

**Chester Board of Fire Commissioners**  
**Minutes – April 17, 2024**  
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The Chester Board of Fire Commissioners met on April 17, 2024 at the Fire House, 6 High Street. In attendance were Bob Bandzes, Charlene Janecek, Bettie Perreault, and Bob Quale. Also, present were Chief James Grzybowski, Fire Marshal Dick Leighton, First Selectman Cindy Legnar, Battalion Chief and Fire Investigator Ben Belisle, Chief's Administrative Assistant Karen Schafer and Fire Fighters Brian Ahearn, John Ahearn and Michael Ahearn.

**Item 1: Call to Order**

Chair Bettie Perreault called the meeting to order at 7:02 P.M. followed by self-introductions by all present.

**Item 2: Audience of Citizens – no one wished to speak.**

**Item 3. Report of Board of Selectmen**

First Selectman Legnar provided information on the following items for the Board of Selectmen:

- Report from the Chester Energy Team had been received by the Board of Selectmen, along with request for a walk-through of the Fire House by Team members and other officials on Tuesday, April 23 at 9:30 A.M. to review energy-related matters. Commissioners Bob Bandzes and Charlene Janecek will participate for the Commissioners.
- Requests for grant funding in connection with potential projects has been submitted to Senator Christine Palm for review and approval. Senator Palm has been in touch with local officials with questions and request for additional information in connection with some of the projects.
- Frank Andress, proprietor of a pizza truck, has been in touch with the Selectmen's office in connection with location of that business with the annual Tractor Parade.
- Budget deliberations with Selectmen and Board of Finance have held workshops concerning the proposed annual budget.
- Resignation of Emergency Management Director Ray Guasp has been received. Application and job descriptions have been posted on the Town's web site.

**Item 4. Report of Fire Chief**

Chief Grzybowski reported on the following matters:

- A total of 66 calls were responded to during the month of March, with 669 calls for the year to date. Year to date mutual aid calls received were 56, while mutual aid calls responded to totaled 110.
- The current budget is currently 89% expended. Ambulance reimbursement income for the year to date is \$212,239.26.

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- The annual Easter Egg Hunt was highly successful, with approximately 96 children participating.
- The new marine fire vessel is in the water and had responded to an incident in Haddam. Installation of power should be completed before the end of the current month.
- The new fire apparatus that is under construction continues, with receipt of supplies an issue.
- The up-dated Tax Exemption Ordinance is being completed before it is submitted to a Town Meeting for approval.
- A Safe Boating Course will be presented by the Fire Department on Saturday, April 20, with 60 registered to attend.
- Requested capital expenditures for the 2024-2025 fiscal year for the Fire Department have been removed from the budgeting process in anticipation that the Town is considering bonding issues in the potential amount of \$12.3 million for “needs based” expenditures, with Fire Department items included in that bonding.
- The Contract between the Chester Hose Company and Town of Chester is being up-dated for renewal.
- The inventory of Fire Department vehicles, equipment and supplies has not yet been finalized.

### **Item 5: Report of Fire Marshal:**

Fire Marshal Leighton circulated the activity reports for the Fire Marshal and Building Official offices.

Activities during the month of March included incidents at 108 Main Street, 18 Bokum Road, and remediation of the mold issues at John Winthrop Middle School. That project is being overseen by the Fire Marshal’s office, which has been reviewing (but not approving) proposed plans that have been submitted. A Director of Maintenance for all District #4 schools is being sought. Funding for the proposed project is being watched very carefully.

Owners of 33 Liberty Street have met with local officials and First Selectman Legnar for development of the property for arts-related units.

The proposed multi-family project at 47 Middlesex Avenue is currently in the legal system.

Topsoil removed in connection with project at the District #4 football field will potentially be available for use in both Chester and Essex. The project still requires building permit and approval by the local Health Official.

Fire Investigator Belisle reported meeting in connection with Everbridge, which may provide communications to town residents, working with a contract for the towns of Chester, Haddam and Killingworth.

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Item 6: Report of Resident State Trooper

There was no one present for the Police Department.

Item 7. Report of Emergency Management Director

Emergency Management Director Ray Guasp had submitted his resignation to the Town  
There was no one present to represent Emergency Management.

Item 8. Old Business:

Commissioner Bandzes inquired of the Chief in connection with the following matters:

- The new Fire Department vehicle will not have signage or other identification marking when it goes into service.
- Photos of the under-construction fire truck have not yet been taken; they will be available upon receipt of photos when received.
- The brush truck is now back in service following replacement of its gas engine with a diesel engine, with the replacement work having been completed by Fire Department personnel.

Item 9. Approval of Minutes of the meeting on March 20, 2024:

**On motion by Bob Quale, seconded by Charlene Janicek, the minutes of the March 20, 2024 meeting were unanimously approved.** Bob Bandzes abstained as he had not attended that meeting.

Item 10. Reports: Nothing was brought up by members or guests.

Item 11. New Business

**On motion by Bob Quale, seconded by Charlene Janicek, it was unanimously voted to move into an Executive Session at 7:52 P.M. to discuss personnel and legal matters.** Present were Commissioners Bob Bandzes, Charlene Janicek, Bettie Perreault, Bob Quale, Chief James Grzybowski and Fire Fighter Michael Ahearn.

Personnel matters were discussed by those present; legal matters and Department operations relating to the Fire Department were reviewed. No actions or motions were made during the Executive Session.

**On motion by Bob Quale, seconded by Charlene Janicek, it was unanimously voted to move out of Executive Session at 9:08 P.M.**

Item 12. Correspondence: Nothing had been received.

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Item 13. Other – Members or Guests: Nothing was brought up.

Item 14. Adjournment:

There being no further business brought up,

**On Motion by Bob Quale, seconded by Charlene Janecek, the meeting was adjourned at 9:12 P.M.**

Respectfully submitted,

*Bettie Perreault*

Bettie Perreault, Chair