

## **Fire Commissioner's Meeting**

### **Draft Minutes**

**August 11, 2020**

Present: Commissioner's Rick Pisano, Adam Zais, Kevin Conley, Fire Chief Paul Rhude.

### **Meeting minutes from July 2020**

#### **Chairman Pisano**

- Trying to figure out the mechanics of live and Zoom meetings in upcoming months re maximum capacity. May need to have attendance by reservation up to maximum then the option of attending via Zoom. Still need to resolve the problems of visibility and sound recording.
- Motion to accept last month's minutes "as they are" due to inaudible recordings
  - Second, all in favor

#### **Public Comment**

- Cynthia Gardner – can public comment be moved to the end?
  - Yes

#### **Fire Chief Report:**

##### **Reviewed the Report:**

- 58 Responses
  - 45 Medical
  - 1 Hazardous condition
  - 12 False Alarm calls

##### **Administration:**

- PPE supply remains good
- COVID update – still no positive case with a Cotuit address since April 10, 2020
  - Question by Commissioner Conley regarding Barnstable County and Cape in general – COVID update? Hospital total?
    - Answer by Chief Rhude – Barnstable County saw a significant increase in the last few weeks in Barnstable County. Ranging from 12 every 3-day period to around 40. Not sure regarding the Town of Barnstable.
    - Both Cape Cod and Falmouth Hospital do not have a very high admission rate. Very low for the Cape.
  - Question by Commissioner Zais regarding if application is needed to FEMA then who handles it?
    - Answer by Chief Rhude – application is through MEMA for the 75% reimbursement expenses. Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer are putting together the application package and will go in within the next month.
      - Online conference call with MEMA representative took place a few weeks ago.

- Assistant Treasurer Lisa Haven seeking reimbursement and additional funds from Medicaid for ambulance runs which is Cotuit Fire District first time seeking this.
  - She was able to recoup:
    - \$33,544 that goes into General fund to reimburse the district for any COVID expenses
      - (She takes into account training for FF / depreciation on equipment)
  - She is also working on reimbursement for COVID expenses
  - Cotuit Fire Department should receive 75% for direct COVID cost from FEMA/MEMA in grant money
  - Town of Barnstable receives Federal Funds that they have the ability to disperse to the Districts. Treasurer is working with Town Finance to recoup additional 25% from them to potentially receive 100% reimbursement for all COVID expenses.
  
- **Capital Plan** is attached to cloud file. Same vehicle plan but it breaks up the facilities potential expenses into different categories including:
  - Septic
  - Paving
  - Roofing
  - Interior
  - Renovations
    - It is an approximation of what the expenses might be over the next 35 years.
    - Will be posted on website.
  
- **Open Cape Status:**
  - Fiber in the building and into the water tower which significantly cut costs
  - Open Cape will put in modem to connect internet to Open Cape and will be switched from Comcast.
    - Comcast expense will be dropped and a voice-over IT system will be installed to get a better features.
      - Question by Commissioner Conley – Will Comcast be dropped 100%?
        - Answer by Chief Rhude – Fire Department pays for the Comcast internet connection data only. Union pays for the cost of the TV.
  - Re: Hot Spots
    - Used to be Verizon Hot Spots in the vehicles but modems were getting old
      - Hot spot in the engine in the ambulance used for mapping / forwarding calls to vehicles and patient care reports in the ambulance so that they can connect to cloud database for patient information when treating patients
    - Now FF Emerson put into the vehicles FirstNet (government plan) through AT&T that allows government organizations to connect with high-speed
      - FirstNet gives priority to government accounts that have a high-usage event
        - ambulances and engines have priority
    - Now cost is \$35/per two vehicles = a savings of over \$100/month over Verizon cost.
    - Costs went down – speed went up – connection/reliability went up

### **Training:**

- Search training will be happening next month – once date is known it will be forwarded and make sure video will be posted

### **Personnel:**

- Back injury – due back September 3, 2020.
- FF Matt Judge was offered position as a call firefighter
  - Scheduled to take his PAT test
    - Cotuit FD is waiting for his physical/agility test through the state
  - Once completed, he will be appointed to the call department

### **Apparatus:**

- Car 261 still on order and should be about a month out

### **Facilities:**

- Still working on getting quotes for doors
  - Question by Commissioner Conley regarding progress on locks?
    - Answer by Chief Rhude – Not much progress and will get on that ASAP – High Priority.

### **Old Business:**

- **Letters of appreciation** for Firefighters Emerson and Clarke have been placed on cloud file and will be sent to Firefighter Pete Emerson and Acting Lieutenant Shane Clarke.
- **Contract for the Deputy Chief position in cloud file “Deputy Chief Contract Revision August 11”**
  - Prudential has given the required approval
  - Contract draft is the next step to making this a filled position
    - Commissioner Conley’s questions regarding the draft:
      - Question 7.1 “10 days to carry each year” – is this accruing or is there going to be a ceiling?
        - Chief Rhude answered: stating that the most amount anyone can have is 40 days.
      - Question 7.2 question regarding sick time and his concerns for this non-union/managerial position:
        - Pointed out that 25% buy-back after a max of 200 days would mean there could be 50 days on the books which is a liability of \$22,000.00 at the current contract rate.
          - Does not see sick days as a pay back and has concerns
        - Chief Rhude answered: with current personnel, this could not happen; however, with a new-hire they could get up to 200 days
      - Commissioner Conley questioned if Chief Rhude was going to come back to the Board of Commissioner’s with a review/evaluation of the Deputy Chief.
        - Chief Rhude answered yes.



- Even if mechanics are worked out the Governor’s restrictions on space and numbers will limit the number of live meetings. There is no pre-established policy which, if too many people show up, meeting may need to be cancelled.
  - Chairman Pisano – if mechanics do work, there could be a website posting for an “invitational sign-up” for people who may be interested in attending the meeting live and if the number exceeds the number of seating then they can attend via Zoom.
    - Commissioner Zais – agrees
    - Chief Rhude – only 16 people in Town Hall at one time
      - Only 11 public seats
    - Commissioner Conley – agrees with sign-up
- Chairman Pisano has been asked by the Prudential Committee to have a representative of the by-law committee for this coming year and is willing to volunteer for that position.
  - No objections by any of the Commissioners.

### **Special District Meeting**

- Prudential Committee was moving towards a date for a Special District Meeting with regards to Water Department request for funding for a vehicle.
  - Chairman Pisano and the Chairman of the Water Department have had an open-ended discussion regarding the current Chief’s vehicle being available, on a limited amount of time basis during the COVID emergency, to them because they need the capacity for their workers which means asking the Chief and Deputy Chief to share the new vehicle and, when necessary, use their private vehicles and get mileage reimbursement and save the district some money for up to 12 months. The numbers could be significant in district savings overall, but mechanics need to be worked out.
    - Question by Commissioner Zais –:
      1. Instead of the Water Commissioner acquiring a vehicle, they would forestall that investment, potentially forever by using the Chief’s former vehicle?
      2. At point would be when this would end?
      3. Concerned regarding shifting the availability of a resource that was prepared to be a Fire Fighting resource.
    - Commissioner Conley – Chief’s current vehicle has a few concerns:
      1. Has some challenges / mechanical concerns.
      2. Advantage to having two vehicles was that there was gear inside the Deputy’s vehicle that would be available in the event of an emergency and limitations may arise in a critical situation if the Deputy’s vehicle was loaned out, then the response would be in personal vehicle without the equipment.
      3. Are there any other alternatives that the Water Department could look at?
        - Government Surplus? Short-term rental?
          - Chief Rhude – Fire Department was only planning on using current vehicle for one more year. Water Department only needs a vehicle for one year. Deputy

and Chief Rhude would find a way to share a vehicle back and forth and use personal vehicles as well.

- Question by Chairman Pisano – Other financing issues that might arise that may require Special District Meeting?
  - Answer by Chief Rhude – No specifics but looking to refinance some of the debt and have public vote on those funding options. Overspent in the budget in Water and Treasurer due to COVID expenses and needed to transfer money to cover the overages.

### **SOGs**

- Chairman Pisano –
  - Social Media, Ground Ladder Training and Vehicle Operations Module
    - Commissioner Zais – regarding Social Media
      - Appears that it has been compiled and could use some further editing for another time
    - Commissioner Conley –
      - Regarding Ground Ladder Training
        - Needs formatting/spelling
      - Regarding Social media
        - It appears it was taken from another department
          - Good start – needs to be fine tuned
  - Amento Arbitration
    - Need to have an executive session asap
      - Contractual obligations regarding the arbitrator
        - Executive session date: Monday August 17, 2020 @ 5:30PM

### **Public Comment**

- Carol Zais
  - 56 High Street? What was happening?
    - Chief Rhude – performing FF drills. Entered 1<sup>st</sup> floor only.
- Cindy Gardner
  - Wanted to clarify she was referring to Article 11 Section 8 Page 14 of By Laws from last month's meeting
  - Regarding sharing vehicle with Water Department
    - Has anyone reached out to Donald Gorton with the Dept. of Revenue and asked if funds can be sent on property not under their jurisdiction? Gray area.
      - Chairman Pisano answered that he would email Mr. Gorton and ask for his ideas.
  - At Prudential Committee Meeting, they discussed the VFIF Policy deductible going from \$1000 to \$10,000.
    - When was this discussed among the Commissioner's Board?
    - How many times did we file a claim with them in the past 2 years?
    - How much money did the district receive in reimbursement?
  - Regarding promotions – didn't pass the Promotion Exam in December 2018 because there wasn't an opening and going forth, the Promotional Exam would be finished once there was an opening.

- Has that ever been finished?
  - Chairman Pisano and Chief Rhude answered that the Promotional Exam was conducted late Spring/early Summer. Brought in a private company for the remainder of the promotional process.

Motion to adjourn, second, all in favor.