

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
***DRAFT* REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**
TUESDAY, MAY 5, 2020
5:30 P.M. –
Electronic Meeting per Governor’s Executive Order 7B

Present: Commission Members: Barbara Hemming, Matt Healy, Dean Mitchell
 And Chairman Ken Wilson

Department Members: Fire Chief Charles Herrschaft; Assistant Fire
 Chief Mike Shove

Chairman Wilson called the meeting to order at 5:35 PM. Due to the meeting being held via conference-bridge, he requested that each Commissioner identify themselves when speaking, making a motion, and voting, to ensure the accuracy of the meeting record.

1. Public Forum

None

2. Approve minutes of:

2.1 Approve minutes of the March 3, 2020 regular meeting

Motion: Upon a motion by Commissioner Hemming, and seconded by Commissioner Mitchell, the Board of Fire Commissioners approved the minutes of the March 3, 2020 minutes as presented

In Favor: Hemming, Healy, Mitchell, Wilson

Opposed: None

Abstained: None

3. Chairman’s Report

3.1 Correspondence and Notices

Chairman Wilson reported that on April 30, 2020 he received a letter from Chief Herrschaft notifying the commission that Firefighters Jeff Young and Don Venutti have been appointed Acting Captains, in accordance with the IAFF collective bargaining agreement. These two firefighters were the highest qualified candidates.

Commissioner Healy offered his congratulations to Acting Captains Venutti and Young on behalf of the Commission.

On March 16, 2020 Commissioner Mitchell received a letter from the First Selectman notifying him of his reappointment to the Fire Commission by unanimous vote of the Board of Selectmen. Commissioner Mitchell's term will expire on October 16, 2023.

Commissioner Mitchell thanked the Commissioners for their vote of confidence.

3.2 Other Information

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, interviews for the vacant positions have been postponed until in-person interviews can be conducted safely.

4. Departmental Officers and/or Committee Reports:

4.1 Fire Chief/Fire Marshal's Report

The new rescue truck is back at the Marion factory. The vehicle had a major catastrophic failure of the drive train involving the drive shaft, as well as numerous other components. Marion sent a flat-bed truck to transport it back to the factory. Marion is honoring the warranty, and all the components are under warranty from the manufacturer. The truck will probably be out of service for 90 days or more.

There is also an issue with the Tower Ladder Truck. The truck is in service however, the tower cannot be used. The pistons for the outriggers were both leaking. The repair is estimated to take four days, and after that the truck will be back in service. The estimated repair cost is \$1,800, compared to a \$15,000 cost to replace the pistons.

The ambulance manufacturer is still waiting for the arrival of the chassis. The department has confirmed with other dealers that no chassis' are being delivered at this time. This is due in part to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Chief also brought to the attention of the Commission that two Firefighters; Keith Kennel and David Lindgren, saved the department approximate \$15,000 by making a major repair to Engine 1-5-2's pump. This was a very labor -intensive repair. They were able to keep the Pumper in service and save the Town and Department a considerable amount of expense.

The Department under the guidance of Chief Shove and Captains Considine and Haverkamp, have been keeping the firefighting personnel, citizens and visitors of the Town safe and updated regarding the COVID-19 pandemic.

4.2 Assistant Chief's Activity Report(s)

The department responded to 263 calls in April. The attendance at a structure fire was seven. The average town wide response time was 7:57 minutes, and the average response time in North Guilford was 8:12 minutes.

Assistant Chief Shove reviewed the May 4, 2020 situation report that is prepared regularly by Captain Haverkamp regarding the coronavirus pandemic. The report includes status reports on the national, state and local levels.

The department is in constant contact with the sponsor hospitals and receives daily briefings regarding hospital capacities, best practices and other pertinent information from hospitals, regional and state representatives.

There have been three policy changes in the last 6 weeks in response to the evolving nature of the pandemic and department members have all been very adaptive. He expressed his appreciation for the hard work of all department members during this very stressful time. It is stressful for all members not only in their work environment, but at home as well.

The Commissioners thanked Assistant Chief Shove and Captain Haverkamp for this very informative report.

In response to questions from Commissioner Healy, Assistant Chief Shove reported that since the opening of the testing facility at Long Wharf in New Haven, members have been able to be COVID-19 tested quickly and receive test results within 15 minutes. Since half or two-thirds of all Guilford's COVID-19 positive patients have been transported by the department's ambulance crews, several members have been exposed multiple times, and those members have been tested. The ambulance crews respond to calls in full level PPE.

The department continually monitors supply chains for food, water, PPE and other supplies. The department received a donation of toilet paper from the Guilford Public Schools since school has been cancelled. Some PPE is still very limited, and the food supply chain is also being monitored closely.

5. Monthly Business:

5.1 Status of Budgets

The budget through March 31st is 80.1% expended, which is 5.4 % over budget. It should be at 74.7%.

5.2 Consider and take action on Monthly Department Expenditures for March, 2020.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the April meeting was cancelled. Commissioner Wilson asked for the Commission's approval of the march 2020 expenditures.

Motion: Upon a motion by Commissioner Hemming, and seconded by Commissioner Healy, the Board of Fire Commissioners voted to approve the monthly expenditures for the month of March, 2020.

In Favor: Hemming, Healy, Mitchell, Wilson

Abstained: None

Opposed: None

5.3 Consider and take action on Monthly Department Expenditures for April, 2020

The expenditures included expenses that have been charged to the COVID-19 account. These expenses will be submitted to FEMA for reimbursement. The total expenses were \$55, 155.81, less the \$11,374.76 for COVID-19 related expenses.

Motion: Upon a motion by Commissioner Mitchell, and seconded by Commissioner Wilson, the Board of Fire Commissioners voted to approve the monthly expenditures for the month of April, 2020.

In Favor: Hemming, Healy, Mitchell, Wilson

Abstained: None

Opposed: None

5.4 Receive Revenue Report

The Finance Department confirmed via e-mail, that a SAFER grant reimbursement in the amount of \$81,799.49 has been received. These funds will be applied to the salary line item accounts.

Chief Herrschaft reported that he received an e-mail notification that the department will be receiving \$24,705.76 through the CARES Act (COVID-19) as an offset to lost Medicare revenue.

Revenue is at 78.7% at eight months into the Fiscal Year. This is 12.3% over projected revenue. Over \$90,000 was deposited in the month of April. There were 152 calls in April, of which 116 were billable.

6. Old Business:

6.1 Update on IAFF request for contract extension

At their meeting on May 4, 2020, the Board of Selectmen unanimously accepted a successor agreement with IAFF 4177 for a one-year contract extension. The terms of the contract will not change, with the exception of a 2.25% wage increase. The Union has also agreed to these terms, the contracts are in the process of being signed and executed. Copies will be made available to the Commissioners upon completion.

Discussion regarding the extension of the management contracts with the Selectmen will be forthcoming.

The Commissioners expressed appreciation for everyone's efforts.

7. New Business:

7.1 Update on status of FY2020-21 budget

The Board of Finance met and approved the budget for FY 2020-21. The approved budget included an additional reduction of \$200,000 from the Board of Education budget and \$100,000 from the Town budget. A meeting to set the mill rate will be held later this week.

7.2 Personnel

The Board voiced its appreciation and recognition of Executive Assistant Erin Gaudet, who is managing her own position as well as the vacant part time position in the midst of this pandemic.

8. Public Forum:

Commissioner Wilson recognized Karen Quercia for her outstanding service to not only the Fire Department but to all Boards, Commissions and Guilford residents she has assisted during this pandemic. She like many others is on the front line assisting and coordinating many efforts to insure the Town continues to serve its residents. All Commissioner concurred and appreciate her efforts.

The next meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners will be held electronically, either via conference-bridge or ZOOM.

Motion: Upon a motion by Commissioner Hemming, and seconded by Commissioner Healy, the Board of Fire Commissioners voted to adjourn at 6:15 p.m.

In Favor: Hemming, Healy, Mitchell, Wilson
Opposed: None
Abstained: None

Respectfully Submitted,
Karen Quercía
Clerk