

Fire Commissioner's Meeting

Draft Minutes

October 13, 2020

Present: Chairman Rick Pisano, Commissioner Adam Zais, Commissioner Kevin Conley, Fire Chief Paul Rhude and Deputy Chief Pouliot

Meeting minutes from September 15, 2020: Motion to accept, all in favor.

Public Comment: None

Fire Chief Report:

- 71 Total Responses for September
 - o 44 Medical;
 - o 1 Hazardous condition – wires down;
 - o 26 Service Good Intent or false alarm calls; and
 - o 2 emergency vote responses that FD responded with Com to in September .

Administration:

- PPE Supply is good
 - o **COVID UPDATE**
 - 4 COVID positives in Cotuit in the last 3 weeks;
 - 3 Possible COVID-19's in Cotuit.
 - o One of the three is a patient at CCH.
 - Last positive was back in April so this has been a bit of a surge which is an anomaly; and
 - Barnstable County's numbers have been consistent – not much of a surge over the county – 7/day.

Technology Update:

- Simultaneous ZOOM and Commissioners meeting.
 - o Working with Commissioner Zais' wife – Carol Zais.
 - District camera is up and running.
 - Cable connects to the existing audio system already in place so live simultaneous Zoom and Commissioner meetings are able to move forward anytime in the future with audio that is as good as if one was present.
 - o *Chairman Pisano said he hopes that by next month the Commissioners could meet at Freedom Hall using the system with significant social distancing in the building*
 - *Would still have to address regulating attendance beyond the Commissioners and the rest of the public.*

- *There will be a couple of meetings before the next Commissioners meeting to try that set up.*
- Open Cape is up and running and has been for a while.
- There is a consultant working to help get the cloud storage moved from existing data workplace to a Microsoft SharePoint system.
 - Eliminating the secure networks – the IT company that was being used and just going with IT consultants *as needed*.
 - Most IT support is done by Pro EMS – ambulance billing company at no charge so there will be significantly lower charges once the system is moved over to the Microsoft SharePoint system.

Training:

- Last month was the obstacle course Scott training, air pack training in the 56 High Street building.
 - Equipment that was borrowed was returned to Com
- This month will be hand line training and a combination hose line training with a Scott Air Pack.
 - Will be done Thursday 10/15/2020 from 9-1pm at one of the Water Pumping Stations behind the old Sons of Italy.
 - *Chairman Pisano stated that he watched last month's obstacle training and was impressed and surprised with the Firemen's agility with the full gear and packs on moving through an obstacle course.*
 - *He asked if any of the other Districts avail themselves to use the course when it was set up?*
 - Chief Rhude answered that although there was interest, there were no other district used the course although he made offers to Sandwich, Mashpee and Com.
- Still working on boat training.
 - Coast Guard is interested in doing a boat training program in the 3 bays – Cotuit Bay, North Bay or West Bay or a combination.
 - They are awaiting input from the other Fire Districts to see who else is interested.
 - They are hoping to put a program on and complete it by mid-November.
 - Hopeful to get more Cotuit FF trained in the next couple of weeks.
- Pro-EMS reports attached.
 - *Chairman Pisano pointed out that there were only 3 people filling out evaluations.*
 - *One person had a lot of pain/discomfort in the ambulance;*
 - *Pulled overall rating down; and*

- *Will there be quarter or semi-annual data compiled to look at because that might provide numbers that may make it more statistically significant?*
 - Chief Rhude explained that the reports have been provide on a 3-month basis but will ask if he can get an annualized report.

Personnel: Nothing new

Apparatus:

- New Chief's car came in a few weeks ago.
 - Still waiting to get graphics put on the side of it.
- All vehicles have had the service with the exception of the brush breaker.
 - Waiting to get mobile company back to service it.

Facilities:

SECURITY / CAMERAS

- **Primary purpose for security is for dispatch to see what is going on in the station**
 - They would view it with their CAD computers (computer-aided dispatch computers) through a web-based portal and, if something were to happen, the recording is archived for 3 weeks in order to be able to be accessed.
- Chief received more Security Quotes:
 - **GIM Security** on the North Shore came in a little over \$9,000.00.
 - **Seaside Alarms** (local company that has already done work with the fire alarm systems) came in with a quote of \$5,600.00.
 - However, the alarm system that Seaside was going to install was put on hold by the US Government.
 - All Government facilities are forbidden from using this specific equipment from HIK Vision.
 - Made in China.
 - Significant security concerns.
 - **Valley Communications**
 - Did COM's system and the water department's fiber optic and security system and called back and stated that they could reduce their price with different equipment.
 - On state bid and are covered under State Bid Laws.
 - Valley Communications should have firmer numbers by 10/14/2020.
 - Different equipment would significantly lower the price.
 - *Chairman Pisano commented that it is difficult to make a comparison in these bids because of the difference in what each company is offering.*
 - *Valley was only quoted for three (3) cameras in their system; and*

- *Seaside had five (5) and the option for variable focal cameras but only if all 5 cameras were upgraded which would be another \$900.00 on their bid making it more like \$6,600.00.*
 - *Commissioner Zais questioned what it was that companies were offering as it seems that it was widespread.*
 - *What should be the coverage? We should have the entire exterior covered.;*
 - *What potential extras might there be to add to the cost? (cable lengths, lifts, etc.);*
 - *How many cameras?;*
 - *Where should they be?; and*
 - *What's the equipment for viewing the archives or the live feed?*
 - Chief Rhude answered:
 - All companies were told that the front apron needed to be covered / all concrete padding in front of the fire station / the entire parking lot / the entry door from the outside / both interiors of both apparatus bays.
 - All companies were told regarding viewing that it needed to be viewed on a web-based computer or a web-based phone.
 - Valley Communications had a specialized camera that was more expensive that covered a larger area – 270 °.
 - *Commissioner Conley asked Chief Rhude which company would be his top pick?*
 - Chief Rhude answered Valley Communications.
 - Most professional;
 - They know what hardware companies are and are not allowed by state law;
 - They've done work for the Fire District and other Fire Departments;
 - They come well recommended; and
 - Gave the most detailed quote.
 - *Commissioner Conley asked Chairman Pisano if the funding was approved at this point?*
 - Chairman Pisano answered that it was.
 - *Commissioner Conley asked the Board for the Chief to have the authority to move forward with Valley Communications as it has gone on a long time.*
 - Chief stated that during September's Board meeting that he was already given the authority to move forward as long as he did a "reasonable diligent effort to try to get more quotes and get a better deal" and if Valley Communications came back with a better quote then to just get it done.

DOORS

- Shepley Lumber Company will be going by on 10/14/2020 to speck out the door and the locking mechanism.
 - o Hopefully by the end of the week there will be a better plan on getting the doors and locks replaced.

SOG'S

- COVID-19 OPERATIONS
 - o Looking to make some revisions to operations around the Fire Station to bring it more in-line with what other departments are doing and what seems to have worked in other places.
 - CDC recommendations regarding wearing face masks when working in close proximity less than 6ft apart;
 - Allowing off-duty firefighters, commissioners and family members, if needed in the station on a shift-by-shift basis;
 - Depending on how the shift operates masks will be required.
 - Station coverage: PRIOR coverage was the crew was required to stay in the fire truck outside whenever they're covering other stations;
 - This has been relaxed (after Russo's landscape fire where they sat in the truck for four hours):
 - o Masks within 6 feet;
 - o Following all CDC recommendations; and
 - o Following all State requirements for social distancing.
 - Changed some patient care reports:
 - Due to new hospital system which is now compatible with every Fire Department on Cape Cod or every rescues software.
 - o They will electronically take patient care reports (instead of photocopying and scanning them into the computer and then re-entering the data).
 - This means that crews can transport the patient physically / give the oral report to the doctor / put the ambulance back in service and do the report on the way back – or once they get back to the station and transmit it electronically;
 - Reduces the amount of time that the ambulance is out of town; and
 - Increases the availability of them to respond to the next call.
 - o *Commissioner Pisano questioned the protocol for ambulance disinfection was?*
 - Chief Rhude said that in the old draft, it was No. 8 – “As soon as a patient has been transferred to a medical facility, all staff shall return to the ambulance for disinfection and completion of the PCR.”;

- The PCR part was the primary part that was being dropped; and
 - Chief Rhude will check on the disinfection guidelines in the EMS guidelines and if it is not, then he will make sure that it is.
 - Need a guideline that says the ambulance is disinfected after every patient (which has always been done).
- Since the start of COVID-19, the response protocol for all ambulance calls has changed:
 - **OLD WAY:** The ambulance respond with two (2) people and a pickup truck with one (1) with the primary focus on reducing contacts with any patient and attempting, whenever possible, to transport with two (2) providers to the hospital (one in the back and one driver) and bring the third person back to the station; and
 - Transported a total of two (2) known COVID-19 patients in March.
 - **NEW WAY:** Whenever there is a Priority One or a Priority Two call, there will be three (3) people in the ambulance:
 - There is a value with having a 3rd person in the ambulance.
 - They provide the highest level of care;
 - Looking to cover the station with additional people whenever possible; and
 - Want to make sure the second overlapping call is always covered with at least one person in the station ready to respond.
 - It is a requirement when they are a high-level of medical care.
 - Priority One patient – there must be three (3) people in the ambulance; and
 - Priority Two patient – borderline – sometimes they require two and sometimes they require 3. Sometimes they change en-route and that extra person is needed after they started.
 - **NEW WAY:** Whenever there is Priority Three call – which is typically non-life threatening then there will be three (3) people responding IF there is an additional person in the station.
 - If Chief Rhude or Deputy Pouliot are in the station on-duty then three (3) people will respond.
 - Best balance to cover the station whenever possible and provide the best level of care for every call.
 - There are Priority Three calls that do require three (3) people:
 - Psychological calls;
 - Physical threat to the crew where a second person is required in the back for safety; and
 - Sexual assault calls (two in the back are required).
 - **SUSPECTED COVID-19 CALL:**
 - Minimize the exposure.
 - Possibly only expose one person to the possibly infected patient.

- *Commissioner Zais questioned the word “exceptions” as opposed to “conditions” in the draft?*
 - Chief Rhude explained that Lieutenant Shane Clark drafted the document, but that “conditions” would be a better fit rather than “exceptions”.

Old Business:

Chairman Pisano:

- Covered Zoom live meeting status and security upgrades / information technology
- Old Cotuit Elementary School discussion:
 - Since the last meeting, several community organizations have expressed interest in the potential uses of the property and the concern about the status of it.
 - Prudential Committee is stepping up to a lead position in trying to pull together lots of different stakeholders and interested parties.
 - *Commissioner Zais questioned to what degree is there a concern about or a plan for more space for the actual station either in its part or in its entirety with regard to the discussion with the Town of Barnstable Asset Committee.*

Chairman Pisano answered:

- The long term view about facilities for the Fire Department itself is something that has been out there but there has not been much room for consideration of it at this time but perhaps down the road there might be substantial community interest and support.
- Likelihood of future meetings of multiple stakeholders.

Chief Rhude answered:

- Fire trucks and ambulances are purchased if they fit until the Fire Department is maxed out on space but the district as a whole does not have a long-term facilities plan – no long-term fire department plan, no long-term water department plan, or Prudential Committee plan. This may give us some opportunity for that, but a lot has been learned from past discussions of district space and a community discussion is needed to figure out what the community wants and what direction they want to go.

Finalizing Chief Rhude’s new contract

- Discuss Salary in November in executive session;
- Discuss Chief’s hours and comp time questions;
 - Chief Rhude circulated a brief paragraph from the Com Districts contract:
 - “The Board recognizes that the chief may devote a great deal of time outside normal business hours to conduct Fire Department business therefore the Chief shall be allowed to make adjustments to his schedule for flexing hours provided such flexing of hours does not adversely impact the Fire Department operations.”

- 3.1 Would remain the same; and
- 3.2 the phrase “as he shall deem appropriate” was questioned as it is leaving the Chief to be the sole authority.
 - Replacing 3.2 with Com’s version in that it gives a standard by which the Board directly has authority to apprise and intervene.

Move to put that language in in place of 3.2 – All in favor.

- Discuss health insurance stipend;
 - Since the last negotiations, the District has recognized the utility and union contract negotiations of allowing (encouraging) people to take advantage of -- if they have the option of not needing District Health Insurance and supplemented that with a stipend.
 - Chief’s contract should have similar language to what the union contract provides which is a 50% stipend if the Chief or any future Chief is in a position where they do not need to use district health insurance.
 - This would be a stipend in addition to salary.
- *Commissioner Conley and Commissioner Zais requested that Salary and Health insurance be a part of Executive session as they are “explicitly tied together”.*
- Chairman Pisano stated that the discussion of salary and health insurance will be discussed in Executive Session.
- *Commissioner Conley asked regarding the boat plan?*
 - **Chief Rhude answered that the Fire Department that the boat is taken out sometime in January.**
 - **Not sure about Santa this year**
- *Commissioner Conley asked about the dock?*
 - **Chief Rhude answered that he spoke with DJ McKinnon and he said that the conversations are still on-going, and action will follow shortly.**

New Business

- There was a question of appointing a representative of our board to represent the Fire Board in such discussions as the one regarding the Old Cotuit Elementary School, etc.
 - *Do the Fire Commissioners want a single representative or is this something that is important enough that the Fire Commissioners would want to participate in as a board?*
 - **Commissioner Zais answered**
 - **From the standpoint of community optics showing a great deal of support whether it is whatever decisions are made benefit**

the Fire Commissioner board specifically is important and favors the idea of all Fire Commissioners being involved.

- Commissioner Conley agreed.
- Chairman Pisano – Leave this as Committee of the Whole is the Fire Commissioner’s wish as Prudential leads this process forward. (no vote needed)

Motion to adjourn, all in favor.