



# COMMISSION MEETING

November 8, 2022

The Westfield Fire Commission met at the East Street Firehouse, Middletown, CT on November 8, 2022. Chairman Amy opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m. with the following Commissioners present – Peterson, Bysiewicz, Scarrozzo, Plummer, Turner and Balch. Commissioner White joined the meeting remotely via Zoom, Commissioner Alderman was absent.

Others present were: Acting Deputy Chief (DC) Jason Lubee, Assistant Chief Phillip Coco, FDA Linda DeManche and Ross Andrew.

Chairman Amy made a **MOTION** to open the public session, with no public comment closed on a **MOTION** by Comm. Peterson, all in favor.

-On a **MOTION** by Comm. Balch seconded by Comm. Plummer it was approved to accept the agenda as amended, all in favor.

-On a **MOTION** by Comm. Scarrozzo seconded by Comm. Plummer it was approved to waive the reading of the October 11, 2022 regular meeting minutes and accept as written; all in favor.

-On a **MOTION** by Comm. Amy seconded by Comm. Balch it was approved to waive the reading of the November 1, 2022 special meeting minutes and accept as written; all in favor.

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

## **Tax Collector's Report**

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

-On a **MOTION** by Balch 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 \$102.39, all in favor.

## **Fire Marshal's Report**

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

## **Chief's Report**

-Acting DC Lubee reported that hose testing was able to be rescheduled to November 8<sup>th</sup>. It was reported that approx. seven lengths of hose failed but there was enough spare to restock the apparatus but it will need to be replaced at some point.

-For the incorporation update; the by-laws have been edited & reviewed by the nominating committee and sent back to the attorney. The Chief is seeking to present to the department for review and vote in either December or January.

-The Open House and Flu Clinic was very successful. Approx. 100 vaccines were administered and one volunteer application was handed out.

- The Chief is seeking funding for a 2.5"/5" Siamese clappered valve, it is designed for long driveway stretches. On a **MOTION** by Scarrozzo and seconded by Balch it was approved to purchase from MES, Inc. for \$1,297 plus shipping, this will come out of the Chief's New Equipment budget, all in favor.
- The current rescue jacks purchased years ago are rated for 4,000 lbs but since that time they have come out with ones with improved features for easier use and have better weight ratings. The department has done research on jacks that up the weight rating are rated to 12,500 lbs with a cost of \$19,000 and even bigger ones that could be used for structural shoring that cost approx. \$23,000. The Chief is exploring the opportunity from either the Gary Sinise or AFG grant for funding these new jacks.
- AC Coco reported the ARPA grant was approved by the Common Council last night. We will be ordering our equipment; it has already been spec'd and will mirror the equipment of Middletown & South Fire departments so we all have the same. Coco would like to wait to for the equipment to be received to do the schedule training. that will be scheduled once received.
- The on-site option for department physicals has been put on hold. As previously reported Physician One Urgent Care had doubled the cost for some of their services and in addition to that, it would require the member to go their facility for some of the testing, therefore they are exploring other vendors.
- The status of training classes for members was reported as follows: FFI Initial – member Maiette is enrolled and the class runs thru January 2023; FFII – members J. Darley and Velardi passed and are FFII certified, J. Ponzio needs to reschedule final testing; Q Endorsement – member Velardi has passed.

### **Commissioner(s) Report**

- FF Arroyo has completed the classroom portion of the fire investigator class. He still has one or two additional classes that were added to the schedule but he should be testing shortly and then the course will be complete. Once completed and passed, Arroyo could be appointed as a fire investigator by the Fire District; a letter of appointment is no longer necessary to send to the State Fire Marshal.
- Linda replated that Verde Energy, who is the supplier for electrical for generation charges, is no longer servicing CT. The current contract with Verde was 8.19 per kWh but it will revert back to Eversource in November at their current rate of 12.25 per kWh. Other vendors are being explored for the best rates but some of the published rates are up as high as 17.19 per kWh and Eversource is reported to be as high as 22.00 but their rates will not come out until sometime in December. Linda will keep exploring rate options and let the Board know via email if something comes out prior to the December monthly meeting.
- A committee will be established to explore health insurance benefits for future retirees. A meeting with the insurance broker from Smith Bros is set for December 6<sup>th</sup> to review the options.
- The November rates for an annuity purchase for the benefit of the LOSAP plan were reviewed. On a **MOTION** by Amy and seconded by Balch it was approved purchase a \$250,000 annuity thru Nationwide Insurance at a rate of 5.15% fixed for 5-year, all in favor. Linda will inquire with the Broker if the rate is any higher for a \$250k investment.
- On a **MOTION** by Balch and seconded by Peterson is was approved to move forward with the project with American Overhead Door for brush sealing the bay doors for \$5,559 and the universal receivers on the bay doors for W2 & W3 for \$667, all in favor. These items were carried in the 2022/2023 budget.
- Dana has been updating the exhaust systems in the bays for individual apparatus and would like to continue with the next scheduled apparatus. On a **MOTION** by Peterson and seconded by Balch it was approved to purchase the plymovent magnetic parts for W10 thru Air Cleaning Specialists of NE for \$3,450, all in favor. Dana will perform the installation.
- On a **MOTION** by Scarrozzo and seconded by Peterson it was approved to transfer \$750 from line item #8555 – Department Picnic in the 2021/2022 budget to the 2022/2023 fiscal year budget, all in favor.
- Linda informed the Board that funds are starting to be received for the limited access highway incident response claims for the calls to I-91. To date 36 claims (July-Oct) have been filed. The revenue from these responses will be applied to other income and the Board will review at a later date the use of these funds.

-The current launch scan tool for the smaller apparatus is outdated, it is no longer holding a battery charge and cannot accept updates. On a **MOTION** by Balch and seconded by Turner the following was approved; 1) purchase a new diagnostic scan tool in the amount of \$4,500 plus shipping from Connected Automotive Systems; 2) transfer \$3,000 from line item #6630 – Vehicle/Equipment Repair in the 2021/2022 budget to #6626 – Maintenance Tools & Equipment in the 2022/2023 budget, all in favor.

**Old Business** – None

**New Business** – None

**MOTION** to go into Executive Session by Comm. Scarrozzo seconded by Comm. Peterson at 7:13 pm, all in favor for discussions regarding: 2023 Chief & Training Officer Appointments, Legal consult opinion; 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, Peterson, White, Bysiewicz, Scarrozzo, Plummer, Turner, Balch and FDA Linda DeManche.

**MOTION** to come out of Executive Session by Comm. Amy seconded by Comm. Peterson @ 7:44 pm, all in favor.

A **MOTION** was made by Amy to change our per diem pay system to go to half day increments in the form of a stipend where each half day increments up to six-hours will be \$105, if anything above the six hours it will be full day stipend of \$210, seconded by Balch, all in favor.

-Letters of interest for 2023 Chief Appointments were received from the following members: Darrell Ponzio for Fire Chief; Jason Lube for Deputy Chief or Chief; Phillip Coco for Assistant Chief; Michael Mosebach for Assistant Chief and Paul Heck for Assistant Chief.

A **MOTION** was made by Balch to appoint Darrell Ponzio to Chief; Jason Lube to Deputy Chief; Phillip Coco to First Assistant Chief; the position of Second Assistant Chief will remain empty at this time, seconded by Peterson, all in favor.

-Letters of interest for 2023 Training Officers were received from the following members: Benjamin Velardi for Training Officer and Jason Powers for Assistant Training Officer.

On a **MOTION** by Amy and seconded by Balch to appoint Jason Powers to assistant training officer for calendar year 2023, the position of Training Officer will remain open at this time, all in favor.

**MOTION** to adjourn @ 7:47 pm by Comm. Balch and seconded by Plummer. Unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda DeManche  
Fire District Administrator  
as Recording Secretary