

Board of Fire Commissioners' Regular Meeting

December 28, 2023

A Regular Meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners was held on Thursday, December 28, 2023 at 6:00 p.m., in Council Chambers of City Hall, 111 N Main Street Bristol, CT

Present: Commissioners Sean Moore, Anthony Benvenuto, Hal Kilby, Dana Jandreau, and Joyce Ptak, Council Member Andrew Howe, and Fire Chief Richard Hart.

Absent: Mayor Jeffrey Caggiano

1. CALL TO ORDER

- a. The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Moore at 6:03pm.

2. EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION

- a. Chief Hart recognized members of the department's C-Shift from Engine 5, Engine 3, and Tower 1 for their actions on November 23, 2023 at a motor vehicle accident.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- a. Resident Joyce Ptak presented Chief Hart a gift from local artist Nigel Winter.

4. COMMUNICATIONS

- a. None.

5. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

- a. On motion of Commissioner Ptak and seconded by Commissioner Jandreau, it was voted: To approve the November 16, 2023 Meeting Minutes. Following a voice vote, the Chairperson declared the motion carried.

6. APPROVAL OF MONTHLY REPORTS

- a. On motion of Commissioner Ptak and seconded by Commissioner Howe, it was voted: To accept the November Monthly Reports. Following a voice vote in which there was no opposition, the Chairperson declared the motion carried.

7. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- a. A summary of the Fire House 3 Building Committee Report was given by Chief Hart and Commissioner Moore.

8. OLD BUSINESS

- a. None.

9. NEW BUSINESS

- a. A request for the Board of Finance was submitted by Chief Hart to clean and remove AFFF firefighting foam that is contaminated with PFAS from 7 apparatus and the replacement of existing stock foam in the amount of \$52,813.00. The state is running a program that would make \$36,000.00 of this process reimbursable due to the foam being non-compliant. On motion of Commissioner Ptak and seconded by Commissioner Jandreau, it was voted: To approve the request in the amount of \$52,813.00 from contingency to the professional fees account. Following a voice vote in which there was no opposition, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

- b. A transfer request was submitted by Chief Hart to move funds from the FEMA Grant Overtime account to the Grant Professional Fees Account to cover the cost of instructors in the amount of \$26,670.00. On motion of Commissioner Jandreau and seconded by Council Member Howe, it was voted: To approve the transfer request in the amount of \$26,670.00 from the grant overtime to the grant professional fees account. Following a voice vote in which there was no opposition, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

- c. Chief Hart discussed with the board the National Fire Protection Association standards for a career department in relation to the department's staffing levels. He advised that the department is non-compliant 100% of the time based on these standards. He stated that the hiring of 16 firefighters would make us 100% compliant 100% of the time. He shared that there is a grant, The SAFER Grant, that would cover all payroll expenses including benefits for the first 3 full years of the new staff's career. He requested permission to go to the Board of Finance and request the hiring of 16 firefighters and to submit an application for the SAFER Grant. Discussion followed including the training costs associated with bringing in 16 new firefighters and what in house academy training vs the state academy training is. In house training was done in the past and very successful. It would cost \$193,000.00 to host in house training and \$125,000.00 for the State Fire Academy. The Chief reiterated that this hiring would increase our on-scene levels from 14 to 18. The NFPA standard is 17, and this would make the department 100% compliant. He also shared that some benefits of this are the reduced liability on the city, increased safety for firefighters, and lower insurance rates for property owners. On motion of Commissioner Jandreau and seconded by Council member Howe, it was voted: To have Chief Hart move forward with the proposal to the Board of Finance for the hiring of 16 firefighters and application of the SAFER Grant. Following a voice vote in which there was no opposition, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

- d. Chief Hart presented the board with the proposed meeting calendar for the 2024 calendar year. Meetings will remain on the 4th Thursday of every month. On motion of Council Member Howe and seconded by Commissioner Ptak, it was voted: To accept the 2024 meeting calendar. Following a voice vote in which there was no opposition, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

10. ADJOURN

- a. On motion of Commissioner Ptak and seconded by Commissioner Benvenuto, it was voted: To adjourn the meeting at 6:48 pm. Following a voice vote, the Chairperson declared the motion carried.

Recording Secretary: Sara Bianchi