

Board of Fire Commissioners
Regular Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, November 10, 2021
7:00 pm via Cisco Webex &
Clifford B. Green Meeting Center
Suite 24, 69 South Main Street, Brooklyn, CT

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1. **Call to Order** - Rick Ives, Acting Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. (19:10 hours).

Attendance: Rick Ives; Jeff Otto, Patrick Gauthier; Michael Podzalne (all present in person).
Felix Ramos arrived at 7:35 p.m. (via call-in, but was unable to communicate).
Lou Brodeur and James Solar were absent with notice.

Others Present – S. Breen, Mortlake Fire Chief; Jim Warren, East Brooklyn Fire Chief (both present in person).
There were approximately ten people present in person in the audience.
Nemeth (member of the public) and J.S. Perreault, Recording Secretary were present via Webex.

2. **Approve Minutes**
 - a. **Regular Meeting of October 13, 2021**

Motion was made by J. Otto to accept the Minutes of the Meeting of October 13, 2021 as presented.
Second by M. Podzalne. No discussion.
Motion carried by voice vote (4-0-0).

3. **Public Comment** – None.

4. **Equipment Discussion**

Mortlake - S. Breen explained that they had met with the vendor (for the new truck) and that they did not have revised specs for review due to ongoing discussion regarding follow-up on a lot of tedious details. Final specs will be forwarded to the Board of Fire Commissioners when available. Mr. Otto commented that the Board of Fire Commissioners should see the final specs, whether there are major changes or minor changes, before the purchase is approved.

5. Department Discussion

East Brooklyn - J. Warren stated that the trucks are running well and everything is going well.

a. Recruitment – No discussion.

b. Retention - No discussion.

c. Paid Staff – Subcommittee Update

Mr. Ives explained that a Subcommittee meeting had been scheduled for Monday, November 15, 2021, but he is going to cancel it so that newly-elected First Selectman, Austin Tanner will have time to become familiar with this issue. There were no objections voiced.

6. Financial Reports Discussion

Mr. Otto stated that the quarterly report for East Brooklyn had been received about a month ago. The Mortlake report, which has not yet been received, is due by Wednesday.

Mr. Otto stated that he had e-mailed the Emergency Report this morning to the Commissioners.

a. Budget Discussion

There was discussion regarding when the draft/final draft for 2022/2023 will be due. Mr. Otto explained that, traditionally, the BoFC looks at the preliminary budgets in January and look at them again and approve them in February so that they can go to the Board of Finance in March.

At this time, Mr. Ives asked for a motion to add Executive Session to the Agenda (under Item 7 Other Business) to discuss pending litigation. No motion was made at this time. There was discussion regarding the following:

Mr. Otto commented that, for the last two months, he had asked that each Department provide a copy of their Respiratory Protection Plan by the next meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners. He said that if there is an OSHA inspection, they want to see the plan immediately. He provided two other documents to help the Departments know what is needed to be in compliance.

Mr. Otto explained about the Connecticut Mobile Radio System and that he had drafted a Resolution regarding the possibility of applying for ARPA Funds to purchase an 800 MHz radio system that would operate on the powerful Connecticut System. He said the system would last for decades. Mr. Ives suggested that a motion be made to add this to the Agenda.

Motion was made by J. Otto to add to the Agenda, discussion regarding a Resolution that he drafted for the Town to consider applying for ARPA Funds for an 800 MHz radio system.

Second by M. Podzalne. No discussion.

Motion carried by voice vote (4-0-0).

7. Other Business

a. Discussion regarding 800 MHz radio system.

J. Otto proposed his Resolution.

Motion was made by J. Otto to present the following Resolution: To resolve that the Brooklyn Board of Fire Commissioners recommends to the ARPA Funds Committee, the First Selectman and the Board of Selectmen, that sufficient ARPA Funds be reserved to allow purchase of 800 MHz single-channel global and portable radios to allow installation or location of such radios in each piece of fire apparatus and in such private vehicles of Fire Officers of the East Brooklyn and Mortlake Fire Companies, and in such other locations as the First Selectman desires, to allow access to and communication of the Connecticut 800 MHz radio network.

Discussion: Mr. Otto explained his estimated cost of \$206,486.00 and he stated that cost is not part of his motion.

Second by R. Ives.

Discussion continued about how this radio system would work. Fire Departments in other towns are using it (Danielson, South Killingly, Dayville, Sterling, Woodstock) and other towns are considering it. Mr. Otto said that Woodstock is also putting them in all town trucks and school buses. Mr. Podzalne explained that it is a great system, but there are dead spots.

Mr. Ives suggested taking a vote on the concept and talk about details at the next meeting to give time to consider things such as the School, buses and the EMD. Mr. Ives stated that a committee would need to be set up and they would need to see whether it would be a reimbursable expense. Mr. Ives stated that we have until the last day of 2024 to designate the ARPA Funds.

Motion carried by voice vote (4-0-0).

b. Executive Session to Discuss Pending Litigation.

Motion was made by J. Otto to enter into Executive Session, to discuss a certain litigation, to include the Board of Fire Commissioners Members present, Richard Ives, Jeffrey Otto, Patrick Gauthier and Michael Podzalne (Felix Ramos was unable); the two Fire Chiefs, Steve Breen and Jim Warren; and Austin Tanner (newly elected First Selectman).

Second by M. Podzalne. No discussion.

Motion carried by voice vote (4-0-0).

At this time, Mr. Ives explained to the people present in the audience that they were welcome to wait, but there would be no further discussion after the Executive Session.

Motion was made by M. Podzalne to come out of Executive Session at 7:42 p.m.

Second by J. Otto. No discussion.

Motion carried by voice vote (4-0-0).

8. Public Comment – None.

9. Next Meeting – December 8, 2021.

10. Adjourn

Motion was made by J. Otto to adjourn at 7:43 p.m. (19:43 hours).

Second by P. Gauthier. No discussion.

Motion carried by voice vote (4-0-0).

Respectfully submitted,

J.S. Perreault

Recording Secretary

***PLEASE NOTE: Meetings to continue to be held via WebEx and in person at the Clifford B. Green Meeting Center, Suite 24, 69 South Main Street, Brooklyn, CT, until they are able to be held in person at the Fire Stations. All attending in person are required to wear masks.**