2 and Station 3
- Key Fob systems being installed in stations
- Rekeying all other doors for security
- Company 1 and 5 officers were emailed to setup a meeting on the operational merging of the companies

Chairperson Wilson asked Chief Butler to email his report to the Board a day before the meeting for review.

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

ASSISTANT CHIEF'S REPORT:

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

- Fire Marshal's Inspections – 76
- CRRS - 1
- Reports to the State Fire Marshal – 174
- Damage to property involved in fire - \$10,100.00
- Damage to motor vehicles involved in fire - \$.00
- Other losses - \$1,602.00
- Total - \$11,702.00

General Information

- Fire Marshal/Code Enforcement class continues until July 1, 2019
- Squad 1 now is equipped with the battery operated rescue tools
- Station 5 is scheduled to have the ductless system HVAC installed on June 25-26, 2019
- Hose Testing is scheduled for September 3-4, 2019
- Ladder Testing is scheduled for September 24-25, 2019
- Sav-Mor will be replacing all sections of the boiler at Station 5 in July
- A mini Hurst tool (HRT) will be added E-31 along with a combi tool

Apparatus

- Shift Commanders are working on the build for a new C-3
- Mid-Inspection for Sutphen #4 is tentatively scheduled for the week of July 29, 2019
- Squad 1 had a LED light strip replaced under warranty
- Squad 1 had a leak in the windshield repaired under warranty
- Squad 1's rear tires were replaced
- Tie Rod kit ordered for L-1, once delivered a PM service will also take place

Building Maintenance

- The Board of Ed's plumber continues to assist at various stations
- Headquarters was treated for insects
- Station 2 had a vent fan motor replaced by the Board of Ed's electrician

- Station 3 had another issue with E-31's overhead door that was repaired

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

COMMITTEE REPORT:

Recruitment and Retention Committee – Commissioner Moise reported that the committee met on June 18, 2019 and discussed the following:

- Questions on policy
- Reviewed the Tapestry Report and its suggestions
- The committee's budget requests
- Ideas on recruitment and retention
- Application process
- Website address miscommunication is being looked into by Chris Poulos and Grzegorz Porzycki
- Improving community knowledge of the fire department
- Positive meeting with good ideas
- Next meeting July 16, 2019

Chairperson Wilson discussed that his decision to revitalize the committee was made to make the volunteer companies successful and he thanked Commissioner Moise and Councilor Chris Poulos for being on the committee. Chairperson Wilson told of wanting the committee to focus on the recruitment of women and that he is trying to find a woman to serve on the committee. Commissioner Robertson suggested contacting the YMCA for possible recruitment opportunities along with other Board member suggestions. Commissioner Moise told the attendees that the committee is going to need the participation of additional company members for it to be successful.

COMMISSIONS COMMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS:

Commissioner Moise thanked Chief Butler and Assistant Chief Paul on their work reducing the overtime.

Commissioner Bunko told of his attendance at the lieutenant promotional ceremony and that he supports Chief Butler's choice of holding promotional ceremonies when they occur instead of waiting. Chairperson Wilson told of Commissioner Bunko walking in the Memorial Day parade with the department.

Commissioner Robertson told of how a teacher from Hatton School had reached out to him to request a tour of Company 2 with her father who is a past member. Commissioner Robertson thanked Assistant Chief Paul and Battalion Chief Heath for opening up the station on Father's Day so that Commissioner Robertson and the teacher could bring her father down. Commissioner Robertson told of how appreciative they were.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC:

FF Greg Porzycki stated the main reason there are so many members in attendance tonight are the following list of items of the way the administration is treating the volunteers:

- Volunteers looked down upon
- Increased training
- Volunteers made to feel like the enemy; volunteers to be a part of the solution
- Feel they are being set up for failure
- Administration refuses to address issues that affect recruitment efforts such as height and weight requirement
- Poor communication which they feel is a sign of poor leadership
- The word volunteer does not appear on the department's official social media pages
- Delay in getting volunteer recruitment message on department social media pages, when requested administration told him it needed to go through the chairman of the Recruitment and Retention Committee
- Commissioners rubber stamp all the administration's ideas
- Asked for recruitment resources and was punished for it
- The volunteers do not have a union to look after them
- Department dictated by the union

FF Porzycki further stated that the volunteer members want a sense of ownership and be able to use their talents to contribute to the organization. They feel they have a right to be heard and be a part of planning and implementation. FF Porzycki stated that the volunteers will not survive with this administration and that they do not have a voice or a seat at the table.

FF Ed Ozga stated that Chief Butler says he has an open door policy but he has never come down to Station 3. Chief Butler stated that Company 3 members never invited him to visit.

MOTION: by Robertson, seconded by Moise, to reopen Commissions Comments and Communications. Motion carried unanimously.

COMMISSIONS COMMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS:

Commissioner Robertson told the members that the Board encourages all members to attend the monthly meetings to discuss issues that it being the only way for all members of the Board to know of problems and take action if they choose. Chairperson Wilson agreed and told of from the beginning of his and Vice Chairperson Shanley-Buck's appointment in November they have stated that they encouraged members input and last week was the first time he had been contacted. All Board members contact information is on the town website.

Vice Chairperson Shanley-Buck stated that it was great to see so many members attend the meeting and those members who are not discussing department problems with the proper people cannot accomplish anything. The Board is the proper venue for issues to be discussed.

Chairperson Wilson told of how he invited all company captains to April's meeting to discuss recruitment and retention and Captain Wisniewski came and gave a great presentation.

Commissioner Moise told of how the Board is pleased with the Fleet Committee reaching out to Lt. Doug Badgley to join the tanker replacement project. Commissioner Moise feels that the integration is for the betterment of the town and he reiterated Chief Butler's feeling of it being one fire department.

Commissioner Moise discussed FF Porzycki's statement about the height and weight requirement and how it is already being looked at which was reported at the Recruitment and Retention Committee meeting. Commissioner Moise addressed the statement of the Board rubber stamping Chief Butler's recommendations, telling of how the Board is in constant contact with the chief before the decisions are made.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

MOTION: by Bunko, seconded by Robertson, to approve FF Joshua Martin's six-month leave of absence. Motion carried unanimously.

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 7:16 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Personnel matters were discussed. No action was taken.

Chief Butler and Assistant Chief Paul left executive session at 8:00 p.m.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Christopher Robertson, Secretary
Board of Fire Commissioners