

Regular Meeting of the
Board of TFD Fire Commissioners

DRAFT -- Meeting Minutes – January 20, 2021
Thompsonville Fire Station, 35 N. Main Street, Enfield, CT

1. Call to Order: by Comm. Perry at 7:00 pm.

2. Roll Call: present (via conference call) were Comm. Perry, Comm. Pliszka, Comm. Dodd, and Comm. Gillespie. Also, present (via conference call) was Chief Deskis, Department Secretary Steneri, and Fire Marshal Ellis.

3. Update from Beirne Wealth Consulting Services, LLC:

Lindsey Allard and Madison St. John gave an update via conference call:

Ms. Allard said the U.S economy suffered through the shortest but the most severe recession on record as a result of the pandemic. But we are in the middle of staging a very strong recovery. The \$900 billion fiscal stimulus package is expected to avert a double-dip recession. With additional fiscal support and the increasing number of people being vaccinated, economic recovery is expected to pick up steam by mid-2021. Interest rates are expected to remain near zero until 2023. Stocks posted a third quarter of strong gains. A lot of the broad market indexes have rallied by 65%. Analysts think the recent release of vaccines are the catalyst for the strong stock market results.

Ms. Allard reviewed the performance report as of December 31, 2020.

Ms. Allard said as far as the 457 plan goes, we are sending out invitations to all of the participants to schedule a time with our advisory team. We will schedule a trustee meeting as well to go over the plan demographics.

4. Chief's Report:

Chief Deskis said the Covid-19 pandemic is continuing to affect our community. Members of the department have started to get vaccinated. The availability of the vaccine has become sporadic. This is due to the CDC's database of tracking doses.

Chief Deskis said a second person tested positive for Covid-19. He quarantined for two weeks. Another member was in close proximity to a family member that tested positive. Luckily, he did not get the virus.

Chief Deskis said the North Thompsonville fire dept. donated some PPE supplies to us. They were awarded a Covid-19 grant last year. Ocean State Job Lot is giving a donation of PPE to the department later this week. Every Ocean State Job Lot is going to donate to a fire or police department in their town.

Chief Deskis said there hasn't been much activity about the water mains issue. We met with the law firm in December. It seems like everything is moving forward. There is a meeting tomorrow night with the Interlocal.

Chief Deskis said many new projects are coming to the district. One of the projects is a Popeye's restaurant. A Cumberland Farms is going to be built. The Town wants to demolish the Strand Theater and build something there. The pad for the train station is going in. The Town also plans to have paddle boats on the Freshwater Pond in the warmer months. Food trucks and a farmer's market will draw people to the area. There has been talk of building apartments on the river side.

Chief Deskis said he is in the process of financing the SCBA units. The air packs will arrive in 7-10 weeks.

Chief Deskis said apparatus repairs have become a big issue. We should start looking at different avenues. I requested several bids to refurbish the squad. One bid was around \$200,000. We have to look at what is better for us: a refurbish, a lease, or a purchase. Time is ticking and we are going to have to make a decision soon. Engine 21 is being repaired now. We just spent \$10,000 on Squad 21. The ladder truck is doing fine.

Chief Deskis said the lights outside the fire station are working again. Thompsonville Electric replaced the timer. The lights will turn on and off automatically.

Chief Deskis said there have been several plumbing issues. A plumber is scheduled to look at things. I would like to put some things together for next year's budget to start repairing things. The station was built in 2014 and the walls and floors are cracking already. The building is only 6 years old and it is unacceptable that it is falling apart.

Chief Deskis said I tasked Fire Marshal Ellis to create a community fire reduction program for the district. We were one of 10 departments that got awarded the PILOT program. The program allows us to do community risk assessments. Chief Deskis congratulated Fire Marshal Ellis on a job well done.

The Board congratulated Fire Marshal Ellis as well. Fire Marshal Ellis said this program will give us resources that we would have financial access to otherwise.

5. Treasurer's Report:

Comm. Dodd said we were overbudget by around \$50,000 for the month of December. It is all in salaries. Some items were higher and some items were lower. Those cancel each other out except for the salaries. The budget was \$140,000 and the actual was \$195,000. But we are sitting at 45% of our budget and we are six months in.

Comm. Dodd said she wanted to ask about the money that is allocated under Other Expenses. There is \$54,000 budgeted for the air compressor and packs. Are we using that money in conjunction with the lease? Chief Deskis said that will be the down payment. Then the yearly payments will be around \$31,000 for 5 years. The replacement vehicle is being built right now. We are going to hold off on the Plymovent exhaust system for now. Comm. Dodd said maybe we can use some of the Plymovent money for another one of those other expenses. Comm. Perry said we will have to review the charter.

Comm. Dodd read the bank balances as of December 31, 2020: Operating account: \$17,800, Apparatus and Building Maintenance fund: \$160,000, Municipal Investment account: \$3,148,000, Debt Service: \$206,000, and Contingency fund: \$35,000.

6. Public Communications:

None.

7. Commissioners' Communications:

Comm. Perry said she cannot make the water mains meeting. She asked Chief Deskis if he was going. He said he will be attending. Comm. Perry said we need a commissioner to attend. Comm. Gillespie agreed to go.

8. Old Business:

None.

9. New Business: a) 2021 Meeting Schedule:

Comm. Perry asked do we have to post the meeting schedule up until the annual meeting. Dept. Secy. Steneri said we have to post the meeting schedule for the entire year. Last year the Board decided to cancel the July and December meetings. I didn't know if the Board wanted to do that as well for 2021.

MOTION to cancel the meetings in July and December made by Comm. Dodd, seconded by Comm. Bouthiette. Discussion: none. Roll Call- Motion passed 5-0.

10. Approval of Minutes from November 18 regular meeting:

MOTION to approve the minutes from the November 18 regular meeting made by Comm. Gillespie, seconded by Comm. Bouthiette. Discussion: none. Roll Call- Motion passed 5-0.

Comm. Gillespie said we should all start thinking about the engines. We've been talking about it for several months now. We need to do something because we are spending a lot of money on repairs. We need to put a committee together or something because we need to move forward. The committee can gather all the information and decide what is best for the district. I don't want to be responsible if something were to happen to the members because the brakes don't work. We need to come up with a plan. Chief Deskis said he has two members looking into the refurbishment. I spoke with someone regarding leasing. But I don't think that would be a good idea for us because of the way hardware is used around here. There is the option of buying a demo. We are not going to spend lots of money on a custom rig. A decent demo with a few add-ons is just as good as a custom rig. Comm. Dodd asked what the cost of a demo is. Chief Deskis said they usually start around \$500,000. Comm. Perry suggested Comm. Gillespie or Comm Bouthiette be on the committee because they have experience with the apparatus. Both commissioners agreed to do it. Chief Deskis said all I want is a financially responsible committee. I want the best for the employees but we have to be careful on what we are spending money on.

Comm. Dodd asked Chief Deskis if he had any idea of how much income we are going to receive with all the new construction going on. Chief Deskis said it's hard to tell right now. Fire Marshal Ellis said a higher level of responsibility comes with all the new construction that is coming in. It raises the level of expectation and liability issues. There are statutory responsibilities that the FM office has. We could be looking at up to six figures for Fire Marshal fees. Fire Marshal Ellis explained some of the work that is going to be done.

Comm. Perry read a thank you card from former Fire Marshal Paul Censki.

Comm. Dodd asked about working on the budget for next year. Chief Deskis said he has been working on it. Comm. Dodd asked can we put the new apparatus in the budget. Chief Deskis said it would have to be voted on. Comm. Dodd asked would it be voted on outside of the regular budget. Chief Deskis said I would have it voted on.

11. Adjourn:

MOTION to adjourn made by Comm. Bouthiette, seconded by Comm. Dodd. All in favor by ayes at 7:44 pm.