



**WESTFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS
WESTFIELD FIRE COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 15, 2023**

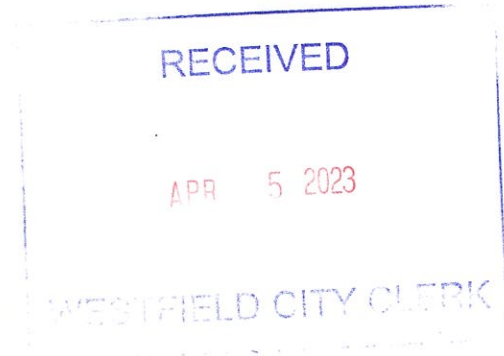


Fire Commissioner C. Lee Bennett called the meeting of the Westfield Fire Commission (hereinafter WFC) of March 15, 2023 to order.

Location: Little River Fire Station
Community Room
366 Little River Road
Westfield, Massachusetts

Date: March 15, 2023

Time: 18:00 hours



MINUTES TAKEN:

Ms. Patricia Breton, Westfield Fire Department (hereinafter 'WFD') Office Manager

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 Special meeting of March 15, 2023 is being audio recorded and if the Westfield Fire Commission meeting at any time goes into executive session all audio equipment will be turned off to include all recording devices of audio and video and any transmission of video and or audio.

Westfield Fire Commissioner C. Lee Bennett also made the following inquiry, that if there is anyone making a video or audio recording of the meeting, please indicate this to the Chair.

PRESENT IN ATTENDANCE:

Westfield Fire Commissioner C. Lee Bennett, Westfield Fire Commissioner Jeffery Siegel, Fire Commissioner Albert Masciadrelli, Fire Chief Patrick Egloff, Deputy Chief Eric Bishop.

ROLL CALL:

Commissioner C. Lee Bennett asked for a roll call.

Commissioner C. Lee Bennett – present
Commissioner Jeffrey Siegel – present

Commissioner Albert Masciadrelli – present

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

READING OF THE RECORD OF:

- a. WFC Regular Scheduled Meeting Minutes February 06, 2023 Vote to accept.

Commissioner C. Lee Bennett ascertained a motion to accept the Regular Meeting Minutes of February 06, 2023.

Commissioner Albert Masciadrelli made a motion to accept the Regular Meeting Minutes for February 06, 2023.

Commissioner Jeffrey Siegel seconded the motion.

Roll Call

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

Yes (3) No (0)

Motion Passed

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Deputy Eric Bishop wanted to express his appreciation for all those who volunteered to help at the Polar Plunge. A large number of Westfield Fire Fighters, not only volunteered their time, but took the plunge.

Commissioner Lee Bennett said everyone is doing a good job, thank you very much. Please thank everyone.

ROUTINE BUSINESS:

- a. Introduction – Commissioner C. Lee Bennett wanted to thank the Westfield Fire Department for all the work they do every day.

- b. Letter and Communications - Chief Patrick Egloff read one letter from Gina Plouffe. She wrote the Fire Chief stating what an amazing job she has witnessed multiple times by the men and women of the Westfield Fire Department.

Over the last few months, my mom has needed ambulance transports approximately 15-20 times. Each and every time your staff has shown up and exhibited nothing short of spectacular care. Every time they've shown up she was treated like family. She has been in chronic pain for quite some time now and multiple back compression fractures and as a result of her pain she can be quite moody. There have been instances where she told me they held her hand on the ride to the hospital and I have actually seen a few paramedics come by to check on her in the ER when they are back in the hospital on another transport. True caring individuals. I can't thank the Westfield Fire enough for the endless care. Being a Chicopee resident living 30 minutes away, I am comforted in knowing the care and compassion my mom will continue to receive by the members of your department until I am able to be at her side.

REPORTS FROM THE WFD & WFC:

- a. Chief Egloff to report on status of key areas of the department.

Department Promotional Lists

The Fire Chief's exam has been called for through NeoGov, it has been posted on the bulletin boards as well as on Fire Manager. Chief has been in contact with Fire Department Liaison Mike Burns and he wanted to express his regret that he could not be here tonight because of another commission meeting that he was needed at. He wanted to relay to you, that the City Council Charter Committees recommendation to remove the Fire Chief's position from Civil Service has been voted on by the whole City Council with a result of a positive recommendation, they are removing the position from Civil Service by changing the Charter. Currently it has been sent to the Law Department and he believes it will go back to committee. He believes that it will be official within 6 months. It will not affect the Chief's position, but will his successor.

One of the many questions this brings up is should we still have a Fire Chief's exam this May? Chief has contacted Civil Service and is awaiting a response. There is no information on the website on the test and there does not appear to be a reading list available. Chief recommends to wait until he hears from Civil Service and then put it on the agenda for your discussion and vote.

Commissioner Lee Bennett asked who decides to take it out of Civil Service, City Council or the Fire Commission.

Commissioner Jeffrey Siegel and Commissioner Albert Masciadrelli stated it would be the City Council, if they changed the City Charter.

Chief Egloff explained you can do it two ways, you come out of Civil Service the same way to go into Civil Service that is through the Fire Commission.

The Law Department said that you can do it by changing the Charter. This does not affect anyone that is currently covered under the Charter.

At this point there is no notification of the Fire Chiefs exam or no reading material listed through Civil Service.

Organization Status

Joseph coach retired February 23rd, Chief reached out to the fourth individual that this Fire Commission gave a conditional offer of employment Elias Valentin, he has completed and passed his full Fire Department physical, psychological examination and background check. He is scheduled to take the PAT next Friday March 24th with a potential start date of March 27th.

We have another employee, Christopher Genereux who has put in his retirement papers, his retirement date will be March 30, 2023.

We have one member who is currently at the MFA, Dustin Russo, he will be graduating Friday March 24th. The Chief extended an invitation to the graduation at 11:00am.

The open burning permit application website with John Guilfoil and FirePermits.com has been operating successfully. So far we have collected \$4,355.00, since January 15th opening day. We pay them \$999.00 per year for the website and also paid a one-time setup fee of \$299.00.

The budget has been imputed into Munis and I anticipate having a meeting with the Mayor and Auditor in the coming days and weeks.

Grant Processes

The Chief wrote a grant from the Massachusetts Department of Fire Services for safety equipment that was received in the amount of \$24,920. This grant was written for 7 full sets of turnout gear, we will be replacing 10 sets and the company that we order from will be coming to measure the members starting next week. There is a three month wait on structural firefighting gear, so we anticipate having the gear before the start of FY24. There is a 10 year shelf life per NFPA.

We received our order of the SCBS's (\$235,000 grant) and have fit tested the vast majority of our force and will put them all into service next week once the last group gets a required class given by our Fire Training Officer, Captain Starr. These will replace all of our current SCBS's.

Air Show

They have put together a committee consisting of the Fire Chief, the Police Chief, the new Emergency Management Director Ronny Gibbons, Dispatch Director Nina Barszcz, Deputy Chief Patrick Kane Jr. and Firefighter/Paramedic Randy Quarles.

There have been multiple meetings as well as attending the table top exercise at the 104th fighter wing. We have a comprehensive plan that has been conveyed to Mayor McCabe. I have requested form DFS, the command trailer, the rehab unit, 2 Gators with med beds and 1 six-pack gator. Each one of these resources comes with an operator which is paid for by the State. I also have requested the JHIRT team for both days, which consists of 2 members from the HazMat team. I have received approval for all of these resources. The Emergency Management Director has also requested the MSP bomb squad for both days as well and that has also been approved. We will be having comprehensive meetings from now until the airshow which will occur in May during Mother's Day weekend. The anticipated daily attendance will be between 40,000-50,000 people which double the population of Westfield each day. The 104th is predominantly worried about what is inside their fenced area and we will be ready for what happens outside.

Replacement Equipment

Chief Egloff put funds into the ambulance budget to replace two of the ambulances. He is anticipating having them by this time next year. He is also anticipating receiving our new Pierce Velocity pumper next year as well, these are all being funded through the ambulance enterprise account and not taxpayer moneys. He is also working with Mayor McCabe to replace our aging Hovercraft with a more appropriate apparatus for river search and rescue and ice rescue operations.

Hiring Process

Chief Egloff is anticipating a retirement that he reported to the Commission by the end of March and another by the end of June, for a total of two 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 on that list.

OLD BUSINESS: NONE

NEW BUSINESS:

- a. Discussion and vote to call for a new Firefighter/Paramedic requisition for an announced retirement of a member at the end of March.

Commissioner C. Lee Bennett indicated we should do that. Chief Patrick Egloff recommended that we wait for the new list. He said he believed the list will come fairly quickly after the end of March. There should be paramedics on this list, we should be hiring paramedics.

Commissioner Albert Masciadrelli ascertained a motion to let Fire Chief Patrick Egloff call for a requisition once the new list comes out.

Commissioner C. Lee Bennett made a motion to give Fire Chief Patrick Egloff the authority to call for the new firefighter/paramedic list as soon as it becomes available.

Commissioner Albert Masciadrelli second the motion.

Roll Call

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

Yes (3) No (0)

Motion Passed

Discussion

Commissioner Albert Masciadrelli asked the Chief to make sure that the Auditor approve the new position. Chief Patrick Egloff indicated that he always get approval before calling for a list.

Commissioner Jeffrey Siegel asked how many more retirements within the next year or two do you see coming?

Chief Egloff said including the one at the end of the month there is a potential for five by July.

Discussion on the retirement of Patricia Breton and how the transition for Christie Fillion's job will take place. He discussed how important the ambulance billing is and that any loss of time for that position could potentially lose millions of dollars.

Commissioner Albert Masciadrelli asked about the third position in the office. The position is still there but, has not been funded. Commissioner Albert Masciadrelli suggested we put that third position back in, Commission C. Lee Bennett thought that if we have the funds that maybe we should add the third position.

Commissioner Albert Masciadrelli brought attention that the meeting should have been a special meeting, due to it was not on the first Monday of the month. I will make the changes when I do up the minutes.

Deputy Chief Eric Bishop also wanted to thank C group for responding to over 37 calls in 60 minutes during the past snow storm. This was for power outages and power lines down, and numerous medical calls. They did an outstanding and terrific job.

The Commissioners asked Deputy Bishop to please thank them for the Commission.

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Commissioner Albert Masciadrelli made a motion to adjourn.

Commissioner C. Lee Bennett seconded the motion.

Roll Call

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

YES (3) NO (0)

Motion Passed

Time: 18:30 hours

Respectfully submitted,



C. Lee Bennett, Chair
Westfield Fire Commission
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