

April 12, 2016
Commissioner's Meeting Minutes

Moderator: Good evening. This is the April 12th meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners of Cotuit Fire District. We're starting at 17:30 this evening. This will be the call to order. Is anybody recording? We'll bypass the previous minutes and we'll get that straightened out at our next meeting or if not before. We have the Fire Chief's report, please?

Chief Olsen: Good evening, folks, commissioners. It's Christopher Olsen, and my Fire Chief's report is rescue calls for monthly activities is 42, and we have 12 fire calls. We were down on the fire calls, I noticed, this month, and fire prevention, we were up a little bit but it was at six, so we're starting to see some sales of homes and a few oil inspections as well. A total of 54 calls and instances for the month of March.

The Comstar report is the second on the item for old business. I gave you a copy of the Comstar report that was prepared by Comstar on 04/12/2016, and it says for the month of March, if you read all the way down, the ending balance is \$42,700.56. The beginning was \$56,000. We did have quite a bit of write-offs. It looks like it's \$9062.49 for write-offs, and I'm going to actually call Comstar and find out those write-offs, find out why so high this time. It's usually roughly, well, we've had a couple in the seven and five thousand range, but it's usually about a thousand or two thousand dollars, so that's rather high for write-offs.

Male: Chief, last time you said that there had been a billing mixup.

Chief Olsen: That could be it right there. If it's a billing mixup and they wanted to ... Yeah, you know what it was? They had the wrong Cotuit Fire District, or they had something different than what we reported, so maybe that's what it is. They're probably catching up on it, and catching up on that, and it's all squared away with Comstar now. Again, our net ending balance is \$42,700.56 since the beginning of the year.

Okay, the third is the budget, and if you have your appropriation seats that the assistant treasurer sent us. This is a completion of until 03/30/2016 when it was produced, 75% of our budget, and we're looking at roughly one, two, three, four, five line items that are concerning. We'll take the first one. The first one is 5150 on the second page at 133%. It's over \$3345. That's the other category for wages. We only had \$10,000 in there. We've spent \$13,345, and I believe some of that is to do with the line of duty, and I think that's what they're using some of that for, that 5150, so I'm going to have to look at that, how the treasurer pulled that out.

The second concern is the building itself, the repairs and maintenance, which is 5243, is the line item, and it's 122% over. It's up to \$17,701. We did a lot to the

building this year, and that was rather substantial, from the flooring to the painting to our septic system that is failing. Every fourth month, we end up paying 500 and some odd dollars to get that pumped out, so that certainly needs to be addressed in this next coming fiscal year or looking forward for the next fiscal year, FY 18 instead of FY 17.

Male: Chief, excuse me. With regard to the septic, the adjacent building has a certified septic system, doesn't it?

Chief Olsen: It does.

Male: Is there any way to offload some of the burden on the station septic as an interim measure until we can get a long-term solution addressed?

Chief Olsen: Let me ask the expert on that, and that would be the person we use. I'll see if there is any stipulations, any regulations that we can or cannot do. Certainly. I will definitely look at that.

The next line item in concern is 8% over, and that's maintenance to the protective clothing. We had used the rest of our protective clothing that that's what the firefighters use, the PPEs that they use for going to burning buildings. We have \$14,000 and we spent \$15,251. We're trying to get everybody up to two sets of gear each, and this did it, so we're there, and now we're just going to slowly replace three sets so that we don't have to come to the district and ask for that 41,000 or 40,000 that we used at one time, so hopefully we can span this out.

The other line item that we see that is in higher than it should be is 5270, which is your telephones. We seem to go over the telephones quite a bit. That hasn't changed. We probably do need to look at that line item for next year to switch it out or to release some of our land lines that we have, and the 911 dispatch, that's all we're going to spend. We're not spending any more from that line item. They gave us the bill and we paid it, and that is the appropriations.

At the end of the appropriations on the third page is our budget, and it's at 66% spent of 75% of the total budget, so we're certainly concerned with those line items that we've gone over, and we're certainly concerned with those percentages, so we're going to keep an eye on those.

The next item we have in new business is a three, five, and 10-year plan. I've started to do a three, five, and 10-year plan. I have a template established and we're moving forward with that, so it is obviously a progress. It has begun, so we're going to continue to get the three-year plan finished first and then each month we're going to add more to the five-year plan and then to a 10-year plan, so when the district is looking to see where we're going, at least there is a vision that we have where we're heading.

Male: Chief, is there any single item that stands out on the three-year plan where it stands now as the most crucial?

Chief Olsen: Obviously the fire engine that we have and if the district is looking at ... We're looking at \$50,000 to the older fire engine that we're going to hopefully rehab, and if the district okays that money then that is going to be substantial, so we can lower that down, but that is the first ticket. The other is looking at a roof. The roof is an older roof for the building, so we're looking at the roof, so that's another big-ticket item, as well as the septic system with the parking lot and the propane tank for the generator.

If we tend to need to redesign our septic, then of course that's going to eat up ... It's right in the middle of our parking lot, so at that time we might as well set up a natural gas line going right into the generator instead of a propane tank, get that propane tank out of there so we have natural gas going in the ... We have natural gas going in the building, but we need to have a separate entity for that generator, so those are the four items that we really need to focus on.

For our personnel, obviously, I know it says "A few serving many" on our trucks, and that is a concern, as always. It would be nice to look at the chain of command, looking at the chain of command as well as an EMS officer.

The Fire Chief has a lot of hats. I'm wearing about seven different hats. That's quite a bit to take on, as the EMS, the fire prevention office, the Fire Chief, the paramedic. It's just a lot, so we should be looking at getting a chain of command in place a little bit tighter than what we have. We don't have anybody in between in office or a lieutenant, which is supposedly on a [piece 00:23:11], to a shift officer, which is a captain or Deputy Fire Chief coming up the ranking file so we don't have a chain of command. It's a very small chain of command.

We don't have an EMS officer or a fire prevention officer. That's what I'm doing right now, so those are the things that we really need to start focusing on and talking about and seeing what we can do, even if we fill it with the people we have, but we need to come up with a good process, and that's what the three, five, and 10-year plan is going to do. It's going to outline all the issues that I see going forward from here. The last item is a reorganization of the board, and I'll step out for that one.

Male: Thank you.

Chief Olsen: Thank you, sir.

Moderator: Last item is reorganization of the board. I'm planning to step down, but not out, and I would at this time nominate Dr. Rick Pisano as chairman.

Male: I'll second.

Moderator: All in favor, aye?

Male: Aye.

Moderator: Thank you.

Male: Thank you.

Moderator: With that, public comment. Yes, ma'am?

Cynthia: Cynthia Gardner, 94 School Street. Gentlemen, prior to tonight's meeting, after the last meeting, I had sent you an e-mail requesting the chief's report to be more entailed. We have quite a few issues with personnel that haven't been discussed yet as of this evening. We have one gentleman whose probation will be ending in two weeks who has yet to fulfill requirements of this job, and I would like to know what you're doing to ensure that the district residents are having the proper coverage.

I know last night after the Prudential Committee meeting I happened to stop by the fire station and it was another evening that we only had one paramedic on duty, which is below what we agreed to have for our staffing levels, so I wanted to know what your plans are to ensure the district has proper coverage, and I'd also like to know how many firefighters we currently have out on disability, when they went out, when they are expected back. When you were going over the budget, there was one line item that wasn't discussed. I don't have the number because I don't have it in front of me, but it was over by \$130,000, so I would like to know what that entailed.

Chief Olsen: I don't know what the line item for \$130,000 is. If the person could be more specific on that, that would be great. I'd certainly love to answer the question if I know what it is. I am a paramedic. I'm on duty 24/7, so if we need another medic, I go, and that's also ... We have a mutual aid. There's some circumstances that happens. Other departments have people calling in sick, so they don't have what they fulfilled to as well, so that answers that question. The LODI, the line of duty injury, we had one firefighter come back already and another firefighter out, so we have a total of three at this time, and I think that's all the questions answered.

Male: Thank you, chief. No, it's on.

Christine: Okay.

Male: You can [inaudible 00:27:09].

Christine: Christine Rebelo, 309 School Street. I'm just curious what the status is with the union negotiations, whether you're still negotiating, whether you've gone to

arbitration, whether you're settled, whatever. I'm out of the loop and I have not been here and it's my own fault for being out of the loop.

Rick Pisano: There was a meeting with the union yesterday, a head of the Prudential Committee ... This is Commissioner Pisano. I keep forgetting to tell this poor transcriber who the heck I am. The meeting involved putting aside a number of issues for revisiting at a later date, but we made a salary offer and the union is taking it to their membership.

Chief Olsen: I found the line item that the former person of the district is asking about, and it's 5130 where it says "Salaries Full-Time." It's on page 2 where that line item doesn't have any money to it, and that is full-time injury. We never priced it out because we have insurance for this, and it says \$129,097.28. That's what we're in [inaudible 00:28:39] with because there is no money for that. That's our insurance. That's what covers that. We get \$1800 a week from these things. The fire department doesn't see it. It goes in the general fund, so I hope that answered the question.

Male: Thank you, chief.

Moderator: There's one firefighter that's coming up on his [year 00:29:09]. Will you speak to that, please?

Chief Olsen: I apologize. That was a question that I did not answer. My apologies on that, and thank you. That firefighter has taken the exam that it was asked to. He has until April 23rd to produce a paramedic certification card. That was what was on the ticket, and he has taken it, and he will find out today, tomorrow, so it takes about two or three days, so hopefully we'll have a positive on that and we can all move forward.

Moderator: Thank you. Do you have anything else?

Rick Pisano: No.

Moderator: There being nothing else, I declare the meeting closed. All in favor say aye.

Male: Aye.

Moderator: Aye. Thank you. Good evening.