

Regular Meeting of the
Board of TFD Fire Commissioners

DRAFT -- Meeting Minutes – May 18, 2022

Thompsonville Fire Station, 35 N. Main Street, Enfield, CT

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

2. Roll Call: present were Comm. Perry, Comm. Gillespie, and Comm. Pliszka. Comm. Crowley arrived at 8:00pm. Absent was Comm. Bouthiette. Also, present was Chief Deskis.

3. Discussion with Enfield Town Manager:

Comm. Perry said the Town Manager will not be here.

4. Update from Beirne Wealth Consulting Services, LLC:

Ms. Allard said it's very nice to see everyone in person after a long time of having Zoom meetings and conference calls. We have a different market cycle that has been occurring so I wanted to be here to answer any questions.

Ms. Allard reviewed the performance report as of April 30, 2022.

Ms. Allard said I would recommend that people should continue contributing to their 457 plans because of the tax advantage. Contributions can be moved to the stable value fund if you are really concerned. We would like to hold onsite and virtual meetings soon. Our team actively monitors the funds. So, if a fund was really underperforming, we would switch it out. You can also call us as well.

Ms. Allard thanked the Board for their time.

5. Chief's Report:

Chief Deskis said the security cameras have been installed. The company has to come back to show us how to record.

Chief Deskis said there were some drain problems in the kitchen again. The lines were blown out. The plumbing company recommends doing that every six months. Chief Deskis said Ladder 21 is out for some routine maintenance. There are several problems that need to be fixed. The repairs are being done right now but there are supply chain issues.

Chief Deskis said Squad 21 had four new rear tires installed. The tires are good for ten years.

Chief Deskis said there is a job posting for the position of firefighter. Candidates can submit their resumes. The interview process will include five interviewers consisting of a member from TFD, an HR rep, and three other career firefighters or officers.

Chief Deskis said all those who were interested in the position of captain have submitted their resumes. Some of the questions on the captain's test come from the policy manual. There are a couple of issues that need to be worked through. The interview process will be the same as last time.

Chief Deskis said there have not been any labor meetings due to lack of personnel. I will meet with Captain Provencher to put a committee together. Comm. Perry said I wanted to make everybody knows that we are not meeting until the 31st. I am having trouble accessing my emails again.

Chief Deskis said there was a grievance filed about a member taking a class. The District will pay for the class but it won't pay for any overtime. That member can take the class when the new budget starts.

Chief Deskis said the Boy Scouts of America troop from Thompsonville requested to hold an event at our station. They would like to use our back parking lot. Comm. Perry said as long as it doesn't interfere with our day to day operations.

Chief Deskis said there have been some good calls recently. Two cars flipped over on the highway. There was a rollover with three people ejected from the car. Nobody was seriously injured. A water truck rolled over in Hazardville. Everybody has done a great job.

Chief Deskis said the Town of Enfield is going to change our motor vehicle mill rate. This is due to the State of CT's cap on automobile taxes. We are going to meet with the Town Manager this Friday. Comm. Perry said it is not a huge hit. Our budget will be fine.

Chief Deskis said Firefighter Miarecki had to use sick time due to Covid. Firefighter Miarecki said my wife and kids had Covid but I did not. The Chief told me to stay out of work and use my sick time. I didn't think it was fair to use my sick time because the request to stay out came from the Chief. I would like to ask for that time back. Other members have been out due to Covid and the department covered their time. Following CDC guidelines at the time, I could have been at work.

MOTION to give Eric Miarecki his sick time back made by Comm. Gillespie, seconded by Comm. Perry. Discussion: Comm. Perry said I think we should give the

time back because the CDC guidelines change constantly. Roll Call- Motion passed 2-0 with Comm. Pliszka abstaining.

6. Treasurer's Report:

The District's CPA Lisa Foy called to review the financial reports.

7. Public Communications:

Fire Marshal Ellis asked if the Board had any questions regarding his latest report. Comm. Gillespie asked what are some of the major projects going on. Fire Marshal Ellis said Ocean State Job Lot is moving and Kohl's is rebranding inside. Engineers are looking at the old Broyhill building. Noble Gas is developing. The old AAA building will be coming down. There is some interior building work is going on. A developer is interested in the Lamagna Center and the Strand Theater. Comm. Perry asked is anything going into the old Ocean State. Fire Marshal Ellis said not as of yet. Most office, professional, and retail buildings are full or in the process of renovation. Boarded up buildings are in the process of being marked for no entry.

8. Commissioners' Communications:

Comm. Perry said the Town gives us all of our money every year. We are not going to be getting a lot of money when they stop collecting our taxes. Money is going to be trickling in. Collecting taxes is a huge undertaking. My concern is paying people's salaries, maintaining benefits, and funding the pension. Consolidation is going to take a while. We have to make sure spend wisely. Maybe we can use the same company the other departments are going to use to save money. Collecting taxes is awfully expensive. We have to be careful about revaluations too. This is very serious and we have to start working on a plan. I would like to host a meeting with the other departments to discuss consolidation and billing.

Comm. Gillespie said Comm. Pliszka said that we won't have any money from car taxes next year. Comm. Pliszka said I thought it said that we won't be taxing cars anymore. Comm. Gillespie asked how. Comm. Perry said the State changed the law. Comm. Gillespie said we are separate taxing entity. Comm. Perry said the State supersedes us. I am more concerned about the Town not collecting our taxes then not taxing motor vehicles. Comm. Gillespie said I think the townspeople should know what is going on. Comm. Perry said many of them don't care. We will have more information after our meeting on Friday. I will share everything with the Board members so they know what is going on. Then we can go from there.

7. Old Business:

a) New Apparatus Purchase:

Comm. Gillespie said the taxpayers approved the purchase so I think we should buy a new apparatus. Comm. Bouthiette and the truck committee agree. We are going to have to continuously spend money on our current vehicles if we wait. Comm. Perry said I would like to wait until after Friday's meeting to make a decision. Captain Flanagan said prices are going to continue to increase as they have already. Comm. Perry said I want to see where we are going.

Firefighter Miarecki asked which truck are we going to sell. Comm. Perry said I don't know much about trucks. Chief Deskis said we should keep both of them. Comm. Perry said maybe we can use the money towards the new truck. Captain Flanagan said it is going to take some time before we get the new truck. Is the Board okay with spending money on our current trucks until we do? Chief Deskis said the rotation of the trucks has been working well. Comm. Perry and Captain Flanagan discussed the truck options.

Comm. Perry said when do we have to start paying for the truck. Captain Flanagan said it depends on how the payments are set up. Comm. Perry asked what would the payments be. Chief Deskis said between \$70,000 and \$80,000 depending on interest rates. Comm. Pliszka said we need to lock the interest rate and the price in.

Comm. Pliszka said we will have \$358,000 in the apparatus account. \$200,000 will be used for a down payment. Will the rest of the money be used for the other payments? Chief Deskis said it could. Or it could be used to replace our other vehicles.

Comm. Perry said we should hold a special meeting to discuss this more. Comm. Pliszka said I would like Comm. Bouthiette and Comm. Crowley to be here when we decide. I would also like to know the payment structure. The Board agreed to hold a meeting on May 24th.

Comm. Gillespie said we will have to meetings to discuss whether to keep or sell the other trucks we have. We will still have to budget for maintenance. We should still keep the rotation going once we get the new truck.

8. New Business:

a) Labor Management:

Comm. Gillespie said the Chief is going to put something together. Chief Deskis asked Comm. Gillespie if he would like to be involved. Comm. Gillespie said he would if the meetings could be held at night.

b) Overtime Policy:

Comm. Gillespie said I want to know how the overtime policy ties into taking that class and the grievance. Is that class a requirement? Chief Deskis said it's our SOPs. But it was not a requirement for hiring. A member took a class and was paid for overtime

before. But right our overtime budget is over. I can approve the class and the member just won't get paid for overtime. Or the member can wait until the next budget starts to be paid overtime.

Fire Marshal Ellis said the SOPs were based on accepted state and federal guidelines. A department has to provide a certain number of hours of training to a new firefighter. Now the Fire Academy requires certain classes. So that kind of passes the training off of us. Comm. Gillespie said I wanted to know if this class is a requirement of this department. Fire Marshal Ellis said yes, it is in the SOPs. But there is no time frame affixed. Chief Deskis said we are tight on money right now. We are spending about \$100,000 a month. If I approved of all the overtime, we are going to run out of money.

Captain Provencher said it's a mandatory class per our SOPs. It was approved without overtime. It's part of our contract to be paid for mandatory classes. That is why a grievance was filed. Chief Deskis said I want to make sure you get paid. Captain Provencher said I understand where the Chief is coming from but the Union can't let it slip.

Comm. Pliszka said this is a commissioners' meeting. This is not a back and forth.

c) Grievances:

Comm. Gillespie said I was just wondering who was going to be on the grievance committee. I can't be on it.

d) New Hires Interview Committee:

Comm. Gillespie said I wanted to know what the committee consisted of. The Chief answered my question during his report.

9. Approval of Minutes from April 20 regular meeting, May 4 annual meeting, and May 4 special meeting:

MOTION for the approval of the minutes for April 20 regular meeting, May 4 annual meeting, and May 4 special meeting made by Comm. Gillespie, seconded by Comm. Crowley. Discussion: none. Roll Call- Motion passed 4-0.

10. Adjourn:

MOTION to adjourn made by Comm. Gillespie, seconded by Comm. Perry. All in favor by ayes at 8:25 pm.