

Fire Commissioner's Meeting

Draft Minutes

April 13, 2021

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

Meeting minutes from March 9, 2021

- Meeting minutes from March 9, 2021
 - Motion to accept – all in favor

Public Comment

- Cynthia Gardner asked to postpone public comment to the end
 - Asked how long the fire truck was loaned to Sandwich and the dates? Does not see the rationale with sending Cotuit's backup engine to a Town with multiple engines.
 - Chief Rhude said that Sandwich used it for 2 days.
 - Commissioner Zais answered that it was driven by need
- Carol Zais put up the Barnstable County COVID 19 Help Line phone number is on Chat.

Fire Chief Report:

Administration:

- PPE Supply is good
- COVID vaccine
 - Town of Barnstable Health Dept was able to get ahold of Pfizer vaccine which the Cotuit FD assisted in giving to 10 homebound Cotuit residents
 - Will go back out in 2 weeks for 2nd shot
 - *Chairman Pisano asked how do people sign up for the shot?*
 - **Chief Rhude answered that you can call the Town Health Dept. and go through them. Also, Cotuit FD advertised on their FB page. Some people called the FD directly. Church also cross-posted on their FB page instructing the public to call FD. Cotuit FD has volunteered their services to not only give the shot to those that are homebound but also to anyone in the community (i.e. teachers, of the school system) but there is a supply problem right now and the Town cannot get ahold of the vaccine but it is being worked on**
 - *Commissioner Conley stated that there may be many of those that are homebound that do not have access to the internet and asked*

that those on the Zoom meeting tonight reach out to anyone they know and offer Cotuit FD's services.

- **Chief Rhude added that the FD did receive a few calls from those that did not have internet access and needed the shot – the FD was able to help them and they will continue to follow up on any leads received for people that are looking for the vaccine.**

Responses:

- 65 Total responses
 - 3 Fires
 - 1 Brush fire / 2 stove fires confined to the stove
 - 47 Medical Calls
 - 3 Hazardous condition
 - 2 gas leak / 1 wire down
 - 12 Service – Good Intent / False alarm calls

PRO EMS REPORT

- Attached

Training:

- March 29th and March 30th, 2021 FD did brush fire training
 - 29th was tactical – classroom based
 - 30th was brush breaker operations out at Joint Base Cape Cod
 - It was inter-departmental – most of the upper Cape Fire Departments were there and that was through the State Forest Fire warden
 - *Chairman Pisano asked if Cotuit FD took their own equipment?*
 - **Chief answered that Cotuit FD's brush breaker was used as well as Falmouth, Mashpee, Joint Base, Bourne – all used on the brush breaker trail**
 - **W. Barnstable was there with their staff**
 - **Comm was there with their tender**
- Planned on having a Department of Environmental protection oil spill drill on 4.13.21 but, there was a last-minute request to be involved in retired Chief Walter Spike Dottridge's services
 - Took the back-up engine and delivered his casket from John Lawrence funeral home to Mosswood Cemetery
 - Had several volunteers from the FD come in and help
 - Added a remembrance to Spike Dottridge on the FB page and it will be in the annual report as well (pictures and a bio) who was on the FD for 40 years and Fire Chief for 8 of those years.
- April 20, 2021 will be a Vehicle Extrication Drill
 - There is one (1) older vehicle in the lot next to the Fire Station and will be getting another one to practice the vehicle extrication techniques

- A manufacturer is coming down to do the drill and show the newest techniques and equipment
 - May 2021 – looking to get the Mobile Fire Training Unit
 - County has a new mobile interior structure fire attack training trailer
 - Made up of a 40’ long shipping container that is compartmentalized and fed with natural gas
 - No hazardous materials
 - Simulates an interior fire attack
 - Will be advertised on FB in case public is able to attend
 - *Chairman Pisano asked if the parking lot of the ball field could be used?*
- **Chief Rhude answered that the parking lot of the school or the ball field could be used as long as there is permission (it will not fit in the lot next to the Fire Station)**
 - **Possibly Freedom Hall parking lot – but parking there is a bit of an issue**

Personnel:

- Nothing new to report

Apparatus:

- 0266 is in the water in service and back at the same dock that it was at in 2020
 - Needed new batteries and received them from off Cape
- Engine 263 – back up engine
 - Talking to Sandwich FD regarding sharing resources
 - Started talking about sharing an ambulance which then turned to sharing a backup engine
 - Sandwich asked to look at it – Cotuit brought it to Sandwich
 - Sandwich did a bunch of repairs to it
 - Water leaks
 - Air leaks
 - Trained their shifts on it
 - Ran it for a couple of days
 - Sent it back to Cotuit FD with repairs done at no cost and in great shape
- **Chairman Pisano commented that the arrangement with the sharing of a spare apparatus is very helpful going forward and being able to work it out**
- **Chief Rhude also commented that he hoped to expand to shared purchasing programs so the purchases can be the same fire trucks and the same ambulances in order to get them at lower cost and each fire department can have “like” equipment so**

it is common knowledge where all tools are stored on the equipment.

- *Commissioner Zais asked about the reception of others when the Chief has the “shared” conversations with other departments? Is there a lot of pushback or are people enthusiastic with the idea?*
- **Chief Rhude answered that Sandwich, W. Barnstable and Mashpee were all very excited. Other departments are slow to respond.**
 - **A lot of fire departments custom design their own fire trucks so this “shared” experience is a different way of looking at it.**

Budget

Facilities:

- Video surveillance security system is up and running
 - On the computers at the fire station
 - On Comm Dispatch
 - They have the ability to see which trucks are in the apparatus bay / which are on the front ramp / front door
 - Current version of firmware on the recorder that the FD has does not allow for a web-based link
 - Looking to get the newer version that does allow for the web link for access
 - If any of the Commissioners want access then Chief Rhude asked them to email to him a note and he would be able to send them installation software and the link
- Construction:
 - Bunk rooms that are taking place of the offices are all framed up with sheetrock
 - All done painting the new rooms and now are painting the old rooms
 - Received 2-3 bids on the flooring (cost to replace the carpet is \$10k)
 - *Chairman Pisano asked if the flooring bid are all for the interlocking vinyl?*
 - **Chief Rhude answered yes – it is a vinyl industrial floor and will be taking the place of any carpet**
 - **Easier to clean / looks better / lasts a lot longer**

SCHOOL PROPERTY –

Commissioner Zais – Elementary School update

- Articles on the Annual District Meeting that pertain to the potential fiscal obligations that the District would incur in order to continue moving forward with finalizing this inter-governmental transfer of the land – including the school and 3 acres of woodlands – total of 8 acres out of 13.5 acres.
- In addition, conversations between the Town and the school committee have indicated that the Town is willing to - in perpetuity – put certain covenants on the land that they would retain which currently are where the tennis courts are situated, the small ball field and a rectangular sort of field – about 5 acres – which they would retain and be obligated to maintain – including the driveway – from the main street – instead of leaving it open as to what the town might do with that 5 acres
- The town did come up with how much it would be to demolish the building including with hazardous materials – specifically asbestos. That number is a little less than \$1 million. This is not driven by a bid process
- Should the district vote to follow through with this, then the town will be responsible for demolishing the building.
 - Water concern
 - *Chairman Pisano asked – Were the building to be maintained, including partly renovated, for a new fire station, the building is in the same zone – in relation to the well – as the current station is, then they would both be in Zone 2?*
 - **Chief Rhude answered that the fire station is almost identical in distance from the wellhead as the school. The school is in Zone 2. The Fire Station is not in Zone 2.**
 - **Zone 2 extends from that wellhead North. Zone 2 encompasses about 1/3 of the Village. Up Mariner Circle up to Levels Pond – which is a very large area.**
- Chief Rhude spoke with a company that was contracted for a facility study for the Prudential office and the Attorney General’s office and found that the current contract could be amended with a company that the Prudential Committee were satisfied with and had them come up with a proposal contract that would analyze what the district would need and what the most cost effective way to move forward which could be:
 - Improving the facilities that are already owned
 - Use the school as an opportunity to do the job in order to fulfill the mission
 - Looking at a freestanding new building
 - Fran Parks added that the most important thing is for the Village to decide whether they want the building, or they do not want the building. After that is decided, then taking a period of time to decide what needs to be done with the building. Many people are interested in the building for other uses. These issues need to be addressed. Fran sent a letter to Mark Ells - Town Manager – asking if all could meet in order to discuss the

process of getting the building and forest. He referred it back to David Anthony – who contacted Fran. The Town does not want to do anything in terms of negotiating – or any further discussions – until they know that the Village has voted to accept the building.

- After the last school committee meeting, there will be some informational meetings scheduling for the village about the building including the architects looking at options, what's on the warrant, the costs on the warrant
- Commissioner Zais commented that his recollection of the committee was of one mind that the “ask” that needs to make to the citizens of the District – if the fire commissioners take the building, then at the very least, the building will need to be demolished. The village is not voting on a new fire station
- Chairman Pisano commented that in prior meetings, when this issue of the building first came up, it was agreed on that there was real value in the District capturing the resource that the land and building represented:
 - Protect water quality in the area
 - Block proposed development of that property
 - The last Prudential meeting – Article 16 – that is the opportunity for the voters to take the first step in choosing the process
 - 1. Vote on accepting the property with an understanding of the initial cost would be to accept the property and transfer it and cover a years' worth of operating expenses
 - 2. What is to follow cannot be decided on until someone provides a harder number about what demolition and restoration would cost
 - If this property is acquired, then the Fire Commissioners ought to be looking at whether or not the Fire District needs could be addressed and at what cost to a potential renovation of the Building.
 - Article 17 included as an option to be examined and weighed and to fund the necessary research to find out what needs to be done, including demolition
 - Option #1:
 - Significant renovation of the existing structure and is that feasible and cost effective to take care of the Fire District mandate for the next 30 years?
 - Option #2:
 - Potential of renovating a portion of the building?

POLICY ADVISORY

Commissioner Zais - School Building subcommittee

- Met on April 5, 2021
- CIP Process Policy seems to be moving forward towards a fully implemented policy
 - Continue to discuss the Public Comment before and after meetings – still in process

- *Chairman Pisano asked if the policy meant to have two (2) public comment sessions – one at the beginning of the meeting and one at the end of the meeting as a matter of format?*
 - **Commissioner Zais answered yes because the cadence of meeting is monthly and if a question from a public commenter occurs and there wasn't an opportunity to ask during the meeting then it would have to wait until the next meeting. This policy allows for a more fluid meeting by facilitating conversation between the Commissioner's and the public in order to be involved. Also, one of the Prudential Committee members sits on the Policy Advisory Committee and the public comment will be on an upcoming agenda discussion with the Prudential Committee as well.**
 - One of the public comments was to ask if there would be any rotation of Chairmanships as well as term limits?
- Next meeting is June 7, 2021

Capital Expenditures – Prudential Committee.

- Met on April 15, 2021 for proposed budget
 - Prudential Committee understood what the Commissioners were doing and why.

Radio Budget

- Deputy Pouliot submitted the grant. Looking for the State to provide the Fire Department with \$180k radio systems
- Funded by the 911 tax on everyone's cell bill
- Replacing every radio for all Fire Fighters in the state because system is going digital

New Business:

- Cape Cod Healthcare – Affiliation Agreement
 - In order to provide advanced life support, FD has to work under a doctor's license and an Affiliation Agreement with a hospital
 - Current Affiliation Agreement states that CC Healthcare will provide Cotuit FD with a medical doctor to work under.
 - CC Healthcare made it as a requirement that if Cotuit FD chooses to use them, CC Healthcare's responsibility as the medical doctor is to do Quality Control.
 - CC Healthcare has decided to sub-contract out that Quality Control to a non-profit organization called Cape & Islands EMS and charges the fire departments for that service
 - Cotuit FD pays a yearly bill to Cape & Islands EMS to fulfill the doctor's responsibility
 - Recently, there was an incident where Cape & Islands EMS leaked personnel information (and possibly

patient information) from one of Cotuit FD transports to the public

- It was the Director of Cape & Islands EMS that leaked the information
 - This information identified three (3) of Cotuit FD employees that no one should have had information on
 - Cotuit FD was able to research and find out who accessed the database / when they accessed it
 - State has taken some action and has terminated one (1) employee
 - Cotuit FD has shut down Cape & Islands EMS's access to all their patient care data
 - Have allowed the medical doctor at Cape Cod Healthcare to access Cotuit FD patient care reports and to continue quality control
 - Working with other Fire Chiefs to try to find a solution
 - Cape Cod Healthcare said that they will not provide Cotuit FD with medical direction or a medical doctor to work under unless Cotuit FD continues to utilize Cape & Islands EMS
 - Cotuit FD has approached Beth Israel – Plymouth and they have agreed to be Cotuit FD's medical affiliated hospital and provide a medical doctor for them to work under and a quality control system
 - No charge which saves \$3k/year
 - Fire Chief's Executive Board Meeting is Thursday, April 15, 2021 to find the best solution moving forward
 - Board of Directors of Cape & Islands EMS has met and interviewed Chief Rhude and are conducting their own information regarding the leaked information.
- **Chairman Pisano added that Cape & Islands EMS was serve, by the April 1, 2021 deadline, with a written notice stating that Cotuit FD will not be automatically renewing contract with them at the end of the fiscal year – option is still there to use them but it won't be automatic. July 1, 2021 is the deadline.**

- *Commissioner Zais asked if there were any negative trade-offs with having a relationship with BI-Plymouth (Beth Israel – Plymouth)?*
 - **Chief Rhude answered that it is still to be determined**
 - **Part of the Affiliation Agreement is to provide medical direction**
 - **Typically, en route to the hospital, Cotuit FD makes contact with a medical control – with a Doctor or a Nurse to let them know that they were coming in with a patient and to get any additional authorizations for treatment that may be needed**
 - **There could be an additional time difference with using BI Plymouth**
 - **Ultimately, Cotuit FD would like to continue with CC Healthcare but without using Cape & Islands EMS.**
 - **New EMS Officer Application:**
 - **Lieutenant Clark is the Current EMS Officer was promoted to Lieutenant but has been a dual role as Lieutenant and EMS Officer**
 - **Lieutenant Clark would like to focus on just being a Lieutenant**
 - **Per Union contract, the position must be advertised for two (2) weeks**
 - **There are three (3) applications from in-house paramedics**
 - **Chief will schedule interviews as soon as Commissioners decide who they would like to have Chief coordinate the interviews with**
 - **Commissioner Pisano offered to sit in on the interview with Chief Rhude, Deputy Chief Pouliot, a Union rep and a current EMS Officer**

Fire Fighter Physical Fitness Committee

Commissioner Conley & Chief Rhude

- **Met with the Union and discussed a plan that will increase the physical fitness and lower the IOD (Injury On Duty)**
 - **Ongoing physical fitness program – would like to contract with an outside vendor who specializes in Fire Fighter physical conditioning**
 - **Starts out with complete physical evaluation of each Fire Fighter and a 6 month follow up.**
 - **Multiple workouts a week with a Physical Therapist that comes to the Fire Station**

- One lecture a month on physical fitness and nutrition
 - People are held accountable to working out a minimum times / week and monitor improvement
- One-year program with an outside contractor and an agreement with the Union
- Looking to do this within next years budget
 - Move some of the Salary/Wages IOD budget to Operations expense
Firefighter physicals /physical fitness
 - Move \$20,000 salary wages IOD –currently budgeted at \$80,000
- Same as the entry level fire fighter exams to measure improvement
- Motion to Vote in favor of moving money to Operations.
 - Drop the line item for IOD from \$80k to \$60k and increase the Line Item in Operations for Physical Fitness by \$20k
 - Second. All in favor.
 - With expectation that a good contract will reached that the Commissioners look at and vote
 - If Contract is not accepted then the money will just sit in the Operations line item unused and be returned to the voters next year

SOGs - n/a

Motion to adjourn, second, all in favor.