

**Town of Montville Public Safety Commission  
Fire Department Staffing Sub-Committee  
Special Meeting – Public Safety Building  
January 21, 2020 5:30pm  
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES**

**1. Call to order:**

- a. Commissioner Leonard called the meeting to order.

**2. Roll call:**

**Present:** Commissioner Leonard, Commissioner Perkins, Commissioner Moran, Commissioner Stewart.

**Others Present:** Career Firefighter D. Ellis, Career Firefighter/Union President T. Condon, Oakdale Deputy Chief M. Butterworth, Oakdale Asst. Chief D. Swinburne, Mohegan Chief C. Gaetano, Mohegan Deputy Chief M. Suarez, Chesterfield Lieutenant J. Truex, Councilor Bunnell many other members of town departments and 2 former town council members.

**3. No remarks from the public.**

**4. Old Business:**

- Fire department budget. No updates on the budget status of the new firefighters contract
- Current status of volunteer force- Commissioners and will request a reply for the fire chiefs, their current total of firefighter/EMT/EMR certified personnel.
- Commissioner Stewart explained evolution of the career firefighters. The career firefighters were hired to supplement the volunteers. Explained that many volunteers are not coming out. Would like to study cross training to cover the town. Ultimately it's the town of Montville. Commissioner Moran asked about contacting the Board of Education. No meeting was attended and Commissioner Leonard will reach out.
- No discussion with regard to the FD calls statistics.
- Commissioner Moran asked who was in charge of staffing allocation.

**5. New Business:**

- a. Commissioner Leonard asked about what makes a qualified firefighter. Commissioner Stewart explained his understanding that it was “Firefighter 1 State of Connecticut certification; SCBA certified which includes a “fit test”. Oakdale Chief Micah Messer indicated it was not true and Oakdale Assistant.
  
- b. 1 certification for paid or volunteer firefighters to be trained. It is up to the individual departments. The State of Connecticut does not mandate firefighter 1 certification to be an interior qualified firefighter. It does require OSHA standard 19-134. Career Firefighter D. Ellis commented that OSHA standard (19-134) does go by the CT firefighter 1 certification. Discussion on the standard and Asst. Chief Swinburne further stated in order to use a respirator you must be trained in it, have a “fit test”, be cleared by a doctor and “the employer” meaning “the individual fire companies” trains you on that respirator and this makes someone an interior firefighter. He commented that if someone can provide documentation otherwise... Firefighter Ellis commented as an instructor the statement is true however, it is written to the Connecticut Firefighter 1 standard. It is the same guideline as that standard and very well documented training records are required.

Commissioner Leonard questioned the Town of Montville workers compensation insurer, would they cover someone who is not certified by the state of Connecticut as a Firefighter 1. Asst. Chief Swinburne commented, other departments have the requirement to go above and beyond and require Firefighter 1 certification. Commissioner Stewart commented that if the training records are in order, he would imagine that the insurance company would cover any individual trained to the level of Firefighter 1 without the piece of paper.

- c. Discussion on the advertising practices from 3 of the 4 fire companies. Facebook and mailers seem to be the common avenue they take. Discussion then moved to how members are welcomed and the process they go through to become a member. Commissioner Stewart asked of the Chiefs in the room. “What type of benefits individual fire companies use to keep members?”. Oakdale has t shirts, hats, jackets, coffee and picnics. They get involved in community events such as mud runs, carnival and youth programs. People will usually comment after that it was a good time. Mohegan fire company also offer the hall to members.

Mohegan Chief Gaetano, said doing things as a family. Members propose ideas and Chief Gaetano will consider everything but maybe not do anything.

- d. Discussion on some written questions for the town's labor council. Councilor Bunnell indicated that questions could be submitted to him and he would forward them on. Councilor Bunnell asked what Chesterfield Fire Company was doing. Lieutenant Truex, commented that Chesterfield is doing similar things are other departments are. Councilor Bunnell asked to go back to the Firefighter 1 standard. Deputy Chief Butterworth commented according to the state legislative research there are no requirements as of their last program in 1994. You have to follow 29 CFR 1910.134 (respiratory) Fit testing, follow fire brigade and give training in what they are going to do. Hose line tactics. According to the letter, Assistant Chief Butterworth, it is up to the individual departments. Councilor Bunnell, asked if this is a federal guideline or state. Further discussion and repetition of the standard and again questioned how many people are trained to Firefighter 1. This will be requested by the commission. Oakdale Chief Messer informed the group that it is encouraged to become Firefighter 1. They will be having a class coming up soon at Oakdale station.
  - e. Further discussion about recruitment and retention.
6. Public Comment: Deputy Chief Butterworth asked what the PSC is going to do to encourage recruitment. There was further discussion on a retirement account by the town. Discussion on the stipend. Career Firefighter/Union president T. Condon stated the commission is on the right path. Get the numbers of where you're at with recruitment and get the road map to where you need to be. Chesterfield member M. Truex asked about the stipend changes. Career firefighter K. Roe spoke about being a former volunteer and encouraging people to come out. Chief Messer commented that fire companies have been helping each other. Working across district lines, all members are encouraged to go on each other calls. Everyone will be covered. Pagers are programmed to hear all fire companies but change is not easy. Members are leery about going to other districts for fear that they would not be covered. There will be a volunteer email address to see all trainings at various companies. Trainings and responses to other departments used to not be welcomed as much but fire officers have changed and it is now accepted.

Union President T. Condon, now is the time to codify, memorialize and put the working across district lines. Take the personalities out of the individual fire companies. Asst. Chief Swinburne announced upcoming trainings and wants to have folks come and see what the fire companies are doing and training on. Oakdale member T. McCarthy commented there are still bugs to be worked out with regard to getting EMS responders on other departments 'EMS Charts' program. Chief Gaetano and Asst. Chief Swinburne indicated that situation is being worked on. Discussion about inviting the public to training and getting into the schools to recruit new members. Contacting the board of education about getting a bus stop at each fire station for the high school students may be a good way to stimulate volunteers. Commissioner Perkins offered a mailer out together by the 4 fire companies and she will get the school system to send out an electronic backpack. Also, discussion on the internship program within the High School. Resident Wills Pike commented on the Almont study. He was encouraged to hear that the 4 fire companies are working together. He respects the volunteers and would like to see the involvement into training and supports a training person to align the career and volunteer training. Chesterfield Lt. Truex, spoke briefly about the staffing situation with respect to the recent changes to the career firefighters. Union president commented that there is a lot of misinformation that has come out about the union contract and will reserve comment until the mayor has the chance to present the contract to the PSC sub committee meeting next month.

**7. Adjournment:**

- a. Motion to adjourn approximately 7pm.

**AN AUDIO RECORDING IS AVAILABLE ON THE TOWN'S WEBSITE**