

Chester Board of Fire Commissioners
Minutes – March 20, 2024
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The Chester Board of Fire Commissioners met on March 20, 2024 at the Fire House, 6 High Street. In attendance were Charlene Janeczek, Bettie Perreault, Bob Quale and Rick Schreiber. Also, present were Chief James Grzybowski, Fire Marshal Dick Leighton, First Selectman Cindy Legnar, Battalion Chief and Fire Investigator Ben Belisle, Deputy Chief Charlie Greeney, Captain Jim Schaffer, President Rich Tsou, Officer Paul Decrosta, and Chief's Administrative Assistant Karen Schafer.

Item 1: Call to Order

Chair Bettie Perreault called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. followed by self-introductions by all present.

Item 2: Audience of Citizens – nobody offered any comment.

Item 3. Report of Board of Selectmen

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

- Meeting regarding the 2024-2025 Budget will be on March 26 at the Meeting House with capital expenditures on the agenda;
- There will be a Public Hearing on March 24 at the Meeting House on the proposed Charter.
- The Town's Emergency Planning documentation is undergoing updates,
- A Referendum regarding Regional District #4 and Early Voting will be held on March 26.
- The Everbridge program is being researched for potential use by the Town, with cost estimates for inclusion in a multi-town arrangement.
- A Town Meeting will be held on April 10 regarding expenditures for capital expenses associated with repair/remediation of the Parker's Point boat launch area to bring it into compliance with applicable DEEP guidelines.
- The Town's web site is being updated and upgraded to make it more user-friendly and informative, with input by local officials and others.
- The Town's job description manual is undergoing review and updates.

Item 4. Report of Fire Chief

Chief Grzybowski distributed the activity report for February 2024, showing 79 calls responded to, and a year-to-date number of calls of 603. The Department participated in the successful Tractor Parade in February, completely selling out its chili. A live burn drill will be held on March 23 in cooperation with the Old Saybrook department. The Chester department hopes to hold a live burn drill annually, with the next one in October. The annual Easter Egg Hunt will be held on Saturday, March 30.

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The marine vessel will be put into the water the weekend of March 23, with completion of electrical service and training to follow. The old marine vessel has been sold by the Town via a silent auction, with the funds going to the Town's General Fund. The old chief's car will go to silent auction in the future.

The new truck that is under construction is not yet completed and will go for certification following completion. The current Department budget shows a number of encumbered line items for items to be purchased and received between now and the end of the fiscal year. The Board of Finance is aware of potential over-expenditures in the payroll line item. A total of \$187,760 has been received as reimbursement for ambulance calls for the year to date.

Update of the Town's Emergency Planning documents is being worked on and updated by the Chief and the Director of Emergency Management. A CPR Certification program will be offered by the Department in the coming months. Once certified, the Town will again be a designated Heart Safe town.

The inventory of Department vehicles, equipment and supplies is nearly completed, with costs for individual items still to be entered, and should be available for the next Board meeting. Commissioner Bob Quale thanked the Chief for having a SOG document prepared and in place for a new vehicle.

The Agreement between the Chester Hose Company and the Town of Chester has not been updated in many years and will be reviewed by the Hose Company and Bob Quale, representing the Commission, for approval by the Board of Fire Commissioners and the Town of Chester.

Item 5: Report of Fire Marshal:

Fire Marshal Leighton circulated the activity reports for the Fire Marshal and Building Official offices, noting February was, for the most part, an ordinary month with a lot of administrative tasks.

The Fire Marshal has met with officials of Masonicare at Chester Village West in connection with false alarm responses and the connection with its contractor.

GenSet equipment to be installed at the Town Hall has been received but will require that building and the bank tenant be closed for a full day to make all necessary connection and repairs that may be required. This may require time over a weekend to accomplish.

The Fire Marshal has met with owners of 33 Liberty Street in connection with as many as 12 residential live/work units being planned for the property. Property at 47 Middlesex Avenue (the former St. Joseph's Parish Center) is in the court system, with an approved development of a multi-family housing project pending satisfactory approvals. The Apple property, formerly Chesterfield's, is back on the for-sale market pending withdrawal of an earlier potential purchaser.

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Item 6: Report of Resident State Trooper

Officer Paul Decrosta advised the Police Department responded to 177 written warnings and 33 citations during the past month, and a total of 782 calls for service since the start of the fiscal year.

Taser batteries for Department equipment are on order, and a speeding unit has been moved to Railroad Avenue in response to complaints of speeders there. Officers have participated in public events in Chester, Deep River and Vernon during the past month, and has received Tier 1 accreditation. Whelen Engineering will be donating a vehicle to the Department once it has been equipped with necessary communications and other items.

A program on Traffic Calming in being done in cooperation with the Board of Selectmen, and the Police Department is considering restructuring moves with the Selectmen as well.

Item 7. Report of Emergency Management Director

The Emergency Management Director was not able to be present.

Item 8. Old Business: There was nothing presented.

Item 9. Approval of Minutes of the meeting on February 21, 2024:

On motion by Rick Schreiber, seconded by Charlene Janecek, the minutes of the February 21, 2024 meeting were unanimously approved.

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

Item 11. New Business: Nothing was brought up by members or guests.

Item 12. Correspondence: Nothing had been received.

Item 13. Other – Members or Guests: No one brought anything up.

Item 14. Adjournment:

There being no further business brought up,

On Motion by Bob Quale, seconded by Rick Schreiber, the meeting was adjourned at 8:01 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Bettie Perreault

Bettie Perreault, Chair