

BURLINGTON FIRE COMMISSION
Minutes of the Meeting
June 1, 2021

Minutes of June 1, 2021 Meeting of the Burlington Fire Commission. The meeting of the Burlington Fire Commission convened at 08:30 hours via Zoom meeting with Commissioners Bond, Perkinson, Sheehey, Chapman, and McLaughlin. Chief Locke, Deputy Chief Libby, Deputy Chief Plante, and Administrative Assistant Meghan Sweeney were also present. Members of the department present for awards were Captain Christopher Laramie and Firefighters Corey Souza and Jason Paul.

Meeting End Time

Meeting end time set for 09:00 by motion from Commissioner Sheehey and seconded by Commissioner McLaughlin.

Commission Award

Commission awards were presented to Chiefs Plante and Libby, Captain Laramie and Firefighters Souza and Paul.

Public Comment

No members of public to comment.

Review and Accept Minutes from April Meeting

With no comments or corrections a movement to accept minutes as written was made by Commissioner McLaughlin seconded by Commissioners Sheehey and Perkinson.

Chief's Oral Report

The following was an update sent by Chief Locke to the Commission prior to the meeting:

Fleet – We recently took of the new Car 11 which is a multi-use pickup truck. This unit is used to haul one of our equipment trailers and has a snow plow/sander for use in the winter. Bids were received for a new ambulance last week and we will be working through the purchasing requirements. This will be the new Ambulance 4, but will not arrive until the summer of 2022. We are beginning to plan for the replacement of Ladder 4 and Engine 3, but expect this will be a part of the next capital funding plan. We will be ready to go as soon as the voters approve. We are not sure when this funding initiative will be considered.

Personnel – This coming week, Matt Stone will assume the role of Fire Marshal and begin work in the Prevention Division. We are excited for Matt to join the leadership team and assume these new responsibilities. We are planning to have another recruit class in the fall, which will include another three new positions. This will bring our employee count to 93. We currently have two vacancies and anticipate one additional before the class starts. We will be advertising shortly for these positions.

Budget – The FY 21 budget is coming to a close, and the team is working to address unmet needs. While overtime has been excessive, we have had vacancy savings to cover much of this overage. We are confident we will be able to balance the budget. The draft FY 22 budget has been submitted and most of the painful reductions made because of the pandemic have been restored.

3rd Ambulance – The plan remains to have this new staffed ambulance in service this summer. I am projecting a go live date of August 2nd although this may push a few days one way or the other. This has been a long time coming and could not have happened without the support of many.

Training Site – As you may have seen on social media, the new training site is coming together. In fact, this week, the companies are conducting ladder training using the facility. While we still have a lot of work to do building out walls and doors, we are excited to see another project come together.

EMS Leadership – The FY 22 budget includes the position of Chief of EMS. This position will be required to be a paramedic and will provide oversight to the entire Medical Division. We bring the plan before Board of Finance/City Council on June 7 and anticipate advertising shortly thereafter. This is another long term goal coming to fruition.

Commissioner McLaughlin asked if the new training site will have the ability to train with live fire. This facility does not have a burning capability.

Commissioner McLaughlin asked when the Ladder 4 and Engine 3 were purchased. They were purchased in 2011.

Commissioner Perkinson asked what type of recruiting challenges we have faced. Chief Locke explained that last year we had a great response from many different geographical regions, however we continue to find difficulty recruiting more diverse candidates. The department will be budgeting \$5000 towards recruitment, and the panel of current members on our hiring committee will be involved with the task of creating a plan for trying to get a larger pool of candidates.

As a follow up question, Commissioner Perkinson asked if there is any way to recruit from a high school level. The department has a couple of minimum requirements to apply including an EMT certification. The certification is very time consuming to get and at this point not something we can change as a minimum requirement. There was department representation at a recent career day.

Commissioner Chapman also asked if there has been any communication with Vermont Works for Women to train more women to become professional firefighters. Chief Locke said there was a meeting a few years ago that involved retired Deputy Chief Peter Brown and himself. At the time it was not something that could go forward, but said Deputy Chief Plante could have further conversations in regards to looking to see if it's a possibility now.

Old Business/New Business

- A lengthy discussion was had with commission in regards to Meritorious Awards. The department has not held an awards banquet in a number of years, and there are nominations that have been on hold until the next banquet. Discussion involved costs, finding funding, and a general feel for what members would like it to look like.
- The next meeting scheduled is Tuesday, August 3rd. At this time it is unknown if meeting will be able to be held in person.

Executive Session

- Commissioner Bond: Pursuant to Title 1, Section 313 of the Vermont Statues, upon the affirmative vote a majority of the members present, a motion to go into executive session is carried to discuss matters where general public knowledge would place the Department at a substantial disadvantage. Motion was made by Commissioner McLaughlin at 09:08.

Adjourn

Meeting was adjourned at 09:26.