

WESTFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS
WESTFIELD FIRE COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES

Fire Commissioner C. Lee Bennett called the meeting of the Westfield Fire Commission (hereinafter "WFC") of February 6, 2023 to order.

Location: Westfield Fire Department
Station 2 Committee Room
366 Little River Road
Westfield, Massachusetts

Date: February 6, 2023

Time: 18:00 hours



Chairman's announcement:

Westfield Fire Commissioner C. Lee Bennett in accordance with the Open Meeting Law Changes (Reference Memorandum dated June 18, 2010 'Open Meeting Law Changes'), from the Office of the City Solicitor, made the following announcement to all participants and attendees that the Westfield Fire Commission Regular Schedule meeting of February 6, 2023 is being audio recorded. No other participants were recording.

PRESENT:

Westfield Fire Commissioners C. Lee Bennett, Albert Masciadrelli and Jeffrey Siegel.

Fire Chief Patrick Egloff, Deputy Chief Eric Bishop.

MINUTES TAKEN:

Christie Fillion, Westfield Fire Department (hereinafter "WFD") Head Clerk

ROLL CALL:

Commissioner C. Lee Bennett asked for a roll call.

Commissioner Albert Masciadrelli	Present
Commissioner Jeffrey Siegel	Present
Commissioner C. Lee Bennett	Present

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

READING OF THE RECORDS OF:

Fire Commissioner C. Lee Bennett ascertained a motion to accept the Fire Commission Meeting Minutes of December 12, 2022.

Fire Commissioner Albert Masciadrelli made a motion to approve the December 12, 2022 Meeting Minutes.

Fire Commissioner Jeffrey Siegel seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL:

Commissioner C. Lee Bennett asked for a roll call.

Commissioner Albert Masciadrelli	Abstain
Commissioner Jeffrey Siegel	Yes
Commissioner C. Lee Bennett	Yes

Motion passed.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Deputy Chief Eric Bishop asked if the Commission and Chief Egloff could add the topic of the Fire Chief's exam to the next agenda. Deputy Bishop mentioned that Civil Service has not released a reading list for the Fire Chief's exam, any exam details, or if an exam will occur. Deputy Bishop is interested in taking the exam but if the test is scheduled for May 2023, there isn't enough time to study for the test. The deputies eligible to take the exam do not know how to proceed. Deputy Bishop's current list expires July 15, 2023. Chief Egloff stated if the Commission can ask to extend the current list for a year, if a new list is not released.

There was a discussion amongst the Commission, Chief Egloff and Deputy Bishop regarding the City's interest in removing the fire chief position from Civil Service and the process of how the removal needs to occur. The fire chief exam has been posted within the department since September 2022. However, Civil Service has not released a reading list for a May exam.

ROUTINE BUSINESS:

- a. Introduction: Commissioner Bennett thanked the Fire Department for their great work.

- b. Letters & Communications – Chief Patrick Egloff read a letter from Fire Chief Richard Stefanowicz from Southwick Fire Department. The letter was a thank you for the immediate mutual aid response for a motor vehicle accident in Southwick. Our paramedics, Aaron Lafrenaye and Michael Sedlak, responded with an ambulance to this emergency event. Copies of the letter will be added to Lafrenaye & Sedlak's personnel files.

REPORTS FROM THE WFD & WFC:

- a. Acknowledgements: With the latest winter cold snap that had temperatures plummet to lows not seen for 2 decades, the men and women of the Fire Department had an extremely busy Friday, Saturday and Sunday (February 3-5, 2023) with downed trees, power lines and broke pipes along with all of the regular calls they normally accomplish.
 1. I want to acknowledge the men and women that worked on Saturday, February 4. They had a very difficult fire in a four-family dwelling that extended from the basement to the attic and displaced more than a dozen occupants. The weather conditions were brutal that day with low temperatures and windy conditions.
 2. I also want to acknowledge the members of A Group & B group who were called to a fire at shift change this morning, February 6. They were able to knock down the fire fast containing the fire to one apartment in a three-family dwelling. Thanks to the quick thinking of Captain Chris Kane who came upon the fire on his way into work and was able to converse with a victim who was trapped in the home. Captain Kane was able to direct Captain Keith Supinski and FF/Paramedic Scott Bullock to his location in the burning apartment saving the victim's life. I will be writing commendations that will be put into each of their personnel files.
- b. Departmental Promotional Lists – The Fire Chief's exam has been called for through NeoGov back in September. It has been posted on the bulletin boards as well as a message sent on Fire Manager. There has been some action by the City Council Charter Committee to remove the Fire Chief's position from Civil Service. Chief Egloff asked if our liaison, City councilor Mike Burns, should come to our next meeting to explain what this means for the Fire Commission and the Fire Department. One of the many question this brings up is should we still have a Fire Chief's exam this May?
- c. Organization Status –
 1. Dominic Cessarini has been brought on board for the replacement of Firefighter Dennis Dalton who retired. He finished his two-week orientation and is now assigned to A Group. Bryan Greene has been brought on board to replace Nicholas D'Amours. Bryan just finished his two-week orientation and is now assigned to C Group. Timothy Black retired the first week of January after 35 years of service and Jack Bacis was brought onboard. He is in his second week of orientation. He will be assigned to B Group starting next week.
 2. There is currently 1 member that should be retiring by the middle to the end of February. We are just waiting for PERAC to respond to the City; they have 30 days. I have reached out to the fourth individual, Esias Valentin, that this Fire Commission gave a conditional offer of employment to. He has not yet been hired by any other department and remains interested in joining WFD. He continues to work and is doing well in paramedic school. We hope to be able

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to get him on board soon. A letter was written to Civil Service with the explanation of why we asked for one position but gave additional conditional offers of employment. The explanation was, instead of having multiple commission meetings, the commission could issue conditional offers of employment with the current list in the event of a resignation or retirement as these reasons were valid conditions. Civil Service accepted the letter. As long as the new list isn't released, Valentin could be brought on to our department.

3. Dustin Russo is currently at the Mass Fire Academy (MFA). Tim Gavrilov and Erika Rubner graduated from the academy on January 13, 2023.
4. I received two progress reports for two probationary career firefighters. Devun Nadeau had his 5-month review by Deputy Patrick Kane Jr. and his performance is regularly competent and dependable. Timothy Gavrilov had his final review also by Deputy Kane and his performance is also regularly competent and dependable. Deputy Kane highly recommends retaining him. Gavrilov just completed the MFA and graduated on January 13th as mentioned previously.
5. The open burning permit application website with John Guilfoil and FirePermits.com has been operating successfully with a few small issues that we continue to work out. So far we have collected \$2,620 since January 15, 2023. We paid \$999 for the website. Most of the residents have applied for seasonal permits rather than the daily permit.
6. I have been working on the budget for the past month. It will be inputted into Munis by this Friday.

d. Grant Processes:

1. I wrote a grant from the Massachusetts Department of Fire Services for safety equipment and we received an amount of \$24,920. A letter was sent to the Mayor asking him to send it to the City Council this Thursday. The grant was brought to the Finance Committee to ask them to accept it as there is no match. It was voted unanimously by the City Council; the Mayor signed the contract and we are awaiting the return of signed documents from the State before proceeding with the purchase. This grant was written for 7 full sets of turnout gear.
2. We are still waiting for our order of the SCBAs (\$235,000 grant) and we hope to have them either towards the end of this month or the beginning of March. These will replace all of our current SCBAs.

e. Hiring Process:

1. I am anticipating a retirement by the end of March and another by the end of June for a total of three more before the end of the fiscal year. Mass HRD is anticipating having a new list to hire from between the end of March or the beginning of April. We hope to have a fresh number of Paramedics to hire from that list.
2. Two out of three of our members who were hired as basic EMTs who had to become paramedics, Leon Morin & Jackie O'Brien, have passed their written paramedic exams. This Saturday, they will be doing their practical exam and

we anticipate they will earn their Paramedic card. Once they earn their Paramedic card status, they will be riding third person on the ambulance until they receive their required number of calls. They will then ride as two paramedics on the ambulance rotation.

3. There are currently 6 Basic EMTs that do not have to become paramedics that will have the opportunity of coming off the ambulance rotation. No one asked to be removed. This means that a senior paramedic could have the chance of being removed from the ambulance rotation once Morin & O'Brien are added to the rotation as paramedics.

f. AFSCME 35 Hour Unit Employee Reviews:

Every February, I need to write reviews for the office staff. I wrote a review for Pat Breton, Office Manager, and Christie Fillion, Head Clerk. I gave both of them rave reviews because the two of them run that office and I, and anyone in the Chief's office, would be lost without them. Pat Breton is looking at retiring from the department in the fall. Per Personnel Department, Christie is the only one who can first apply for that job internally. I highly recommend Christie Fillion for the office manager position when it opens up. The Personnel Director recommends hiring for that position prior to Pat Breton leaving and also hiring someone to fill Christie's position prior to Pat leaving. The head clerk position cannot be posted until after the Office Manager position is filled. I would like to be able to bring Pat Breton on a part-time basis while Christie trains the person who is hired for the head clerk position which handles the ambulance billing.

Commissioner Masciadrelli asked if the Civil Service Annual 67 Report was completed as it is due March 1st. Chief Egloff reported Pat Breton had completed it and sent it to the Personnel Department for submittal. Commissioner Masciadrelli asked the Commission and Chief Egloff if they would like him to mention to Mike Burns about attending the next meeting. Then a formal invitation could be sent from Chief Egloff.

OLD BUSINESS:

- a. Update on the Rules & Regulations of the Westfield Fire Department
The update went to the Personnel Department to Personnel Director Robert Bishop. He was in the midst of re-writing the employee handbook and wanted to make sure that the updated Rules & Regulations coincided with the employee handbook. Robert Bishop has since left the position. Chief Egloff has rekindled this topic with Personnel Director, Annie Larkham, and recently forwarded her a copy of the old and the updated version of the Rules and Regulations.

NEW BUSINESS:

- a. Discussion and potential vote on the acceptance of the resignation of Nicholas D'Amours – In December 2022, FF/Paramedic Nicholas D'Amour resigned from his position.

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Fire Commissioner Albert Masciadrelli made a motion to accept Nicholas D'Amour's resignation.

Fire Commissioner C. Lee Bennett seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL:

Commissioner C. Lee Bennett asked for a roll call.

Commissioner Albert Masciadrelli	Yes
Commissioner Jeffrey Siegel	Yes
Commissioner C Lee Bennett	Yes

Motion passed.

b. Westfield Fire Department Annual Report -- The report has been started and is in process. Chief Egloff has been concentrating on working on the budget as that is due shortly.

c. Discussion and Vote of Fire Commission Chair

Fire Commissioner Albert Masciadrelli made a motion to appoint C. Lee Bennett as Commission Chair.

Fire Commissioner Jeffrey Siegel seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL:

Commissioner Jeffrey Siegel	Yes
Commissioner Albert Masciadrelli	Yes
Commissioner C. Lee Bennett	Yes

Motion passed.

Fire Commissioner Albert Masciadrelli made a motion to adjourn.

Fire Commissioner C. Lee Bennett seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL:

Commissioner C. Lee Bennett asked for a roll call.

Commissioner Jeffrey Siegel	Yes
Commissioner Albert Masciadrelli	Yes
Commissioner C Lee Bennett	Yes

TIME: 18:48 hours

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Lee Bennett". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "C".

C. Lee Bennett, Chair
Westfield Fire Commission
caf

