

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSION
Regular Meeting
November 13, 2017
“MINUTES”

Present: Brett Salafia, Eric Germain, Phil Visintainer, Darin Hurne, and Charles Gotta

Others Present: Fire Chief Greg Voelker, Assistant Fire Chief Martin Swan, Fire Marshal Rich Klotzbier, Fire Fighters Charles Spakowski, and Hunt Voelker

Chairman Salafia called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. at Company #1 on Barton Hill Road.

Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of Minutes: *A motion to approve the minutes of the October 16, 2017 regular meeting was made by Mr. Hurne and seconded by Mr. Gotta. Voted 4-0-1 with Mr. Germain abstaining.*

Public Remarks:

Hunt Voelker, Chestnut Hill Road, Trustee of the Awards Program stated that Matthew Walton was looking for tax information from his distribution of 2013. Chairman Salafia will look into this.

Approval of Bills/Budget Report:

A) **The Screening Source:** Bill is for background checks for two possible new members.

Mr. Germain moved and Mr. Visintainer seconded to approve the expenditure of \$181.00 for The Screening Source. Voted 4-0-1 with Mr. Hurne abstaining.

Fire Marshal Report: Fire Marshal Klotzbier's report is attached to these minutes.

Fire Chief's Report: Fire Chief Voelker's report is attached to these minutes.

Communications: Chief Voelker's secretary attended a grant writing class geared toward first responders.

Unfinished Business:

A) **Fence for Co#3:** Money had been previously encumbered for this. Chief Voelker will remind Public Works Director Michelson that there are funds to fix the fence as this issue is now in his hands.

B) **Dry Hydrants:** Assistant Chief Swan distributed a list of all dry hydrants with testing results. He thanked the members who helped accomplish creating the list, including all the Junior members.

There are currently 9 out of service for various reasons, and there are no functioning hydrants in Cobalt. The two most important priorities were identified as the hydrant on 151 across from Cobalt Lodge, which is on private property, and the hydrant on Old Middletown/Chestnut Hill Roads, which is missing the pipe. Public Works Director Michelson will be asked about helping with these two. The hydrant by Royal Oaks needs an adapter, which the Dept. can fix.

Continued maintenance will need to be done on the hydrants as they get clogged with leaves and silt. There was discussion on the continued question of who is responsible for the maintenance: the Town or the Volunteers. There was money in Capital for dry

hydrants, but that line item has disappeared. The Commissioners will look into this with the Town's Finance Dept. Assistant Chief Swan will speak with the DEP to see if there is still money available for hydrant assistance.

- C) **Follow Up on Dispatch Concerns:** Chairman Salafia attended a meeting with the Town Manager, Police Chief Cox and the Ambulance Director. At this meeting Chief Cox stated that he spent a lot of time chasing down "dead-end" complaints about the dispatch system, which is in conflict with what Chief Voelker has stated and documented and the calls that Chairman Salafia has heard. The Chiefs will be sitting together to talk about this issue further tomorrow evening. Chief Voelker reiterated that his complaints are documented, true, and reported to the BOFC. If Chief Cox is chasing complaints from other members of the FD, Chief Voelker needs to know as this has violated the chain of command.

New Business:

- A) **Vote on 2018 Meeting Dates:** *A motion was made by Mr. Hurne and seconded by Mr. Visintainer to approve the 2018 meeting dates. Voted 5-0 in favor.*
- B) **Background Screening Service Agreement:** *Mr. Visintainer moved and Mr. Germain seconded to have the Commission sign off on the new service agreement with The Screening Source. Voted 4-0-1 with Mr. Hurne abstaining.*
- C) **Radio System Infrastructure:** When KX dissolved, the communications structures was left and purchased by QV. These are not currently FCC compliant. The Town Manager and Police Chief Cox have come up with a three-phase plan for shoring up the infrastructure and making a new one with a town-wide frequency. This will be an 800 MHz system. This seems to be already in the works, with no input from the Fire Department.

This is a problem for the FD because our mutual aid towns are on a low band frequency and it is essential that we be able to communicate with them. Also, the FD would need to purchase about a million dollars worth of new radios, pagers, portables, etc. to accommodate the change. Additionally, the old equipment would still need to be maintained so that communication with MA partners can be continued. This is a large expense for the department, and there would need to be 4 – 5 radios in an apparatus.

Chief Voelker outlined what would need to be done, according to Paul Zito the communications consultant, to get the towers and physical structures shored up for the FD. This would involve a \$750 fix. Chief Voelker would like to know what exactly was expended on hardware and infrastructure when the changeover to Glastonbury dispatch occurred. He has gotten no answer thus far. He would also like to know how much of the \$18,000,000 put aside for the new municipal campus is for the radio tower and infrastructure.

Chief Voelker has documented what was discussed at his meeting with Mr. Zito. There was no mention of changing frequencies or the 800MHz system at his meeting. There was discussion on replacing the QV owned tower in Cobalt for a cost of \$750. That would also require AC in the summer because of weather fluctuations. The town also lacks some licensing that is believed to be something Mr. Zito can help us obtain. Real costs to get the current system functioning will be outlined as well as what it would cost to replace the aforementioned equipment if the FD has to migrate to the 800 MHz system.

It was discussed to invite Mr. Zito to the December BOFC meeting to discuss further.

Adjournment: *Mr. Hurne moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:57 P.M.. Mr. Gotta seconded. Voted 5-0.*

Respectfully submitted,

Eliza LoPresti
Recording Secretary