



COMMISSION MEETING

February 6, 2024

The Westfield Fire Commission met at the East Street Firehouse, Middletown, CT on February 6, 2024. Chairman Amy opened the meeting at 6:33 p.m. with the following Commissioners present – Peterson, Scarrozzo, Turner, T. Bysiewicz; Commissioners Alderman & Bysiewicz joined the meeting remotely via Zoom. Commissioner Plummer joined the meeting @ 6:41 and Commissioner Balch joined the meeting @ 7:12 pm.

Others present were: Chief Ponzio, (DC) Lube, 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. Peterson seconded by Comm. Turner it was approved to accept the agenda as amended, all in favor.

-On a **MOTION** by Comm. Scarrozzo seconded by Comm. Peterson it was approved to waive the reading of the January 9, 2024 regular meeting minutes and accept as written; all in favor.

The bills for January 2024, including the detailed Liberty and Lowes statements were reviewed; after all questions were answered, the bills were approved on a **MOTION** by Comm. Peterson and seconded by Comm. Turner, all in favor.

Tax Collector's Report

-On a **MOTION** by Peterson and seconded by Turner the January Tax Collector report submitted by Tax Collector Leanna Harris was reviewed and approved, all in favor.

-On a **MOTION** by Peterson and seconded by Turner it was approved to issue tax refunds to the various taxpayers on the list provided by the Tax Collector in the amount of \$ 208.76, all in favor.

Fire Marshal's Report

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

-The 2023 Annual Fire Marshal's report was available for review.

Chief's Report

-The 2023 Assistance to Firefighter Grant (AFG) opened on January 29th and will close on March 8th. The Chief stated the application will apply for PPE (turn-out gear) with an estimated grant request of approx. \$100k. The District's cost share is 10% of the application amount.

-The Chief stated the CT Realtors Assoc. will make use of the upstairs meeting room on February 26th for a community CPR class.

-The Chief shared that the Westfield Vol Fire Department is now incorporated with the St of CT. They are waiting for 501(c)4 documentation and a TIN number from the IRS.

-On a **MOTION** by Scarrozzo and seconded by Peterson it was approved to purchase five single gas CO meters for several of the officers with an estimated cost of \$1,500, this would come out of the Chief's budget, all in favor.

- The Chief is actively working on specifications and pricing for the replacement of the Chief's vehicle (car 5) and the Fire Marshal's vehicle. He will have numbers to present for consideration in the 2024/25' budget process.
- The issues with the water leak on Westfield 4 have been addressed thru Custom Fire. This was taken care of as a warranty item.
- The Chief will attend the February CT Fire Chiefs Assoc dinner at cost of \$40. The education portion will be a representative from ISO giving a presentation summary of the ISO process.
- The department banquet is scheduled for Saturday, March 16th at Falcon's Pavilion.
- The status of training classes for members were reported as follows: FFI-Initial – member Sorenson needs to re-take just the haz-mat written portion; (8) members started the course which runs January-June; EMT-Initial – member Robinson has passed and is EMT certified, (3) members need to re-take the written exam.
- The Chief shared that MFD is hosting the State Police Fire & Explosion Investigation Unit for 4 dates in February to deliver their evidence collection & preservation lessons. Mutual aid depts have been invited to attend. Westfield hopes to have some of its members participate.
- On a **MOTION** by Scarozzo and seconded by Turner it was approved to fund a 3-day rope rescue class being offered by the Middlesex County Fire School in April for cost of \$1,800, all in favor. The cost will come out of the Chiefs budget.

Commissioner(s) Report

- On a **MOTION** by Peterson and seconded by Scarozzo it was approved for FF Ahern to attend a CFA aerial operator class in June for \$450, all in favor.
- Linda stated that the six-month evaluation was successfully completed on FF Lemay. The Chief & Comm. Peterson participated. Lemay continues his probation but certain PTO benefits will now be in effect. The next evaluation will be scheduled in June at the one-year mark.
- On a **MOTION** by Peterson and seconded by Turner it was approved to purchase the Tech600 Pro Tool kit used for tire pressure management in the amount of \$1,690 from CAS, all in favor. This will come out of the mechanics budget for maintenance tools & equipment.
- On a **MOTION** by Plummer and seconded by Peterson it was approved to purchase the six tires for the ladder truck (W6) budgeted for replacement in this year's budget, the cost is \$4,014 from Barnwell Tires, all in favor.
- Linda reported that AR Mazzotta appears to have someone interested that would meet the District's needs but the candidate has asked if there is an opportunity for more hours for the part-time position. The Board is comfortable offering 20 hours with a four-day work week. This will be passed on to AR Mazzotta to see if the candidate is still interested.
- A reschedule date needs to be set for the portfolio review with Hometown Benefits, the firms that assists with the management of the LOSAP benefits. Linda will see what the schedule looks like in March.
- The City's 2023 Grand List (G/L) was released from the Tax Assessor's office. Westfield had an increase of 9.12% over last year's 2022 G/L. A large part of the increase is due to the 5-year abatement for FedEx which has ended, effectively increasing the grand list.

Old Business – None

New Business – The Chairman had done research regarding the election process for Commissioners. Even though the number of candidates submitting their intent to place in nomination equals the total number of Commissioners to be elected he felt the by-laws indicate that an election was still needed. He asked the Board if there was interest in seeking a legal opinion on whether an election is necessary in this situation or can one ballot be cast. This will be revisited next month.

MOTION to go into Executive Session by Comm. Peterson seconded by Comm. Balch at 7:14 pm, all in favor for discussions regarding: Personnel; new hires 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, Plummer, Bysiewicz, Alderman, Scarrozzo, Turner, T. Bysiewicz, Balch, Chief Ponzio, DC Lube, AC Coco and FDA Linda DeManche.

On a **MOTION** by Amy and seconded by Peterson the monthly meeting was recessed @ 7:50 pm to attend the Annual Meeting scheduled for 8:00 pm, all in favor.

On a **MOTION** by Amy and seconded by Peterson the Board reconvened @ 8:15 pm after the conclusion of the Annual Meeting, all in favor. The Board remained in executive session. Chief Ponzio and DC Lube did not re-join the meeting.

MOTION to come out of Executive Session by Comm. Amy seconded by Comm. Peterson @ 8:33 pm, all in favor.

On **MOTION** by Balch and seconded by Peterson it was approved to send FM Kotowski, DFM Coco & Higgins to the 2-day CFMA conference in April, all in favor. The total cost is \$900 and will come out of the Fire Marshals training budget.

Comm. Balch made a **MOTION** seconded by Scarrozzo for the following; 1) make an offer of employment for FF/EMT to candidates McGuire and Silverman; 2) make a conditional offer of employment to Matthew King, this offer is contingent upon successful completion of his EMT certification within the next 30 days; 3) the starting rate is \$21.85 per hour applicable for all three candidates, all in favor.

The Chairman stated the results of the Commissioner election were as follows: David J. Peterson 13 votes; Christian Plummer 12 votes; E. Gregory Amy 10 votes therefore for the next three (3) years the following Commissioners will be seated; Amy, Peterson and Plummer.

Comm. Scarrozzo made a **MOTION** seconded by Balch for the slate of Commissioner Officers to remain the same; therefore E. Gregory Amy/Chairman; Comm. Peterson/Vice Chairman and Comm. Plummer/Secretary, all in favor.

MOTION to adjourn @ 8:36 pm by Comm. Balch and seconded by Plummer. Unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda DeManche
Fire District Administrator
as Recording Secretary