

**BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS**  
**DRAFT REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**  
**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2018**  
**5:30 P.M. – GUILFORD FIRE HEADQUARTERS**

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Present: Commissioners: Barbara Hemming, Josh Hershman, Dean Mitchell,  
 Chairman Ken Wilson

Department Members: Chief Charles Herrschaft; Assistant Chief Mike Shove; Deputy  
 Chief Ken Maginniss; Captain Jim Considine; Steve LaPaglia,  
 IAFF President; Joseph Deko, IAFF Vice President; Robert  
 Piascyk, Jeff Larson

Town Officials: Mitchell Goldblatt, Human Resources Director; Attorney  
 Chris Hodgson

Commissioner Wilson called the meeting to order at 5:36 p.m.

**1. Public Forum**

No one from the public wished to speak.

Chairman Wilson welcomed Commissioner Hershman to the Board, and presented him with his badge.

Commissioner Wilson publicly thanked former Commissioner Catardi for her volunteering to serve on the Board, her contributions and friendship.

**2. Discuss performance of Probationary FF/EMT Jeff Larson, and take action on his probationary employment. (Executive Session will be required.)**

Chairman Wilson asked Mr. Larson if he would like to exercise his right to discuss this item in open session. Mr. Larson declined.

*Motion: Upon a motion by Commissioner Hemming, and seconded by Commissioner Wilson, the Board of Fire Commissioners voted to enter Executive Session to discuss the performance of Probationary FF/EMT Jeff Larson, and take action on his probationary employment at 5:38 p.m. Invited to remain in Executive Session with the Commissioners were: Assistant Chief Mike Shove, Human Resources Director Mitchell Goldblatt, Attorney Chris Hodgson, IAFF president Steve LaPaglia, IAFF Vice President Joe Deko, Captain Jim Considine, Firefighter Jeff Larson. Chief Herrschaft recused himself.*

*In Favor: Hemming, Hershman, Mitchell, Wilson*

*Opposed: None*

*Abstained: None*

At 5:41 p.m., Firefighter Jeff Larson and IAFF President Steve LaPaglia exited the meeting.

*Motion: Upon a motion by Commissioner Mitchell, and seconded by Commissioner Hemming, the Board voted to exit Executive Session at 5:43 p.m.*

*In Favor: Hemming, Hershman, Mitchell, Wilson*

*Opposed: None*

*Abstained: None*

*Motion: Upon a motion by Commissioner Hemming, and second by Commissioner Mitchell, the Board voted to accept the resignation of Jeff Larson, with regret.*

*In Favor: Hemming, Hershman, Mitchell, Wilson*

*Opposed: None*

*Abstained: None*

The Board wished Mr. Larson well with his future endeavors.

At 5:44 p.m., Attorney Chris Hodgson and HR Director Mitchell Goldblatt exited the meeting.

### **3. Approve minutes of:**

#### **3.1 Approve minutes of the October 2, 2018 regular meeting**

The minutes could not be approved since the members that were present at the October 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting are no longer serving on the Board of Fire Commissioners.

### **4. Correspondence and Notices**

#### **4.1 Correspondence and Notices**

Chairman Wilson shared numerous thank you notes and expressions of appreciation, including one from a group of young children.

Chairman Wilson notified the Commissioners that Commissioner Catardi tendered her resignation from the Board of Fire Commissioners. He distributed a copy of her letter of resignation to each commissioner. The Commission expressed their appreciation for Commissioner Catardi's dedication, assistance and friendship to the Fire Department.

The Department received notification that the Board of Selectmen recently approved both the Assistance to Firefighters Grant as well as the Port Security Grant.

Firefighters Mike Walston and Steve LaPaglia were both recognized for the excellent job they did conducting a CPR class, and Firefighter Chris Ziemba was commended for participating in a Career Day event at an out-of-town school.

#### **4.2 Other Information**

The Department's Annual Dinner was recently held at Woodwinds and the North Guilford Fire Department also had their annual volunteer dinner. Both were well attended and enjoyed by all.

## **5. Departmental Officers and/or Committee Reports:**

### **5.1 Fire Chief/Fire Marshal's Report**

There was one major structure fire last month, which was caused by a lightning strike. There was major damage to the house, which was home to a family of four. The family was housed at the Tower Motel the night of the fire.

The Chief submitted a check request for payment to the motel, but it was denied by the First Selectman for inappropriate use of town funds, so the Chief paid the invoice from his personal funds.

The new rescue chassis has been built and is at the factory. Progress drawings should be available soon. The rescue truck is on schedule and on time for delivery. Representatives from the fire department will be on site to perform an inspection before it is painted. Transportation costs are paid for by the vendor.

Changing the rims from steel to aluminum resulted in an approximately \$14,000 cost savings. The change was made to resolve a steering issue.

The Chief also reported that the Housing Authority has begun to address their water drainage problem at 310 State Street.

### **5.2 Assistant Fire Chief's Activity Report(s)**

Assistant Chief Shove reported that the department responded to 309 calls in October. The response times for North Guilford and the entire town are both down; for the entire town the average response time is 7minutes, 26 seconds; and for North Guilford it is 6 minutes, 21 seconds. These times are down from an average response time of 13 minutes 30 seconds.

The 1710 compliance report was also reviewed. The response to two structure fires was excellent, with an average attendance of 16.50 personnel.

## **6. Monthly Business:**

### **6.1 Status of Budget**

As of September 30, 2018 the budget was 27.8% expended, which is 2.9% over target. Emergency repairs and the SAFER Grant reimbursement have all impacted the budget.

The second SAFER grant reimbursement in the amount of \$128,000 was approved, but has not yet been received.

## 6.2 Consider and take action on monthly Department Expenditures

Monthly expenses totaled \$92,504.57. There were several large expenditures in the Vehicle Maintenance line due to three generator failures: Unit 1-7-3, the ladder truck; Unit 1-5-2; and Marine 10 the fire boat.

Unit 1-5-1 housed at Washington Engine had an ejector problem which resulted in a \$6,000 repair.

Tires and a new steering box for the rescue truck were also large expenses.

*Motion: Upon a motion by Commissioner Wilson and second by Commissioner Mitchell, the Board voted to approve the monthly expenses in the amount of \$92,504.57.*

*In Favor: Hemming, Hershman, Mitchell, Wilson*

*Opposed: None*

*Abstained: None*

## 6.3 Receive Revenue Report

Revenue is 3.5% over the projected target of 16.6%. Credit card charges are now broken out as part of the report. October was a five week month and revenue is projected to be over \$100,000.

There were 184 ambulance calls last month.

## 7. Old Business:

The Commissioners held a discussion about the First Selectman's decision not to approve the check request submitted by the Chief for reimbursement of the cost of housing a family at the Tower Motel that was displaced at 2:00 a.m. due to a fire in their home. The expense totaled approximately \$250.00.

The Chief explained that the First Selectman suggested the Chief request that the homeowner reimburse the town. The Chief felt that housing this family with children in an emergency, was part of the department's mission to protect and serve, and he refused to request reimbursement from the family.

The Commissioners agreed that the Chief should not have to pay for this expense from his personal funds.

The Commissioners strongly expressed their dismay that this expense was not approved, and agreed that the best course of action was to put a mechanism in place so that this situation did not happen again. It was decided that in the next budget, a line would be added for these types of emergency expenses. Had the expense been approved, it would have come out of the Fire Prevention line. The Chief stated that in his 35 years with the Fire Department, he can only think of four emergency situations that the department found it necessary to house a family at a local motel.

The Commissioners also thanked the Chief for his actions and applauded the department for considering the welfare of this family.

**8. New Business:**

**8.1 Discuss and take possible action on Five Year Capital Plan.**

The Chief reviewed items being considered for inclusion in the department's Five Year Capital Plan. They include: air paks, hose, replacement of the 2005 Polaris, replacement of a 1999 plow truck, a used bus, upgrade to the communications alarm panel, and a training site, (building) with an estimated cost of \$650,000.

To meet ISO requirements, which affects the insurance rating, training must take place in a NFPA rated facility. Currently training takes place at the New Haven facility, or a burn trailer is rented. Guilford is rated as a Class 3 department, of which there are only three in the state. The department wishes to maintain this rating. The department was at one time rated as Class 9.

The Chief will get the final proposed plan to the Commissioners in the next few days. He will prioritize the needs and identify them by year. The capital plan hearing will take place on November 29<sup>th</sup>.

**9. Public Forum:**

None

*Motion: Upon a motion by Commissioner Mitchell, and seconded by Commissioner Hershman, the Board voted to adjourn at 6:37 p.m.*

*In Favor: Hemming, Hershman, Mitchell, Wilson*

*Opposed: None*

*Abstained: None*

Respectfully Submitted,  
Karen Quercia  
Clerk