

Town of Suffield



Board of Fire Commissioners Minutes

Minutes of the Fire Commission Meeting – March 9, 2016
Amended Minutes April 12 ,2016 Meeting

Commission chair, Jeremiah Mahoney, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. at the main firehouse. Present: P. Christian, J. Mahoney, J Caron, R. Gemme, Chief Flynn, Fire Marshal M. Thibedeau, First Selectman Melissa Mack, and observers.

The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Secretary's Report

Christian moved, Gemme seconded to approve the minutes of the February 9, 2016 Commission meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Change to Agenda

The Chair stated that item IAFC Participation under the Chief's Report would be deferred until all Commissioners are present.

Financial Report

The Commission reviewed the current year to date financial information. Christian moved, Caron seconded to approve the financial report as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Correspondence

- The Chair stated that he had received correspondence regarding the start time of the Commission meetings. The meetings are posted to begin at 7 p.m. and must not begin before then even if all Commission members are in attendance before that time.
- Chief Flynn received a letter from Congressman Courtney's staff pledging support for our request for the FEMA AFG grant.
- A letter has been received from Avon Fire Department thanking Suffield for assistance at a fire in Avon on February 5.

Calls & Activities

- The Commission reviewed the report for February 2016.
- Chief Flynn reported on a house fire on Pleasantview Drive on March 2. This house was unoccupied and under renovation. The Chief stated that if the fire had been called in a few hours later, the single night duty firefighter would have arrived at the scene alone. A hole had been burned through the main level floor and serious injury could have occurred with no assistance until other volunteers arrived. The Fire Department

budget request for next year asked for an additional fire fighter to assist with the night shifts.

Public Comment

- Firefighter Al Golden stated that in accordance with the Commission's mission statement to assist the Fire Department in ensuring that the citizens have dependable and efficient fire protection, that the Commission utilize the group's years of service and knowledge to support the department. He encouraged fire department programs to enhance life in the community. He encouraged the Commission to take into consideration any input from members of the Fire Department.
- Jennifer Tilsch-Nardi, 165 Mountain Laurel Way, stated that the meeting was being recorded for documentation purposes.

Old Business

- The 2016/17 budget proposal has been submitted. Commission members were given the schedule for the budget process. The budget will be presented to the Board of Finance on March 28th. The First Selectman stated that the requested additional firefighter has been removed from the budget for next year.
- ACCE – Chief Flynn is waiting to hear from ACCE regarding the budget process.

New Business

- Chief Flynn has drafted a SAFER grant proposal. This grant would cover the cost of a firefighter for two years (salary and benefits, no overtime). The First Selectman recommended pursuing this grant as the requested additional firefighter was cut from the proposed 16/17 budget. Approval to submit this grant would be contingent upon agreement from the union that, should the town decide this position was not needed after the two years are completed, the position would not continue. Discussion followed about the need for an additional firefighter. Commissioner Caron reminded the group that the position had been agreed upon in the original budget vote. Chief Flynn reiterated the importance of having an additional firefighter on staff at night for safety reasons. This would fill in five of 10 currently uncovered shifts. The First Selectman asked if it was possible to ask for volunteers to fill in the remainder of the uncovered shifts – perhaps one per month. Discussion followed.

Caron moved, Gemme seconded **to approve the SAFER Grant application pending approval of the union to not require retention of the firefighter provided by this grant once the grant period ended.** The motion was defeated by a vote of 2:2 (Caron and Gemme voting for, Christian and Mahoney voting against).

- Due to the number of observers at Fire Commission meetings, Chief Flynn will be looking into another location to hold the monthly meetings. He will investigate the Town Hall Conference Room and the community room at the Police Department.
- "Learn About Your Local Fire Department" was an event held March 1 inviting the community to Station 2 to learn how the department operates on a day to day basis. This effort was put together by Firefighter Colby Tyler. It is hoped that more of these events will be held in the future.

Chief's Report

- Small pickups will now need annual inspections

- Governor Malloy is recommending that the cost of firefighter training become the responsibility of each town. Training funding will be cut from the state budget. The anticipated cost is \$1000 per class.
- Station 3 repair is not complete. Waiting for delivery of materials.
- Working on recruitment and retention with other area towns.

Chairs Report

- The Chair asked about what safeguards were in place for the protection of a duty crew of one. The Chief stated that there were no alarms or sprinklers in Station 1 where the overnight duty crew sleeps. The Chief explained that consideration had been given to having dispatch, police or other EMS check in periodically when staffed with a duty crew of one, but that measure was not adopted because it would disrupt the sleep of the firefighter on duty. Commissioner Gemme inquired about the use of a transmitter for the firefighter on duty and the Chief explained that would not assist a suddenly and immediately incapacitated firefighter.
- There was discussion on the process of dispatch – time lapse from call to response. Can this be streamlined? Chief Flynn stated that dispatchers are all receiving updated training to better dispatch fire, police and ambulance personnel.

Fire Marshal's Report

None

Adjournment

Gemme moved, Christian seconded to adjourn the meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Christian
Secretary