

**BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS  
DRAFT REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
TUESDAY, JULY 7, 2020  
FIRE HEADQUARTERS  
5:30 P.M.**

Present: Commission Members: Matt Healy, Josh Hershman,  
Dean Mitchell and Chairman Ken Wilson

Department Members: Fire Chief Charles Herrschaft, Assistant Fire  
Chief Mike Shove, Fire Marshal Jim Considine,  
Captain Clint Haverkamp

Chairman Wilson called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

**1. Public Forum**

None

**2. Approve minutes of:**

**2.1 Approve minutes of the June 2, 2020 regular meeting**

*Motion: Upon a motion by Commissioner Mitchell, and seconded by Commissioner Hershman, the Board of Fire Commissioners approved the minutes of the June 2, 2020 meeting as presented.*

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

*Opposed: None*

*Abstained: None*

**3. Chairman's Report**

**3.1 Correspondence and Notices**

Chairman Wilson reported that he attended the virtual June 26, 2020 Board of Selectman meeting. The Board approved labor contracts, and the negotiated and approved wages and HSA were consistent across the board.

Also, based on the advice of Town Counsel, the BOS decided at their meeting yesterday to continue with virtual meetings until further notice. The decision was based on the inability to provide safe social distancing for any members of the public that may want to attend a meeting. Therefore, upcoming Board of Fire Commissioner meetings may be held virtually.

Two thank you notes were received and shared with the Commissioners.

A note of congratulations was received from Human Resources Director Mitch Goldblatt in recognition of the heroic efforts of department members who rescued a person that fell through a floor into a (hidden) well.

The Chairman stated that he wished to clarify some information regarding the Chief's contract negotiations. He wished to make it clear that the Chief voluntarily offered to forgo a pay raise. All other provisions in his contract remain in place.

Commissioner Healy noted that Chairman Wilson was very clear in his statement to the Board of Selectmen. Commissioner Mitchell commended the Chief for his actions, stating it was very admirable of him to give up a pay raise.

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

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

The ambulance chassis has been delivered. The original chassis that was ordered was a 2020, but due to all the delays, the chassis that was delivered is a 2021. This has resulted in the need for a modification to the emission fluid tank. The manufacturer is responsible for any additional expenses that this change has incurred, the town is not liable.

The rescue truck is making slow but steady progress. COVID-19 has had a major impact on the ability to get parts.

##### **4.2 Assistant Chief's Activity Report(s)**

The Commissioners reviewed the 1710 compliance report and the response times. The total number of calls in June was 277. There was one building fire, the number of personnel that attended the fire was 8, which is a consistent number of responders.

The town wide average response time for June was seven minutes and nineteen seconds, for North Guilford it was eight minutes seven seconds. Both these times are under the targeted response time of 9 minutes.

Commissioner Mitchell commended the department on the great job they did handling the communications for the incident regarding a resident that fell through a floor and into a hidden well.

Assistant Chief Shove explained that as the number of coronavirus cases in the town and state start to level off, the department is starting to see more "normal" call activity. They recently responded to and rescued a person who became trapped at the entrance of a sluice pipe, rescued a person that was stuck 30 feet up in a tree, and rescued a person who fell through a floor and into a hidden well.

The well incident was particularly complex, and the crews did an excellent job. They fell back on their training. Due to vacations, the responding crews were mixed, but everyone came together to solve the problem. They did a great job. This illustrates the importance of the progressive, continual and repetitive training the members do, and the consequence of all their hard work. The dispatchers also did a great job in keeping things calm and discerning the exact nature of the incidents.

The rope and rescue training the department practices at Bluff Head was instrumental in rescuing the person trapped 30 feet up in a tree.

Various media outlets around the world reported the well incident. Assistant Chief Shove explained that any media inquiries are addressed within the department.

The department has applied for the eighth SAFER grant reimbursement. They are also waiting for a response for both an AFG and AFGS grant. COVID-19 expenses must initially be submitted to FEMA. Any expenses not covered by FEMA will then be submitted to the State. According to State officials, the state will reimburse towns for coronavirus related expenses that were not covered by FEMA, which is usually 25% of the total costs incurred.

## **5. Monthly Business:**

### **5.1 Status of Budget**

The budget is 95.9% expended as of May 31, 2020. This puts the budget over target by 4.6%. The Chief is reviewing encumbrances to see if any can be surrendered. The expected SAFER grant and COVID reimbursements will affect the end of year budget numbers.

The fiscal year will not be closed out until August.

### **5.2 Consider and take action on Monthly Department Expenditures**

Monthly expenditures totaled \$44,492.81. Expenses included replacement of 10 sets of turn out gear. A repair to the fire boat was made last month. Due to a poor design, the exhaust was bringing water into the engine. The repair cost \$2,894.84. Other quotes for the repair came in at almost \$6,000.

There were no other notable expenses.

*Motion: Upon a motion by Commissioner Mitchell, and seconded by Commissioner Hershman, the Board of Fire Commissioners approved the monthly expenditures in the amount of \$44,492.81.*

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

*Opposed: None*

*Abstained: None*

### **5.3 Receive Revenue Report**

At the end of May, revenue is ahead of target by 16.7%. The last deposit for FY 2019-20 will be made on July 30<sup>th</sup>. Of 170 ambulance calls in June, 139 are billable. \$24,000 in COVID related Medicare reimbursements have been deposited to date.

Executive Assistant Erin Gaudet has done an excellent job with the billing, especially since the part time position is still vacant, and the department has been extremely busy due to COVID-19.

The anticipated revenue for year end is \$950,000 - \$960,000. The Commissioners discussed the difficulty in accurately projecting revenue for budgetary purposes. Typically, the projection is based on an average of the revenue for the prior 3-4 years.

### **6. Old Business:**

The department responded to 3,606 calls for FY 2019-20, which is 47 more than last year.

Commissioner Mitchell reported that the Sub-Committee charged with the review and revision of oral board questions, in collaboration with the Assistant Chief, has prepared a list of questions appropriate for Guilford Fire Department candidates. The questions are now being reviewed by Town Counsel, and should be ready to present to the Commission at the August meeting.

### **7. New Business:**

The two new firefighters are on staff and training.

Chairman Wilson asked for a motion to add an Executive Session item to the agenda in order to provide the Commissioners an update on contracts.

*Motion: Upon a motion by Commissioner Mitchell, and seconded by Commissioner Healy, the Board of Fire Commissioners voted to add Item 7.1, Executive Session to discuss and provide update on contracts, and to enter Executive Session at 6:23 p.m.*

Only the Commission members entered Executive Session, there were no invitees.

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

*Opposed: None*

*Abstained: None*

*Motion: Upon a motion by Commissioner Hershman, and seconded by Commissioner Healy, the Board of Fire Commissioners voted to exit Executive Session at 6:50 p.m.*

*In Favor: Healy, Hershman, Mitchell, Wilson*  
*Opposed: None*  
*Abstained: None*

No action was taken in Executive Session.

**8. Public Forum:**

None

*Motion: Upon a motion by Commissioner Mitchell, and seconded by Commissioner Hershman, the meeting was adjourned at 6:50 p.m.*

*In Favor: Healy, Hershman, Mitchell, Wilson*  
*Opposed: None*  
*Abstained: None*

Respectfully Submitted,  
*Karen Quercía*  
Clerk