

**BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
DRAFT SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, JULY 10, 2018
5:30 P.M. – GUILFORD FIRE HEADQUARTERS**

Present: Commissioners: Anita Catardi, Gary Gilbert, Dean Mitchell,
Chairman Ken Wilson

Department Members: Chief Charles Herrschaft, Assistant Chief Mike Shove, Deputy
Chief Ken Magginnis

Commissioner Hemming was absent.

Commissioner Wilson called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

1. Public Forum

None

2. Approve minutes of:

2.1 Approval of the minutes of the June 6, 2018 regular meeting

Chairman Wilson explained that Item 9 on the agenda should have provided more detail regarding the Executive Session. It should have read: "Executive session to update the Commission regarding IAFF negotiations and to discuss the Executive Assistant to the Fire Chief position."

Commissioner Catardi noted that an additional correction should be made to Item 9, no motion was made or vote taken to exit the Executive Session, while the Commission was in Executive Session.

Motion: Upon a motion by Commissioner Catardi, and seconded by Commissioner Mitchell, the Board of Fire Commissioners voted to approve the minutes of the June 6, 2018 Board of Fire Commissioners meeting as amended.

In Favor: Catardi, Mitchell, Wilson

Opposed: None

Abstained: Gilbert

3. Correspondence and Notices

3.1 Correspondence and Notices

None

3.2 Other Information

None

4. Departmental Officers and/or Committee Reports:

4.1 Fire Chief/Fire Marshal's Report

The ambulance is complete, it was tested and sent back so an adjustment could be made. Once the official state required certificate has been received, the ambulance will be picked up, brought to Guilford and put into service.

The Chief anticipates that the drawings for the rescue truck will be ready for approval by the end of the week. The chassis has been ordered.

One employee is still out on long term disability.

The Dive Team responded to a report of a missing swimmer at Hammonasset State Park. Fortunately the person was located on the shore unharmed.

The Chief reported to the Commission that a grievance has been filed in regards to vacation pay.

4.2 Assistant Fire Chief's Activity Report(s)

Assistant Chief Shove reviewed the missing units report. As of July 1, 2018 the North Guilford Fire house has been staffed with a full time crew, so the numbers should begin to trend downward.

The numbers on the 1710 compliance report remain consistent, the Assistant Chief noted the responses to Code 111's building and cooking fires are consistent at 9-10, but he will watch those closely as those numbers should also be impacted by the hiring of the new firefighters.

The average response times at the end of June were 13:48 minutes, but for the first ten days in July, the response time has dropped by over four minutes to 9:31. So in the first ten days of having full time staff in North Guilford, the response times have improved. The national standard is below 9 minutes to have ALS (advanced life support) on scene.

Training for the new hires went very well, and the first ten days of staffing at Station 5 (in North Guilford) has gone great. There has been a lot of positive feedback from the Captains; so far everything has been very positive.

The department provided mutual aide to Madison for a working structure fire. There were no serious injuries, but the house has been condemned.

5. Monthly Business:

5.1 Status of Budget

For FY 17-18, the budget will be over expended, and all the encumbrances will be used. The Chief anticipates receiving the June 30th budget numbers from the Finance Department sometime next week.

5.2 Consider and take action on monthly Department Expenditures

Significant expenses included equipment, gear and clothing for the new hires, rental of a burn trailer for training purposes, and classes required for renewal of boat captain's licenses.

Motion: Upon a motion by Commissioner Gilbert, and seconded by Commissioner Mitchell, the Board of Fire Commissioners voted to approve the monthly expenses in the amount of \$61,808.83.

In Favor: Catardi, Gilbert, Mitchell, Wilson

Opposed: None

Abstained: None

5.3 Receive Revenue Report

As of May 31, 2018 revenue is at 84.8%, or \$738,641.60 which is over anticipated revenue by 1.2%

6. Old Business:

6.1 Contract Negotiations

The IAFF and the town reached an agreement which has been ratified, approved and is in full effect. This is a good contract; both sides achieved what they wanted to. The HSA has been implemented. The contract is a public document should anyone wish to review it.

6.2 Vacant Positions

Erin Gaudet has been promoted to the Executive Assistant to the Fire Chief/Fire Marshal position. She will begin her new position on July 16, 2018. There were two candidates, Erin was the most qualified. This position falls under the GEA, and since Erin has been working for the department for several years, there will be no interruptions to the day to day operations and billing.

The part time administrative assistant position left vacant by Erin's promotion, will be posted both internally and externally beginning tomorrow. This is a 24 hour position.

7. New Business:

7.1 Town Travel Policy

Chief Herrschaft informed the Commissioners that there may be a conflict with a recently approved Board of Selectmen Travel Policy. The policy requires both a Department Head's and the First Selectman's approval for travel involving an overnight stay, air transportation, or travel in excess of 200 miles from Guilford. This provision is an apparent direct violation of the Chief's contract, which gives the Chief the authority to make decisions regarding the operation of his department. Additionally, there is a clause in his contract that states that his contract prevails over town policy.

The Chief has, on occasion, paid for travel expenses for himself and his staff at his own expense.

The Department Heads were not consulted prior to the implementation of the travel policy.

The Commission discussed this issue. It was agreed that the Chief and a Commissioner, Commissioner Mitchell, would request a meeting with the First Selectman to understand the reason for the policy. The policy should not affect the operations of the fire department. Mr. Mitchell supports the Chief, and a meeting to explore the reasons for the new policy, as well as bringing to light any possible breaches of contract.

The Commission discussed the Charter and State Statutes as they relate to the oversight and operation of the fire department. There is a clear separation between the Board of Selectmen and the Fire and Police Departments. The Board of Selectmen have control of the budgets for the police and fire departments, but not the operations of those departments.

The Commissioners requested that the Chief keep them apprised of the outcome of his meeting with the First Selectman and Commissioner Mitchell.

7.2 Proposed Fire Marshal Fees

The fee proposal was presented to the First Selectman, who in turn forwarded it to a BOS/BOF subcommittee that is currently reviewing building department fees. Chairman Wilson offered to get an update on where this proposal stands, as neither the Chief nor the Commissioners have received any communications from the subcommittee or the First Selectman. Chairman Wilson will report back at the August meeting.

8. Public Forum:

None

Motion: Upon a motion by Commissioner Mitchell, and seconded by Commissioner Gilbert, the Board of Fire Commissioners voted to adjourn the meeting at 6:31 p.m.

In Favor: Catardi, Gilbert, Mitchell, Wilson

Opposed: None

Abstained: None

Respectfully Submitted,
Karen Quercia
Clerk