

**TOWN OF WOODBRIDGE**  
**Board of Fire Commissioners**  
Minutes of Regular Meeting  
Monday, March 20, 2017 – 6:00 pm  
Woodbridge Fire Department

Present: *Chairman Elia Alexiades, Vice Chairman Michael Horton, Secretary Mike Soufrine, Commissioner Bruce Mandell, Commissioner Mica Cardozo, Chief Sean Rowland, Assistant Chief Ted Pocwierz, Paul Kuriakose (BOF Liaison), Nate Case (Executive Board Liaison), and Deputy First Selectwoman Beth Heller (BOS Liaison)*

Absent: *Fire Marshal Joe Cappucci*

**Call to Order**

Chairman Alexiades convened the meeting at 6:10 pm.

**Public Comments**

Members of the Boy Scouts attended as part of achieving their citizenship badge.

**Liaison Comments:**

Deputy First Selectwoman Heller, introduced herself and explained her function as liaison to the BOS. She congratulated and thanked the WVFA on the wonderful attendance at their Snowflake Dance. On a personal note Deputy First Selectwoman Heller thanked the WVFA for purchasing the ladder truck – as reported at the BOS meeting. Deputy First Selectwoman Heller also thanked the volunteers for their efforts during last storm; Woodbridge was well prepared and it was impressive.

Mr. Kuriakose, echoed Deputy First Selectwoman Heller's comments regarding the preparedness of the volunteer firefighters and the Town's first responders in general during emergencies; he relayed a story of his personal experience during a hurricane. Mr. Kuriakose thanked the Chief for the FD being one of first departments to respond when cuts were requested. Chairman Alexiades asked about the budget process; Mr. Kuriakose reported a \$575,000 cut is being requested across all departments. The BOF will meet again Monday.

Mr. Case, introduced himself and explained WVFA's function.

**Review Current Financial Statements**

Year-to-Date FC Operating Budget and Capital Budget

Chief Rowland distributed and reviewed the budget noting lines that will be tight or will go over including medical, repair maintenance machinery, data processing, cellular, technical, and tires. Discussion took place on older equipment requiring more repairs, DOT tire requirements, the influx of new members (requiring physicals), cuts the BOF had made to these lines, and adjustments in next year's budget. \$4,200 was transferred from repair maintenance machinery to tires to replace the tires on Tanker 5 and two front tires on Engine 9 (old tires will go to Public Works).

Chief Rowland explained issues with hydrants including flow concerns and a damaged hydrant needing repair. Discussion took place on the Regional Water Authority's annual hydrant charges and what is the responsibility of the town. The department has ordered equipment to test hydrants.

Regarding capital non-recurring the department received air paks and put them in service. The thermal imaging camera arrived. Discussion took place on the funds remaining in capital and keeping a reserve to cover replacement hose and radios as needed.

### **Fire Chief's Report – Fire Chief Rowland**

#### **Budgets for FY2018**

Chief Rowland explained the Commission approved the budgets and we submitted them. We volunteered cuts and then the BOF asked for more cuts. Capital was high (a 10% increase) due to the Tower, the second payment on Engine 7, the air paks, Engine 3 (didn't fund), the main radio system (100,000), and Technology (BOS funded 15,000). The BOS added a \$385,000 truck reserve beginning in FY18. Chief explained the need to order two engines (E3 and E9) and how a truck ordered July 2017 yields a first payment in FY 2020. Discussion took place on whether there needs to be money in the line before the department can move forward on ordering a truck. Discussion continued regarding the procedure. The liaisons will work with their respective boards to get clarity.

Chief reviewed the rest of the FY2018 request noting \$35,000 of cuts were made at the beginning of the process, the BOF made a \$10,000 cut and directed the department to cut another \$10,000. Discussion took place. Mr. Kuriakose stated the BOF is looking for \$575,000 across the board and he isn't sure how the \$20,000 figure came to be. After discussion, **MOTION** (ALEXIADES/MANDELL) made to authorize the Chief to report back to the BOF with regard to additional cuts in accordance with our discussions (\$5,000 natural gas, \$2,000 electricity, \$2,000 from pagers, \$11,000 repair maintenance); **MOTION** passed unanimously (ALEXIADES/ HORTON/ SOUFRINE/MANDELL/CARDOZO).

The light tower on Rescue 1 was used at a recent chimney fire and couldn't be lowered. It needs to be repaired. We had a new light tower in the FY18 budget, but it was cut. We need to request funds from contingency for \$13,000 to fix the tower and change it over to LED. The new suburban is getting new lights put on and will be back in few weeks.

In addition to regular calls for service, on 2/13/17 the fire department responded to 34 incidents. On March 2 there were 11 calls between 4am and 4pm. In addition, on 3/14, 23 volunteer firefighters stood by from 7 am to 7 pm for the blizzard (a total of 276 hours).

Chief reported there are two additional firefighters attending the next FFI class (5 in class currently). There were 4 new applicants last week as well.

Water damage occurred in the day room when a Crystal Rock employee installed a coffee pot incorrectly. The cost to repair the damage will be covered by Crystal Rock's insurance.

Chief drew attention to an ambulance bill submitted to workers' compensation that hasn't been paid yet. The firefighter is being sent to collections; this indicates there are still issues with workers' compensation.

Five firefighters will attend FDIC April 26-29. They will bring back good information and see demo apparatus.

The Radio Committee met two weeks ago. Things are moving forward. The tower at the Police Department went to 824 review with the BOS and is going to Planning and Zoning next. Paul Zito should have an actual cost in the next week or so.

The radio system is failing; both the Police Department and Fire Department have had radio issues. The UPS at Oak Lane CC failed during the wind storm. A small UPS was put there for the meantime and funds need to be requested from contingency to replace the UPS. Discussion followed.

Chief explained issues with hydrant flow; detailing the problem and a solution. These issues led to the purchase of the ladder truck by the WVFA to help at the assisted living facilities, nursing homes, and elsewhere. This 1992 tower provides a “Band-Aid” fix until the town can fund a new ladder truck in the next 4 years. Discussion followed. Mr. Case stated the safety of volunteer firefighters and townspeople made the investment in the ladder truck worth it. The new tower needs tires. Chief was directed he had to wait a month until another BOS and BOF meetings take place to ask for those funds from contingency. The WVFA owns the truck; it is insured by the town. (5- Minute break)

Hydrant painting was discussed. Chief estimates \$8,000 is needed to complete the project.

**MOTION** (CARDOZO/HORTON) to approve the purchase of new tires for the tower truck at the cost of \$7,000 and seek approval from the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance to spend it from contingency; **MOTION** passed unanimously (ALEXIADES/HORTON/SOUFRINE/MANDELL/CARDOZO).

**MOTION** (CARDOZO/MANDELL) to approve repairing the light tower on Rescue 1 at the cost of \$13,000 and seek approval from the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance to spend it from contingency; **MOTION** passed unanimously (ALEXIADES/HORTON/ SOUFRINE/MANDELL/CARDOZO).

The department received a letter from CT OSHA regarding violations in connection with the JCC fire. Chief reviewed the violations. Regarding FIT testing and annual firefighter physicals the department is now compliant. Regarding a firefighter not wearing his protective face piece, we are remedying that situation. An informal hearing with OSHA is scheduled for the end of next week. Chief will attend with Dave Ryan and Tony Geonovese. Due to our compliance, it is expected our fines will be reduced. We were cited on these three things and will remain on OSHA’s list for 5 years. If during that time we are cited again for those violations, the fine starts at \$10,000 and goes up – so we have to be vigilant.

#### **WFD Activity Report – Assistant Fire Chief Pocwierz**

Assistant Chief Pocwierz distributed and reviewed his report on noting calls of interest.

#### **Fire Marshal’s Report - (See attached report)**

Fire Marshal Cappucci’s report was distributed.

#### **Chairman’s Report**

None

**Executive Session**

**MOTION** (ALEXIADES/CARDOZO) to move into Executive Session with Commissioners, Chief, and the BOF and BOS liaisons to discuss pending claims including strategy regarding appeal, settlement, and personnel.

**MOTION** approved unanimously (ALEXIADES/HORTON/SOUFRINE/MANDELL/CARDOZO) and Executive Session began at 8:48 pm.

**Action on matters heard in Executive Session**

No action was taken in Executive Session; returned to regular session at 9:12 pm.

**Correspondence**

None

**Other Business that May be Voted to be Placed on the Agenda (if necessary)**

None

**Approval of Minutes (deferred from earlier in meeting)**

Minutes were tabled.

**Next Meeting Date:**

The next Regular Meeting will be April 17, 2017.

**Adjournment**

**MOTION** (SOUFRINE/CARDOZO) to adjourn. With unanimous approval, the meeting adjourned at 9:16 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Secretary Michael Soufrine  
Board of Fire Commissioners

Aimee Cotton Bogush, Clerk  
Board of Fire Commissioners