



COMMISSION MEETING

October 10, 2023

The Westfield Fire Commission met at the East Street Firehouse, Middletown, CT on October 10, 2023. Chairman Amy opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m. with the following Commissioners present – Peterson, Bysiewicz, Alderman, T. Bysiewicz. Commissioner Turner joined the meeting remotely via Zoom. Commissioner Balch joined the meeting @ 7:09 pm Commissioners Scarrozzo and Plummer were absent.

Others present were: Chief Ponzio, Deputy Chief (DC) Jason Lubee, AC Coco and FDA Linda DeManche.

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. Peterson seconded by Comm. Alderman it was approved to accept the agenda as amended, all in favor.

-On a **MOTION** by Comm. Peterson seconded by Comm. Alderman it was approved to waive the reading of the September 12, 2023 regular meeting minutes an accept as written; all in favor.

The bills for September 2023, including the detailed Liberty and Lowes statement were reviewed; after all questions were answered, the bills were approved on a **MOTION** by Comm. Peterson and seconded by Comm. T. Bysiewicz, all in favor.

Tax Collector's Report

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

-On a **MOTION** by Alderman 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 \$1,073.42, all in favor.

-It was reported the tax office received a certificate of change as a result of stipulation of judgement. MK Roscommon Group appealed their real estate assessment for the 2022 GL and was awarded judgement. A refund of \$658.94 will be issued.

Fire Marshal's Report

-The Fire Marshal's (FM) monthly report for September was distributed and accepted on a **MOTION** by Peterson and seconded by T. Bysiewicz, all-in favor.

Chief's Report

-The Chief stated the family picnic that had been re-scheduled for Saturday, October 14th due to weather will be cancelled again due to a pending storm.

-The new 2023 tanker will go into service this week and members will drill on it this evening. The old 1999 tanker will be delivered to Rockwood, Maine this weekend. Members Andrew, Coco & Heck will be making this trip. The Board would like Rockwood Fire & Rescue to be made aware of the expectation of reimbursing the District for any travel expenses related to this delivery.

Commission Amy called for a brief recess of the monthly meeting to join the department members in a short gathering. On a **MOTION** by Amy and seconded by Peterson the monthly meeting was recessed @ 6:39, all in favor.

On a **MOTION** by Amy and seconded by Peterson the Board reconvened @ 7:08 pm, all in favor.

Chief's Report - continued

- The Department by-laws have been posted for members review. The Chief expects it to be voted on in the department's November meeting. The anticipation would be to move incorporation status forward.
- The State of CT has come out with a "Clean Cab" policy. What is now being recognized in the industry is that harmful chemicals can be inadvertently transported from the fire scene to the fire station via contaminated PPE and tools used on the fire ground. This leads to cross-contamination and exposes fire fighters to secondary exposures. The department plans to adopt a version of the State's recommended guidelines for Westfield.
- The Chief stated the annual department physicals will begin in December or January. He feels it is necessary to include a cancer baseline assessment in order to adhere to the newly passed CT legislation on an act providing workers' compensation benefits for certain cancers in firefighters. The department regular medical providers will be contacted to see if they provide these types of services.
- The Chief reported the personal CO meters carried by the Officers are nearing end of life as the sensors eventually wear out. He will get a quote for replacement and present for approval in the near future.
- The Chief would like to purchase addt'l cones for highway safety. He is exploring the replacement of the smaller cones with 28" cones with double stripping. He will report back on the costs.
- The Chief would like to see a door security system installed with a key pad/key fob entry system on the north door. He is suggesting assignment of key codes for entry and not the fobs at this point. On a **MOTION** by Alderman and seconded by Peterson it was approved to; 1) purchase the system thru Associated Security Corp in the amount of \$3,100; 2) annual cloud based recurring fee is \$240; 3) this expense will come out the CNR – Security Surveillance project, all in favor.
- On a **MOTION** by Balch and seconded by Peterson it was approved to purchase (5) Elkhart replacement nozzles on W2 from MES, Inc, in the amount of \$4,500.75, this will come out of the Chief's budget, all in favor.
- Department hose testing is scheduled for November 7th thru IIAI Fire Dept. Testing.
- Comm. Balch stated he is waiting to see if the State DMV will allow Westfield to make use of the commuter parking lot for CDL/Q testing.
- The Chief has had discussions with the mechanic regarding Car 5. It is Dana's recommendation that due to the age and mileage of the 2015 Tahoe the Board might consider putting this on their radar for the next fiscal year budget.
- AC Coco joined the meeting to give the Board a brief overview of the Pride & Ownership class instructed by Chief Lasky that the department would like to host for its members in March 2024. On a **MOTION** by Bysiewicz and seconded by Peterson it was approved to host the class for a cost not to exceed \$5,000, all in favor. The cost includes the instructor fee and travel expenses, etc. and will come out of the Chief's training budget. AC Coco will reach out to surrounding departments to see if there is any interest in co-hosting this training event and share the cost.
- The Chief has not completed the analysis of the weekend staffing program that would offer some insight to the cost if the daytime staff were to be included in this program. He will work on this and have available for a subsequent meeting. Linda shared that FF Passamano submitted in writing a complaint regarding the weekend staffing program. Passamano stated "District employees are not eligible to participate in the weekend staffing incentive program" yet Assistant Chief/Deputy Fire Marshal Coco took one shift last weekend. He feels that even though Coco is part-time he is an employee of the District. Comm. Amy wanted to bring up two points; 1) currently District employees are not eligible, District employees who are not members of the department will not be eligible; 2) Deputy Fire Marshal Coco is a per diem/part-time DFM therefore he participates in this weekend program as a volunteer FF/EMT/Driver of the department; his participation is not relevant to the complaint. To further clarify the weekend staffing guidelines, the Board would like it to reflect "full-time" District employees are not eligible.

-The status of training classes for members was reported as follows: FFI-Initial – member Sorenson is enrolled (Aug-January); FFII-Initial – member Connole is enrolled (Sept-November); Certified Pump Ops – FF Ahern has completed the course and needs to test for the written; Q Endorsement – (4) members have passed and now have the Q endorsement; EMT-Initial – (5) members are enrolled (Sept-Dec).

-AC Coco and LT Phenicie participated in a Leadership class hosted by South Fire Department (SFD) today. DC Lube stated the training drill that was to take place with WFD daytime staff and SFD had to be re-scheduled. He is waiting for alternate dates.

-The department intends to continue with the annual fund drive starting in October.

-A **MOTION** was made by Amy and seconded by Balch to amend the agenda to place the Executive Session before the Commissioner agenda, all in favor.

MOTION to go into Executive Session by Comm. Amy seconded by Comm. Alderman at 7:53 pm, all in favor for discussions regarding: Personnel – new hire, salaries 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, Bysiewicz, Alderman, Turner, Balch, T. Bysiewicz, FDA Linda DeManche and Chief Ponzio.

MOTION to come out of Executive Session by Comm. Amy seconded by Comm. Peterson @ 8:35 pm, all in favor.

On a **MOTION** by Bysiewicz and seconded by Balch it was approved to offer the position of District 5 to J. DiCostanzo at a rate of \$32.00 per hour retroactive to October 1st, all in favor. The only further discussion would be the clarification of the job description; Comm. Amy stated that will be clarified prior to speaking with DiCostanzo.

-Comm Alderman left the meeting @ 8:36 pm.

Commissioner(s) Report

-A.R. Mazzotta has been given the job posting information relative to the vacancy in the tax office. The Board would like the opportunity to review resumes and meet potential candidates prior to making the decision whether to direct hire or contract to hire the applicant.

-Linda reported that FF Ahern is currently on workers compensation leave and will be re-evaluated at the end of October regarding his return-to-work status.

-A proposal was obtained from Wespro, LTD for sidewalk repair and concrete step restoration to the existing sidewalks/steps by the Fire Marshal' office. On a **MOTION** by Peterson and seconded by Balch it was approved to; 1) issue a PO to Wespro, LTD for these repairs costing \$3,200; 2) the Board was made aware if the stucco finish is not uniform the entire area will need to be coated with a concrete solid color stain adding an addtl \$400 to the project; 3) the cost will come out of CNR – Physical Plant/Parking Lot-Sidewalk Improvements, all in favor.

-The paving contractor had a pre-construction walk-thru with the Dana last week and is anticipating a start date for the week of October 16th. He will let us know if that schedule changes. Quotes will be obtained from contractors for backing-up the curbs once in place.

-A memo will be posted accepting letters of interest for the following 2024 Chief appointments (Fire Chief, Deputy Chief, First Assistant Chief & Second Assistant Chief); they are due by 11/9/2023 for scheduled appointments on November 12th.

-A memo will be posted accepting letter for interest for 2024 Westfield Training Officer and Westfield Assistant Training Officer; they are due by 11/9/2023 for anticipated appointment on November 12th.

-Linda stated she anticipates a conflict with her attendance at the March 2024 Commission meeting. The Board approved the March meeting to be delayed one week if necessary. The 2024 meeting dates will be posted accordingly on the website and at the Town Clerks office at the appropriate time. She appreciates their cooperation.

-The District received a health insurance premium rebate for 2022 from Anthem in the amount of \$3,052.64 and will be applied to the District's November premium.

-The Board will start to explore options for a Fire Marshal Office on-call rotation schedule to implement in the near future. The Chief wished to share with the Board that FM Kotowski is has been doing a great job, has been available when needed and very professional. Comm. Amy would like to start exploring options to share the weekend coverage duties.

Old Business

-Comm. Amy was informed by Atty Giran of Shipman & Goodwin that a notice of order was received on October 6th relative to the FOI complaint that was filed with regards to the December 13, 2022 regular meeting. The notice states Greg Amy will need to file an affidavit attesting to the points outlined in the order and hand-deliver to the FOIC on or before October 27, 2023. Comm. Amy stated this will be taken care of and he will personally deliver the requested documents.

-A quote for the replacement of office chairs in Commission office was not available. This was tabled until the November agenda.

New Business – None

MOTION to adjourn @ 9:00 pm by Comm. Balch and seconded by Peterson. Unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda DeManche
Fire District Administrator
as Recording Secretary