

TOWN OF WOODBRIDGE

Board of Fire Commissioners

Minutes of Meeting

August 21, 2023

Woodbridge Fire Department

<https://youtu.be/gMYM7KSOrLk>

Present: *Chair Karen Baldwin Kravetz, Secretary Stephanie Ciarleglio, Commissioner Pasquale Izzo, Commissioner Scott Hunter, Chief Sean Rowland, Assistant Chief Ted Pocwierz, Fire Marshal Joe Cappucci, Nate Case (Executive Board Liaison)*

Absent: *N/A*

Call to Order

With a quorum (4 Commissioners present) at roll call, Chair Karen Baldwin Kravetz convened the meeting at 6:08p.m.

Public Comment

None

Liaison Comment

None

Chairman's Report

Chair Karen Baldwin Kravetz commented at the last meeting Commissioner Scott Hunter inquired of the annual review of the Fire Marshal. This ordinance was last updated in 2013 and is no longer appropriate as it is not consistent with other town employees. Chair continued that she has asked the ordinance committee to put this on the agenda for the next meeting.

Review Current Financial Statements

Chief Rowland discussed the current financials. The packet was sent prior to the BOFC. Chief commented that we are in good shape as this is the start of the new fiscal year.

Fire Chief's Report – Fire Chief Rowland

Fire Chief Report: The storage/facility building is moving forward. The Town has applied for a STEAP grant and we hope to go to bid on the foundation shortly. Chair Karen Baldwin Kravetz inquired of the cost estimate. Chief commented that the figure is not yet finalized but the STEAP grant would cover \$500,000 and the WVFA is donating an additional \$100,000. Discussion followed. Chief continued that currently we have 7 FF's attending pump operator classes on Wednesday and Sunday nights. The new engine 9 ordered 2 years ago should arrive in January 2024. Chief inquired if the dispatch protocol which was approved last month was circulated. Chair Karen Baldwin Kravetz said she would check on that issue. Chief continued. Currently the tax abatement is set at \$750 and the current state mandate is set at \$2000. Copies of Article IX Tax Abatement for Fire Department personnel 382-21 and a research report done by the CT State Office of Legislative Research on Tax Benefits for Volunteer Firefighters and EMS personnel was distributed. The Volunteer Firefighters not only go to calls, but attend regular Tuesday night meetings, extensive training courses and a mandatory physical. It is a huge commitment for a firefighter when they sign up to volunteer. Commissioner Scott Hunter asked if we are below what the state allows, what is the cost to the Town. Chief continued that the firefighters must meet a host of eligibility requirements in order

to receive the abatement including attendance percentages, years of service. Nate Case commented that this increase will encourage younger people to participate and shows that the Town is interested and invested in the volunteers. Chair Karen Baldwin Kravetz, Secretary Stephanie Ciarleglio remarked if the Town had a paid Fire Department the cost would be much more. Chief continued that the Junior program is exploding right now and hopefully when they turn 18, with this added incentive they would continue to join the department and this investment would pay off. We would also like to change some language so that the abatement shall be applied against real property taxes or against motor vehicle taxes owing to the Town of Woodbridge at the choice of the firefighter. Commissioner Scott inquired of other incentives and whether the department was interlocal. Chief commented that we are not. Discussion followed and will be presented to the ordinance committee.

Motion for Commission to recommend that Woodbridge Town Ordinances 382-21 and 382-23 be amended as follows:

Ordinance 382-21:

- **For A to read: “For two or more years of service: at the state maximum per Connecticut General Statutes 12-81(w) as it may be amended from time to time.”;**
- **By removing Paragraphs B and C.**

Ordinance 382-23:

- **First Sentence to read: “The tax abatement under this article shall be applied either against any real property taxes owing to the Town of Woodbridge or against motor vehicle taxes owing to the Town of Woodridge at the sole discretion of the volunteer firefighter.”**

BALDWIN KRAVETZ requested a Motion for Commission to recommend that Woodbridge Town Ordinances 382-21 and 382-23 be amended as follows:

Ordinance 382-21:

- For A to read: “For two or more years of service: at the state maximum per Connecticut General Statutes 12-81(w) as it may be amended from time to time.”;
- By removing Paragraphs B and C.

Ordinance 382-23:

- First Sentence to read: “The tax abatement under this article shall be applied either against any real property taxes owing to the Town of Woodbridge or against motor vehicle taxes owing to the Town of Woodridge at the sole discretion of the volunteer firefighter.”

MOTION (CIARLEGIO) FOR COMMISSION TO RECOMMEND THAT WOODBRIDGE TOWN ORDINANCES 382-21 AND 382-23 BE AMENDED AS FOLLOWS:

ORDINANCE 382-21:

- FOR A TO READ: “FOR TWO OR MORE YEARS OF SERVICE: AT THE STATE MAXIMUM PER CONNECTICUT GENERAL STATUTES 12-81(W) AS IT MAY BE AMENDED FROM TIME TO TIME.”;
- BY REMOVING PARAGRAPHS B AND C.

ORDINANCE 382-23:

- FIRST SENTENCE TO READ: “THE TAX ABATEMENT UNDER THIS ARTICLE SHALL BE APPLIED EITHER AGAINST ANY REAL PROPERTY TAXES OWING TO THE TOWN OF WOODBRIDGE OR AGAINST MOTOR VEHICLE TAXES OWING TO THE TOWN OF WOODRIDGE AT THE SOLE DISCRETION OF THE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER.”

MOTION SECOND (IZZO)

With unanimous ROLL CALL APPROVAL, the BOFC MOTION FOR COMMISSION TO RECOMMEND THAT WOODBRIDGE TOWN ORDINANCES 382-21 AND 382-23 BE AMENDED AS FOLLOWS:

ORDINANCE 382-21:

- FOR A TO READ: “FOR TWO OR MORE YEARS OF SERVICE: AT THE STATE MAXIMUM PER CONNECTICUT GENERAL STATUTES 12-81(W) AS IT MAY BE AMENDED FROM TIME TO TIME.”;
- BY REMOVING PARAGRAPHS B AND C.
ORDINANCE 382-23:
- FIRST SENTENCE TO READ: “THE TAX ABATEMENT UNDER THIS ARTICLE SHALL BE APPLIED EITHER AGAINST ANY REAL PROPERTY TAXES OWING TO THE TOWN OF WOODBRIDGE OR AGAINST MOTOR VEHICLE TAXES OWING TO THE TOWN OF WOODRIDGE AT THE SOLE DISCRETION OF THE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER.”
MOTION CARRIES

WFD Activity report- Assistant Chief Pocwierz

The Assistant Chief discussed his report (previously sent to the BOFC) with the numbers and types of calls in July. Assistant Chief noted a particular MVA where the driver had to be extricated out of the vehicle via the windshield, as well as microgrid burst that caused a lot of trees/wires down in one section of town.

Fire Marshal’s Report – Fire Marshal Joseph Cappucci

FM Cappucci discussed his report of inspections since the last meeting: 13 inspections, 4 plan reviews, 7 consultations and 1 complaint.

Approval of July 24, 2023, special meeting minutes

BALDWIN KRAVETZ requested a motion to approve the special meeting minutes from July 24, 2023
MOTION (IZZO) TO APPROVE JULY 24, 2023, SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

MOTION SECOND (HUNTER)

With unanimous ROLL CALL APPROVAL, the BOFC APPROVED THE JULY 24, 2023, SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

MOTION CARRIES

Executive Session

N/A

Adjournment

MOTION (HUNTER) requested MOTION TO ADJOURN

MOTION SECOND (IZZO)

With unanimous ROLL CALL APPROVAL, the BOFC MEETING ADJOURNED at 6:57pm

Respectfully submitted,

Tina O’Connor Clerk
Board of Fire Commissioners

Stephanie Ciarleglio
Secretary