

WESTFIELD FIRE DISTRICT

653 East Street, Middletown, CT 06457



COMMISSION MEETING

March 8, 2022

The Westfield Fire Commission met at the East Street Firehouse, Middletown, CT on March 8, 2022. Chairman Amy opened the meeting at 6:31 p.m. with the following Commissioners Present – Lockwood, Brenda White, Bysiewicz, Scarrozzo, Peterson, Brian White, Plummer and Commissioner Alderman joined the meeting remotely via Zoom @ 6:37 pm.

Others present were: Deputy Chief (DC) Ponzio, Assistant (AC) Coco, FDA Linda DeManche and Ross Andrew.

Chairman Amy made a **MOTION** to open the public session; Ross Andrew, Middletown reported on the Telecommunication Commission meeting held on March 7th; the tower on Mile Lane is before the siting committee now and it will be a little while before there are any changes, everything else is fine. With no additional comment the public session was closed on a **MOTION** by Comm. Brenda White, all in favor.

-On a **MOTION** by Comm. Peterson seconded by Comm. Brenda White it was approved to accept the agenda as published, all in favor.

-A **MOTION** was made by Comm. Peterson seconded by Comm. Brian White to waive the reading of the February 1, 2022 regular meeting minutes an accept as written, Comm Amy, Brenda White, Bysiewicz, Scarrozzo, Peterson, Brian White, and Plummer in favor Lockwood opposed, motion passed.

The bills for February 2022, including the detailed Liberty & Lowes statement were reviewed; after all questions were answered, the bills were approved on a **MOTION** by Comm. Plummer and seconded by Comm. Peterson, all in favor.

Tax Collector's Report

-On a **MOTION** by Amy and seconded by Peterson the February Tax Collector report submitted by Tax Collector Cynthia Augeri was reviewed and approved, all in favor.

-On a **MOTION** by Amy and seconded by Peterson it was approved to issue tax refunds to the various taxpayers on the list provided by the Tax Collector in the amount of \$ 530.49, all in favor.

Fire Marshal's Report

-The Fire Marshal's (FM) monthly report for February was distributed and accepted on a **MOTION** by Scarrozzo and seconded by Peterson, all in favor.

Chief's Report

-DC Ponzio reported that at the structure fire on February 26th a firefighter sustained a minor injury. The member was treated and released the same day.

-Captain Kennedy & LT Figueroa are the members scheduled to attend Command Officer Boot Camp in May. The District covers the standard group room rate offered for the conference but if a member wishes to take their spouse the add'l cost for the room upgrade will be covered by the member(s). As has been past practice both members are required to give a deposit check of \$200 which will be refunded to them upon their completion of the conference. Additionally, the meal allowance is not to exceed \$75 per day per person (no alcohol); the cost will be carried under the Chief's training budget.

- The Chiefs feel at this point that mandatory drills can continue as typically scheduled.
- On a **MOTION** by Brenda White and seconded by Amy it was approved for members A. Balch & Phenicie to take a Fire Instructor I course for the cost of \$430 per person plus books, all in favor.
- On a **MOTION** by Lockwood and seconded by Brenda White it was approved for members Kennedy, D. Passamano to take a Rescue class/into to shoring for the cost of \$200 per, all in favor.
- On a **MOTION** by Lockwood and seconded by Brian White it was approved to replace the duo ion red-white strobe lights on the Chief's vehicle for an estimated cost of \$700, all in favor. This would come out of the equipment repair budget.
- DC Ponzio shared that the truck committee has made some very good progress in the last couple of months. Essentially all the things the committee thinks should be in place in terms of design, etc. are now complete. They are at a stage now where they have to build out the actual specs. Dana is currently working on this.
- The Chiefs are exploring options for medical providers for the department physicals. If possible, they would like to have the periodic exams performed in station as they have been done in the past and are getting quotes from providers to perform a physical exam to the NFPA standard. The costs for these types of exams are exceedingly higher than what was budgeted and has been performed in the past. A **MOTION** was made by Brian White and seconded by Lockwood to move forward with the recommended provider to service the department members in-house for their annual physicals; under discussion it was suggested that the members be made aware of this change in the level of physical protocols so they may address any issues and start the new standard after July 1st; the **MOTION** was amended to reflect moving forward with a new provider for entry members and wait to host the periodic exams until after July 1st, Comm. Amy, Brenda White, Bysiewicz, Alderman, Scarrozzo, Peterson, Brian White and Plummer in favor, Lockwood opposed.
- On a **MOTION** by Lockwood and seconded by Peterson it was approved to purchase a decent device for rope rescue from Rock n' Rescue in the amount of \$759, all in favor.
- AC Coco shared with the Board the details regarding two additional modules; electronic health record (EHR) and personnel management that the department is interested in adding to the existing ESO software program. The modules have been demoed by the Officers and they are looking to implement them as soon as possible. The pro-rated cost for the software, migration of data and training thru the end of the fiscal year is \$2,400 +/- and the annual recurring cost as of July 1st would be \$4,335. On a **MOTION** by Amy and seconded by Scarrozzo it was approved to move forward, all in favor. This will be budgeted under the software support and contracts.
- Comm. Scarrozzo had a question for the Chief regarding the response time for ambulances in the city; are delayed response times still happening. DC Ponzio does not have any specific data but has seen different ambulance from other towns servicing the city. AC Coco stated that in the city they are averaging approx. 5 calls a week that are being handled by outside services, primarily Cromwell, Durham so the wait times on those are significant.
- The status of training classes for members was reported as follows: EMT Initial (in-house) – two members (J. Ponzio & Albert) will be re-taking the course at a later date; EMT Initial – member D. Passamano is enrolled in the NB EMS Academy which runs thru April; FFI – two members (Bogus & J. Ponzio) are enrolled; class is scheduled to end in March; Fire Service Instructor I – Officers Kennedy & Figueroa passed the practical's and needs to take the written.

Commissioner(s) Report

- It was reported that the employees are interested in switching providers from Aflac to Colonial Insurance for their disability, A&S, etc. plans. Premiums are employee paid and there is a potential cost savings for them. The Board is not opposed to the switch.
- It was reported that the Districts' auditor, Sandra E. Welwood is closing her audit practice and ceasing services. Linda will seek proposals from other accountants for auditing services for fiscal year June 20, 2022.
- On March 4th the Commissioners were made aware via email that there was a fraudulent check that was presented to Liberty in attempt to draft from the District's Liberty account. The check was identified as fraudulent and no funds were released. Liberty is again proposing their service called Positive Pay that is a service that matches check or ACH transactions that were authorized by the District. The monthly cost for this service is \$25.00. On a **MOTION** by Amy and Peterson it was approved to initiate the positive pay service effective immediately, all in favor.

- The Board reviewed policy language on a floating holiday. On a **MOTION** by Peterson and seconded by Brian White the floating holiday language was approved, the concept of a floating holiday was introduced in lieu of the Juneteenth holiday that was made a federal holiday in 2021, all in favor.
- It was confirmed that the committee that meets with the Raymond James broker to review the portfolio is set for March 14th @ 5:00 pm.
- The first budget committee meeting will be scheduled for March 22nd @ 5:00 pm.

Old Business

-LT Figueroa has been the member primarily responsible for social media postings on Facebook (FB) /Instagram for the fire department for quite some time now. On a **MOTION** by Comm. Brenda White seconded by Lockwood the following was approved; 1) pay Figueroa a stipend amount of \$50 per month for the work he does on social media postings; 2) the expected frequency of posts would be approx. 6 to 8 per month at minimum; 3) stipend would take effect for March 1st, all in favor. DC Ponzio suggests that Figueroa could periodically submit feedback data on the progress of the posts which he should be able to be obtained from FB statistics.

-Comm. Brenda White stated the patches on the Class A uniform (dress shirts & jackets) for the eight paid staff currently say Westfield Volunteer Fire Department; she is suggesting the patch for those individuals say Westfield Fire District as they are paid employees. DC Ponzio said he would like to get feedback from other members but has anyone entertained the idea of one patch that would read "Westfield Fire Department" that everyone would wear. The Commissioners are in support of that concept. A price will be obtained from Security for a new patch.

-Comm. Lockwood asked Comm. Bysiewicz to address his residency that he said he would discuss in March. Comm. Bysiewicz stated that they are in the process of completing a house in the District boundaries that will be ready in approximately four to five weeks.

-Comm. Bysiewicz stated that one of the items we may want to consider in the upcoming budget is whether we want to try and staff weekends with per diem and use that to develop a program to also attract volunteers. He was looking for feedback from the Chief's. DC Ponzio stated that he and Augeri have had some discussion about it but there is a lot of things to consider beyond the costs. DC Ponzio feels the department is meeting their obligations. The Chiefs will discuss the need and the logistics of this concept and will report back for further consideration.

New Business - None

MOTION to go into Executive Session by Comm. Amy seconded by Comm. Peterson at 8:14 pm, all in favor for discussions regarding: Personnel - new hire; pursuant to Statutes Section 1-200(6)(A) and Section 1-225(a) of the Connecticut General Statutes, as amended. In attendance at the Executive Session were Commissioners Amy, Lockwood, Brenda White, Bysiewicz, Alderman, Peterson, Plummer, Brian White, FDA Linda DeManche and DC Ponzio.

MOTION to come out of Executive Session by Comm. Amy seconded by Comm. Peterson @ 8:30 pm, all in favor.

MOTION to adjourn @ 8:31 pm by Comm. Alderman and seconded by Peterson.
Unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda DeManche
Fire District Administrator
as Recording Secretary