

BURLINGTON FIRE COMMISSION
Minutes of the Meeting
February 4, 2020

The Meeting of the Burlington Fire Commission convened at 0830 hours in first floor conference room at Central Fire Station with Commissioners Bond, McLaughlin, Perkinson, Sheehey and Sweeney present. Also present were Chief Locke, Deputy Chief Brown, Deputy Chief Collette, and Deputy Chief Plante.

Meeting opened at 0830 hours by Commissioner Bond.

Meeting End Time

Meeting end time was set for 0900 hours by motion of Commissioner McLaughlin, seconded by Commissioner Sheehey with all in favor.

Minutes of the Last Meeting

A motion to accept the minutes was made by Commissioner Sheehey, seconded by Commissioner McLaughlin with all in favor.

Chief's Oral Report

Recognized Deputy Chief Brown for his years of service as he approaches his retirement date. Announced Deputy Chief Plante as the new Deputy Chief of Administration for the department.

The department will be conducting an assessment center for the promotional process for the next Battalion Chief's vacancy. This process will produce a 12-month eligibility list of successful candidates. The assessment center will be conducted in March with the new Battalion Chief being announced near the end of March. Commissioner McLaughlin asked about the content of the assessment center. Chief Locke reports that the skill sets will be set internally by the department, while the evaluators will be from outside.

Chief Locke reports that Tower One's bucket struck the station while exiting after the bucket angle crept up through temperature changes. The truck is currently back at the E-One factory where the technicians have determined that the bucket will need to be replaced. The truck will be repaired and will return with engineering components that should alleviate this problem in the future.

The department has made four conditional offers of employment to prospective candidates. The department has three known vacancies and one pending vacancy.

The FY20 overtime budget has been one hundred percent expended for this fiscal year to date. The Chief attributes this number to the high number of vacancies, work comp injuries, and FMLA leave across the department.

The Regional Dispatch proposal was determined to be too costly with a projected two-million-dollar infrastructure buildout cost for the South Burlington location. There are now looking at a scaled down four community model where the Burlington Dispatch Center could be modified to accept the communities of Burlington, South Burlington, Colchester, and Winooski.

The FY21 budget has been presented as a draft to the City. The department submitted two budgets – a flat budget which is level funded and a second budget that reflects a three percent reduction.

Commissioner Bond asks if there is anything the Commission can do to help support the upcoming vote for the establishment of the third ambulance. Chief Locke replies that there are several rules that prevent the department

from advocating for the ballot item. The Commissioners are welcomed to reach out to their constituents to discuss the vote and what it means to the citizenry.

Commissioner McLaughlin asks if the ballot item is a single line or if it is combined with other items on the March ballot. Chief Locke replies the question is a single item, item two for a dedicated police and fire tax for the establishment of a third ambulance and other public safety needs, which include the added costs of employee benefits through contract negotiations, paramedicine project, CAD maintenance fees and other costs.

The Chief shared that on Monday, February 3, 2020 the department presented a proposal to accept a Fire Act Grant at the Board of Finance. The grant award will replace all of the outdated exhaust recovery systems in all five fire stations with a more up to date system. This will go to full City Council need week.

The Department recently signed a four-year ambulance billing contract with our current billing agent, ECP Services, LLC. The company will collect 3.75 percent of collections. The department has experienced great success with this agency in the past.

Commissioner McLaughlin asked if there were any other opportunities for Federal grant money that the department could apply for. Chief Locke replies that yes, the Fire Act grant that was just awarded for the exhaust recovery system upgrade was in fact a Federal grant. This year the department will be pursuing a leadership and training grant. The grant will focus on company officer development followed by several days of live fire evolutions at the State Fire Academy.

Chief Locke reports that the Union has filed an intent to arbitrate for the recent grievance which the Commission denied. He anticipates a mid-March arbitration.

Commissioner McLaughlin asked about the status of the station consolidation study. Chief Locke reports that the Mayor has asked for three proposals from the department. This will be something that will be looked at when DC Plante goes into the Administrative office.

Old/New Business

No members of the public were present. No old business to discuss. No new business to discuss.

Adjournment

The Commission adjourned at 0855 by motion of Commissioner Sweeney and seconded by Commissioner Sheehy with all in favor.