

TOWN OF SOUTHLINGTON
BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

Chairperson Wilson called the regular meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners, held at Headquarters on February 20, 2020, to order at 6:00 p.m. Commissioners Wilson, Shanley-Buck, Bunko, Moise, and Kanute 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

FF Daniel Comen introduced Matt Conroy from the Ragged Mountain Foundation who was thanked for the rope rescue equipment donated to the department and their continued support of the rope rescue training program.

MOTION: by Bunko, seconded by Kanute, to approve the minutes of the January 9, 2020, regular meeting as circulated. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION: by Kanute, seconded by Moise, to approve payment of bills for January 2020 in the amount of \$51,100.28. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Moise asked questions about the wage and stipend account. Chief Butler reported that the additional funds in the accounts have been put in or will be before the end of the budget year, and will be taken care of through the Finance Department. Both accounts need funds due to the timing of the union contract settlement.

Secretary's Report:

A memo from Chief Butler recommending the request of a special appropriation to the Contracted Services account for an outside agency to provide a Master Plan

CHIEF'S REPORT:

Chief Butler Reported:

- Ice rescue training was completed and there was very positive feedback from the participants; Chief Butler gave the credit for its success to Captain Scott Lee who was the instructor
- The rope rescue training will begin in March and will have sessions for the career and volunteer members
- A driver training class will be held next week
- At the volunteer officers meeting the training program was discussed which was overall very positive
- The following was discussed on the request for funds to hire an outside agency to compile a comprehensive master plan:

- Chief Butler had identified the need for a department master plan from the beginning of his appointment
- It would take 4-6 months to complete
- The plan spans ten years
- The document will provide the town with an unbiased report that identifies the weaknesses in all areas of the department
- Clarification of the OSHA requirement for Hazmat certification and how it will affect the probationary member, has not been received
- The following items were reported from volunteer officers meeting the was held on February 10, 2020:
 - The meeting was very productive with constructive dialog
 - Suggested changes in the training program's communication and trainer opportunities were made
 - Request for IDs for the volunteer members were made and Chief Butler plans to start with IDs for the company officers
- The apparatus replacement plan has been updated and will be emailed to the Board
- Recommended changes to the Rules and Regulations and corresponding SOPs were given to the Board and had also been emailed out several months ago
- A new SOP that outlines a travel reimbursement policy was handed out

MOTION: by Moise, seconded by Kanute, to add item 10.C. "Action on the Travel Policy" to the agenda. Motion carried unanimously.

- The roof company that was hired by the town to rate the life of the roofs of town buildings, was called for a leak in Company 5's roof and found a problem with a roof drain; they have been contracted for its repair
- The roof company also found that Company 5's roof had deteriorated much faster than expected and will recommend that it be put at a higher priority for replacement
- Chief Butler will present the department's 2020-2021 budget request to the Board of Finance on Wednesday, February 26, 2020, at 8:30 p.m.
- An electronic SCBA checklist is being tested
- Chief Butler is considering making the use of 'I Am Responding' mandatory so that officers are aware of their available resources
- BC Donnelly and BC Dube are working on a dispatch protocol that would spell out different scenarios and equipment needed, that will be used to help guide dispatching decisions

ASSISTANT CHIEF'S REPORT:

Activities of the Southington Fire Department for the month of January 2020:

1. Fire Marshal's Inspections – 83
2. CRRS – 2
3. Reports to the State Fire Marshal – 201
4. Damage to property involved in fire - \$66,700.00
5. Damage to motor vehicles involved in fire - \$15,000.00
6. Other losses - \$8,500.00

7. Total - \$90,200.00

General Information

- There was a major house fire on East Johnson Avenue and all crews did a great job
- The Fire Marshal's Office is working with the insurance and fire investigators on the East Johnson Avenue fire
- Attended a meeting with the Board of Education's Operations regarding school fire drills
- A vendor damaged an overhead door at Station 3 and Assistant Chief Paul is working on a quote that will be covered by the vendor's insurance
- The preconstruction visit for the rescue engine was done January 28-30, 2020
- Tanker 2's mid-inspection is delayed approximately 1 month; there is a penalty clause in place for delays
- Assistant Chief Paul met with Air Cleaning Systems, the department's plymovent vendor to discuss updating Station 2's system for Tanker 2
- The department is waiting on final permission from the State of Connecticut to transfer ownership of The Freightliner Prime Mover and Decon Trailer another dept in Connecticut.

COMMITTEE REPORT:

Commissioner Moise reported for the Recruitment and Retention Committee:

- The Recruitment and Retention Committee's plan for 2020 was discussed
- Posters were put up and interest cards left at local fitness facilities
- Would like to have the monthly newsletter include the change in the IRS's taxable amount for tax abatements
- The committee had a good turnout for February's meeting

Chairperson Wilson thanked the committee members for their work.

COMMISSIONERS COMMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS:

Chairperson Wilson discussed how he would support the master plan and feels that it is a good step for the department but feels that the money could have been used for staffing. Chairperson Wilson hopes that the plan will be implemented.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC:

BC Dube expressed the Locals thanks to all members of the department who attended the services of retired Inspector Norman Fritz. BC Dube told of Inspector Fritz's 40 years of service to the department, who was also a founding member of the union and a large presence in the community. BC Dube told of how the family was very appreciative of the department's presence at the funeral services.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None

OLD BUSINESS:

MOTION: by Kanute, seconded by Bunko, to approve up the Recruitment and Retention Committee's plan for 2020. Motion carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS:

MOTION: by Bunko, seconded by Shanley-Buck, to approve requesting a special appropriation to the Contracted Services account for an outside agency to provide a comprehensive Master Plan. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Moise questioned why the expense was not requested in the budget and his concern that the reports recommendations would not be implemented. Commissioner Moise also felt that Chief Butler had presented very clear facts of the need for more firefighters to the Town Council and that feel that their decision was not fiscally responsible. Commissioner Moise voiced his concerns of not having anything formal in writing from the Town Council being in support of the master plan and that the recommendations would not be supported like the ICMA study.

Commissioner Kanute told of his experience on other boards who had similar reports done to support their need for funding and it was never considered. Commissioner Kanute is not confident that the plan will be useful.

Commissioner Bunko understands the frustration the other board members voiced but feels that there is no harm in having the plan and that there are many parts of the master plan that will be useful.

Vice Chairperson Shanley-Buck discussed the information that Chief Butler gave to the Town Council was an eyeopener and was surprised that they have doubts to the needs of the department.

Chief Butler discussed that the master plan is a method to get the message out to the residents and that it will be up to the department to get the publics support. Chief Butler told of the company being considered and was asked to check with departments they had worked with and the departments success in using the information to gain support. Chief Butler told that the company would be reviewing all stakeholders of the department.

MOTION: by Bunko, seconded by Kanute, to table action on the proposed changes to the Rules and Regulations. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION: by Moise, seconded by Kanute, to approve the SOP on travel expenses. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION: by Bunko, 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 7:22 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

No action was taken.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Michael Bunko, Secretary
Board of Fire Commissioners