

Special Meeting of the
Board of TFD Fire Commissioners
DRAFT -- Meeting Minutes – May 22, 2019
Thompsonville Fire Station, 35 N. Main Street, Enfield, CT

1. Call to Order: by Comm. DuFour at 6:00 pm.

2. Roll Call: present were Comm. Perry, Comm. DuFour, Comm. Pliszka, and Comm. Dodd. Absent was Comm. Reidy. Also present were Jeff Bradanini and Jean-Oliver Beirne from Beirne Wealth Consulting Services and Chief Deskis.

MOTION to move item 7 a) before item 3 made by Comm. DuFour, seconded by Comm. Dodd. Discussion: none. Roll Call- Motion passed 4-0.

7. Old Business: a) Pension:

Mr. Bradanini said Beirne Wealth received the wire transfer of \$325,000 on April 29th. The rest of the assets were transferred over on May 13th. The \$325,000 was invested in equity allocation. Another \$1 million was invested on May 22nd: \$700,000 was invested in equity market and \$300,000 was invested in fixed income.

Mr. Beirne said their company is going to be strategic about where the assets are invested in. The market has been volatile. Only 15% of the portfolio has been invested so far. The market will be reviewed week to week and slowly invest money in stocks or bonds. Most of the money is in broad index funds diversified between US and international. Right now, the US is a better place to be. In the future it will be more balanced between the two.

Comm. Dodd asked how frequently Beirne Wealth is going to look at the market and invest. Mr. Beirne said a team meets every Friday.

Comm. Dodd asked what the long-term projection is for when all of the money will be invested. Mr. Beirne said 100% will definitely be invested by the end of the year. But it could happen by the end of summer. We are waiting to see how things play out with the trade talks with China and what's going on politically.

Mr. Beirne said he put together a couple of different reports. He compiled the three biggest asset managers: JP Morgan, BlackRock, and Vanguard. He doesn't always agree with what they are saying but it is important to listen to what these companies are

saying because they are saying similar things. Mr. Beirne explained different pages of the reports.

Comm. Pliszka asked what the percentage was on the funds in fixed rate account. Mr. Beirne said right now it is less than 2 percent. I don't expect it to sit there. I don't want to put it in fixed income because it would be subject to interest rate moves. I feel more comfortable having the cash because it allows us to be more flexible.

The Board thanked Mr. Bradanini and Mr. Beirne for attending the meeting.

3. Chief's Report:

Chief Deskis said there has been a decrease in fires for the month of May. There was only one structure fire in the North Thompsonville district. However there has been an increase in motor vehicle accidents. There was a vehicle rollover at the intersection of Palomba Drive and Route 190. A vehicle went through a window at the dental office next to Hannoush Jewelers.

Chief Deskis said two firefighters are out due to injuries. One firefighter injured in his arm during a training session. He is out until he has an MRI scan. The other firefighter cut his arm at home. He had minor surgery to repair some internal damage. He may be able to return to work by June 3rd.

Chief Deskis said he received a \$300 grant check from the Firefighters Charitable Foundation Inc. to purchase new equipment. Comm. Dodd asked do we need a vote to spend this money. Comm. Perry said no, it is only \$300. We have to show the money coming in and it has to be deposited into the proper account. Comm. Dodd asked what account it goes into. Chief Deskis said it will go into the equipment account. Comm. Dodd asked the Chief what he would like to purchase with the money. Chief Deskis replied some hoods and gloves.

Chief Deskis said FM Global, the company that awarded us the \$1,500 grant, has invited him to their research facility to show him what they do and what other grant opportunities are available to the department. They also provide grants for training and equipment. I would like to use these grants to reduce the department's ISO rating which will reduce insurance premiums.

Chief Deskis said the CPR training classes are ready to be conducted. We have ordered some new equipment. The class schedules will be posted this week.

Chief Deskis said he attended an opioid epidemic seminar at Asnuntuck Community College. He discussed the heroin issues in Thompsonville with Congressman Joe Courtney and Attorney General William Tong.

Chief Deskis said the department is currently planning for this year's Fourth of July Celebration on the Town Green. The Fire Marshal is in the process of issuing permits for the event. The Thompsonville Fire Department is looking forward to working with our emergency services divisions in town to make this year's event a safe and memorable one. Comm. DuFour asked do we need to sign off on the fire line for the fireworks. Chief Deskis said the Fire Marshal is in the process of doing that. Comm. DuFour said we had to sign a waiver last year because the station was occupied and the roof was wet down. Comm. Pliszka said we were overrun with people last year. Comm. Perry said the firefighters working that night had to constantly move people. It was difficult getting the trucks out. There were a lot of people in the station. Comm. DuFour suggested asking for mutual aid. Comm. Dodd also suggested having security volunteers. Comm. DuFour said he doesn't want the rest of the district to suffer because the members cannot get out of the station. Comm. Dodd said we should ask for help because there was over 50,000 people here.

Chief Deskis said the 5 Fire Chiefs are in the process of gathering data to form a consolidation plan for the town's fire departments. The consolidation review will be completed by a professional service who will decide if consolidation is a possibility in the future. It would cost each district \$1,000 to move forward with the process. This is a positive move to improve fire department asset acquisitions and personnel in the Town of Enfield. Comm. DuFour asked who is performing the consolidation review. Chief Deskis said Lee Erdman. Comm. DuFour asked if he has any interest in any of the five districts. Chief Deskis said no, he doesn't live in Connecticut. He asked for each department's history, statistics, budgets, geographic location, and run totals. Comm. Perry said there has to be a study if there is going to be a consolidation. This isn't just up to the Fire Chiefs. This involves the five fire commissions. Comm. DuFour asked when the money is due. Chief Deskis said probably within a month. Comm. Perry said this is something that we have to do. Comm. DuFour asked what would happen to the debt of this department. Do you think the other districts would be willing to take on our debt? Comm. Perry said our district will always have the debt. Our district would be assessed a separate rate. Comm. DuFour asked how that benefits Thompsonville. Comm. Perry said overall the debt would be lower and the income would be greater. The Board agreed to add this matter to next month's meeting agenda.

4. Treasurer's Report:

Comm. Dodd said the total of our checking and municipal investment accounts is \$1.973 million. There are two months left in the fiscal year. Plus, we will need money for July and August since we don't get our funds until August. That is an average of \$493,000 per month. We really only need about \$300,000 for monthly expenses. The budget is tight but we are right where we said we would be. There is no extra fluff anywhere. I would like to review the expenses for May and what the expenses might be for June soon. What do we do if we run a negative budget number? We are already overbudget on station vehicle expenditures. We may need to hold another meeting to

discuss our budget. Comm. Perry asked is there a dollar amount the Board is allowed transfer without a public vote. Comm. Pliszka said \$20,000. Comm. Perry said I would like to number our transfers like the Town of Enfield does. Comm. Dodd said we cannot do that until July because that is when we close our budget out.

5. Public Communications:

None.

6. Commissioners' Communications:

None.

7. Old Business: a) Pension:

Discussed earlier in the meeting.

8. New Business: a) Discuss change in Fire Marshal Ordinance Fees:

Chief Deskis said he has discussed with Comm. Pliszka about charging the same rate as the Town does. We would like to change the plan review fees from 1 percent to 1.5 percent of the total project cost. Comm. Dodd said we have reviewed the Charter and the Ordinance and the Board is allowed to change the fees. Can we increase the fee to 2 percent? Comm. Perry said when working with builders, you want to keep it on the same level. Chief Deskis said we don't want to draw businesses out of the district.

MOTION to raise the Fire Marshal Fees from 1 percent to 1.5 percent made by Comm. DuFour, seconded by Comm. Dodd. Discussion: Comm. DuFour asked does the ordinance have to be rewritten. Comm. Dodd said yes. It has to be posted in the newspaper. Comm. Pliszka said there is a little bit more than just the fees that need to be looked at. Comm. Perry said we need to look at the whole ordinance. Comm. Pliszka said we can put in the ordinance that the Chief has the authorization to waive fees for nonprofit groups.

Comm. DuFour rescinded the motion.

Comm. DuFour said since Comm. Pliszka is a captain in the department, he would like to ask the attorney for list of what Comm. Pliszka can and cannot vote on. I don't want to run the risk of an ethics violation.

9. Discussion of Deputy Fire Marshals:

Chief Deskis said there has been a lot of confusion about the Deputy Fire Marshal positions. There is not a pay rate for Deputy Fire Marshal in the contract. I am afraid the district may be liable for a fire because the district doesn't have a good fire inspection program. Comm. Pliszka and I calculated the pay rate should be \$30.96 per hour. Did the Board discuss this when the position was created? Comm. DuFour and Comm. Perry said they were not on the Board when the position was created. Comm. Dodd asked who is a deputy Fire Marshal. Chief Deskis said Paul Censki is the Fire Marshal. Scott Ellis, Daniel Pliszka, and Michael Richardson are Deputy Fire Marshals. Comm. Dodd asked are they performing inspections. Chief Deskis said yes. They should be paid more because they are working out of their job classification. Comm. DuFour said do they fill out a time sheet for Fire Marshal hours. Chief Deskis said yes. The Fire Marshal recently told him that he needs help doing inspections. Comm. Dodd asked is there a charge for the inspections. Chief Deskis said there is a charge for plan reviews. There isn't a charge for apartment buildings because it's hard enough trying to get into the building to inspect it. We can use the Fire Marshal Fees to supplement their salaries. Comm. DuFour said it needs to be done. Chief Deskis said a schedule will be put together. Comm. DuFour asked if the Chief can cover for the Fire Marshal. Comm. Perry said the Fire Marshal is a union position so the Chief cannot do it. Comm. DuFour said the union needs to give a little because our budget is tight. Chief Deskis said he told the Fire Marshal that he is here to help him. Ultimately, we all fail if something happens. Comm. Perry said right now our backs are against the wall when it comes to money. There is no intention of taking advantage of the union for this. Chief Deskis said something has got to give with this inspection program. Comm. DuFour said the union needs to work with us or the place goes out of business. There is no in-between. Comm. Perry said it's not just the dollar amount, it's somebody's life. Comm. Pliszka said the deputy can do his inspection if there are 4 people working. Only three people have to be on the rig. Comm. DuFour said the deputy can do the inspection while the other 3 respond to a call. We have to make this work. If it doesn't work, we are in trouble. Comm. Pliszka said one of the vehicles needs to be fixed in order to do these inspections. Chief Deskis said they can use the service vehicle for the time being.

10. Discussion and Approval of Invoices/Bills:

Commissioners reviewed, discussed and approved checks for invoices/bills.

11. Adjourn:

MOTION to adjourn made by Comm. DuFour, seconded by Comm. Perry. All in favor by ayes at 7:15 pm.