

Fire Commissioner's Meeting

Draft Minutes

February 9, 2021

Present: Commissioner's Rick Pisano, Adam Zais, Kevin Conley, Fire Chief Paul Rhude & Deputy Chief Pouliot

Meeting minutes from January 19, 2021

Chairman Pisano

- Motion to accept last month's minutes with small typo revision "what" should be "that"
 - Second, all in favor

Public Comment

- No Public Comment

Fire Chief Report:

Administration:

- PPE supply remains good.

Responses

- 75 total responses
 - 2 fires
 - Trout Brook Road Fire
 - Centerville Fire on Shoot Flying Hill Road
 - 40 Medicals
 - 2 Hazardous conditions (wires down)
 - 13 Service/Good Intent or False Alarm Calls

COVID UPDATE

- COVID numbers are coming down.
- No longer posting exact numbers on the Cotuit FB page
 - Information was not reliable enough to confidently share.

VACCINE UPDATE

- Half of the Fire Dept staff received the second shot February 9, 2021.
- The other half will get it Thursday, February 11, 2021
 - Received the MODERNA vaccine - 95% protected.

REGIONAL COVID TESTING

- Regional site at Melody Tent was shut down and moved back to Hospital due to lower demand.
- Hospital is taking over COVID testing - Cotuit Fire Dept is no longer involved.
- All Barnstable Fire Departments have volunteered to be a part of the COVID vaccine program for the town.
 - If the town is successful to receive the vaccine, then Barnstable FD personnel are legally able to give the vaccine.

TECHNOLOGY UPDATE

- Unfortunately, SharePoint is not up yet but hopefully soon.

PRO EMS REPORT

- Due to the late date of January month last month, the report is the same report that was given at the last Commissioner's Meeting.

Training: n/a

Personnel:

- Matt Judge broke his nose during the PAT test and State would not allow him to finish the test but has since passed everything. As of the January 26, 2021, per the Commissioner's vote, he has been appointed conditional.
- One FF out on IOD
 - Slip and Fall and shoulder injury and out at least until February 20, 2021 or a clear from orthopedic.

Apparatus:

- Significant mechanical repairs
 - Frontline Engine 265 was coming back from a call 2 weeks ago and, as it approached the station, the cab started filling up with smoke.
 - Overheated clutch for the air conditioner compressor that started melting wires.
 - Mobile mechanic looked at it and it is now at Minuteman Fire Apparatus in Walpole and they are swapping out the air conditioner compressor, clutch assembly and belt.
 - Hopefully have it back in the next few days
 - *Commissioner Conley asked if Chief Rhude had the opportunity to see if the failure was a warranty question?*
 - **Chief Rhude answered that he was waiting for a call back but had not received one yet so he didn't know for sure but there is a possibility. He will double check and get back to everyone in a written email.**
 - Ambulance 262 has another error light on it.
 - Mobile mechanic said it is a sensor on the exhaust system - which was just repaired for \$15,000.00.
 - It is going up to the International dealer in Wareham - SAV - hopefully, it is under warranty. Should be a quick fix-should be back by Thursday, February 11, 2021.
 - There is not have a spare ambulance.
 - Relying on mutual aid for Thursday, 2.11.21 for any ambulance calls

Budget

- Budget for the vehicles is completely exhausted and in the negative
 - On Monday, the ambulance had a problem with the inverter (produces 110v for charging portable equipment)

- Had to take the inverter out of the ambulance, ship it out to Ohio for repairs - \$500.00+ to repair the inverter.
- Blew 2 tires - one on Chief Rhude's car and one on the trailer for the boat.
 - Both had to get replaced.

Facilities:

- Exterior/Interior slab doors have been replaced - in place and operational.
 - Every door has a brand-new combination lock.
- Renovations for interior office should start in a few days.

FACILITIES NEEDS ANALYSIS

Commissioner Conley - Needs Assessment

- Up to date with the analysis team at this point
- Completed visits.
 - Sent off link to Chief Rhude and Deputy Pouliot that contains other construction projects that have occurred that have been referenced in the past.

SCHOOL PROPERTY - POLICY ADVISORY

Commissioner Zais - School Building subcommittee

- Seth Burdick has been nominated as the chairman of the Committee.
- Cynthia Garnder has been nominated as the clerk.
- Work in progress - big agenda coming up February 9, 2021 evening.
- Elementary School Committee met but was in Executive Session - cannot comment.

BY-LAW COMMITTEE MEETING

Chairman Pisano

- By-Law Committee met
 - A few things in the works to review.
 - Chairman Pisano will update more after second meeting.

FY 21 Year Report

- Apparatus / Cost overruns
 - When Needs Analysis was done, there is a long-term timetable for capital projects that includes all the various equipment. Becoming clear why the vehicles are replaced as often as they are - wear they take on and the cost of keeping them functional. Brings back up the question of the new structure - loaner ambulances are not available when they do not fit in the building.
 - Chief Rhude pulled the "real-time" Operations Budget on screen
 - \$26,000 was budgeted but now in the negative -\$63,000.
 - Still must pay for the engine repair work that was done in December - probably going to come out to \$1,500.00.
 - Still must pay for the engine being away right now and the tow - which will probably be \$2,000.00+
 - Have not received a bill for the ambulance that will be going out on February 11, 2021 (hopefully no bill because it is under warranty but not sure).
 - *Commissioner Conley asked where it was overall regarding total?*
 - **Chief Rhude answered that as of February 9, 2021 overall 42% expended.**

- Prudential is requesting that Cotuit FD present the mid-year budget report to them at their next meeting on February 22, 2021 @ 6pm.

FY 22 Budget Planning

- Chairman Pisano - we will need to have a discussion before we present. We need to review those capital expenditure schedules for equipment in light of all of this expenditure to see whether we can stick to the timetable that is outlined in terms of equipment - particularly the ambulance with the expenses that have been incurring. Need to give some thought regarding how soon the capital expenditure budget will need to be accelerated.
 - *Commissioner Conley asked Chief Rhude how long the apparatus useful life is typically how long?*
 - **Chief Rhude answered - Ambulances = 8 years / Service Vehicles = 6 years / Brush Breaker Engines = 25 years**
 - *Commissioner Conley stated that regarding the Brush Breaker - already 4 years into a 25-year engine life and would be very disconcerting if need to start thinking about that. Regarding the ambulance itself - we will start talking about it sooner.*
- Chairman Pisano - least difficult part of the budget is salary and wages.
 - Did not use a lot of the money budgeted for legal expenses - may be able to shift some money around.
 - *Commissioner Conley asked how do we shift the money around if needed?*
 - **Chief Rhude answered that there is no need to “shift” money - we can overspend on one account and underspend on another. Money cannot be transferred from Salary to Operations.**
 - *Chairman Pisano asked if the radio systems were done with the updates?*
 - **Chief Rhude answered that the State has announced the grant process for the radio systems. FD can submit it at any time - estimated grant of \$100,000.00 in grant money for new radios (portables and mobiles). Most of the radios come free (unless higher models are selected at around \$300/radio) and they come with installation monies (\$300-\$500 installation per radio). Should be putting in for the grant within the next month or two and hopefully the radios will be replaced within the next six (6) months at no cost.**
 - *Chairman Pisano asked Commissioners’ Zais and Conley if either had picked out a category within Operations that needed close attention as FY 22 is thought about?*
 - **Commissioner Zais answered that he had not thought of a particular category, but the Apparatus is cause for concern. Feels as though it will continue to have additional charges. The ambulance is the most pressing concern right now.**
 - *Commissioner Zais asked Chief Rhude about any “second-hand value” for the ambulance once it is time to get a new one?*
 - **Chief Rhude answered that, typically, there is not much of a “trade-in value” associated with ambulances -- they cost \$300,000.00+ but only trade in for between \$5,000.00-\$10,000.00.**
 - Chief Rhude stated that there have been talks to getting a “truck chassis gas model” instead of a diesel. Cost less and emissions systems are much less prone to problems. It is comparable to a Ford F-450 with 4-wheel

drive which can be repaired on Cape. Maintenance is easier and cost is lower. The newer ones will fit into the bay at the Cotuit FD.

- FY-22 needs to be looked at so it can be brought to the next Prudential meeting later in March.
- *Commissioner Pisano asked if there has been any conversation regarding office space on the first floor?*
 - **Chief Rhude answered no.**
- **Old Business:**

New Business

Call Fire Fighter position

- *Commissioner Zais asked what problem were they trying to solve by increasing the rate of pay for Call Firefighters? Also, if there isn't any budget, how would it be accounted for? What is the amount of time and at what cost?*
 - **Chief Rhude, Chairman Conley and Chairman Pisano answered:**
 - **The immediate problem is getting staff to “come back” for late overnight calls / summer calls. Many times, those that are responding to those calls are Deputy Pouliot and Matt Judge and/or Chief Rhude and Matt Judge.**
 - **Useful tool and has worked out phenomenally for Cotuit FD.**
 - **Useful way to get people engaged with a department that is small enough to be overlooked if there isn't a way to capture attention.**
 - **Used as a recruiting tool to get people to know and like the Cotuit FD and it has worked really well.**
 - **Call FF are paid out of the “Incident Response”.**
 - **The idea is that when the station needs someone like him. Since Matt Judge has been approved by the Commissioner's, he will come in to respond to an emergency, be an additional body or just to be there to go to an emergency and respond to a medical.**
 - **They do not have an hourly schedule - they only get paid if they go on a call or if they come into the station to cover when others are out on the call.**
 - **Adequate staffing in the event of line-of-duty injury**
 - **Putting the best people behind the wheel or in front of a resident of the village in an emergency**
 - **Building a future workforce**
 - *Commissioner Conley asked how many of the current staff were call firefighters at one point?*
 - **Deputy Pouliot answered 9 out of 14 of the current staff, including Deputy and Chief.**
- Deputy Pouliot put in a request that Call Firefighter Compensation needs to be upgraded to \$20/hr in order to make it more financially attractive to stay in the Call FF role
- Starting Firefighter hourly wage is \$26/hr (for EMT / FF)
 - Deputy Pouliot stated that Cotuit FD was on a base system upon certifications.
 - Deputy called around and found that Barnstable does a “pay-per-call” system where you only get paid if you respond to a call and only a certain rate for details and a certain rate for drills (\$28.00/call and if a 5-hour shift is worked then it is \$68 pay)

- Brewster is an hourly rate. Basic FF is \$19/hr. Up to \$23/hr for EMTs, etc.
 - \$20/hr for Call FF is reasonable at this point.
 - *Chairman Pisano asked what certifications would be needed and when would this take effect?*
 - **Deputy Pouliot answered Certified MA EMT which Matt Judge qualifies for and would take effect after approval from the Commissioners - March 1, 2021?**
 - Chief Rhude said that Matt Judge would get paid out of the “Incident Response” line item. Right now, Mike Judge makes \$13.50/hr. and the Federal Gov is talking about raising minimum wage to \$15.00/hr. Deputy Pouliot is asking to raise it to \$20/hr. Matt Judge spends many hours at the station - taking as many shifts as he can - he is there cleaning floors, working on trucks. He and Christian Gardner are very hardworking and constantly at the station. Commissioner Zais asked to re-visit this for March 9, 2021 meeting.

- Chairman Pisano informed Deputy Pouliot.

SOGs - n/a

Public Comment - none

Motion to adjourn, second, all in favor.