

**Board of Fire Commissioners
Regular Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, January 13, 2016
7:30 p.m. Mortlake Fire Department**

- 1. Call to Order:** Chairman, Peter Considine, called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Attendance: Peter Considine, Chairman; Stephen C. Breen; Patrick Gauthier; Richard Ives; Jeffrey Otto; James Soler.

Felix Ramos arrived at 7:32 p.m.

Others Present – Jim Warren, East Brooklyn Fire Chief; Lou Brodeur, Mortlake Fire Chief; Matt Bombster arrived at 7:35 p.m.

- 2. Review of Minutes from last meeting**

Motion by J. Otto to approve the Minutes of the meeting of October 14, 2015, as presented. Second by S. Breen. Motion carried unanimously (6-0).

F. Ramos arrived at 7:32 p.m.

- 3. Public Comment**

J. Otto provided copies and gave a brief presentation of the Fire and Medical Calls for Mortlake and East Brooklyn Fire Departments for the year 2015.

P. Gauthier asked what the average call for fire departments in the QV area is. J. Otto stated that he doesn't remember the numbers, but it is pretty much proportional to population.

At this time, P. Considine asked R. Ives if he would like to speak about the budget.

R. Ives asked that the Fire Departments have their draft budgets back by the next meeting because it is time. It would be okay to vote on them in March and get them to the Board of Finance by the third week in March.

J. Otto gave a reminder that the last quarter financial reports for 2015 should be ready by the end of January. The Board of Finance needs them by their next meeting which is the third Wednesday in February.

P. Considine asked if meeting on the second Wednesday is working for everyone. No one was opposed.

Matt Bombster arrived @ 7:35 p.m.

4. Discussion of Apparatus Replacement Schedules

J. Otto provided copies of a sheet entitled, "Brooklyn Fire Apparatus Replacement Plans for Discussion 9/9/15" which he had put together for discussion. It included the 2014 Plan, the 2015 Plan transformed to go to the 25-year replacement which was discussed in 2014, and the 2016 Plan which spreads out the replacements by eliminating some trucks. He suggests not replacing ET-192 and replacing the other vehicles on the 2015 schedule except for Service 190 which gets pushed out from a 15-year schedule to a 20-year schedule. Topic for discussion: Could it be pushed out further than 20 years or should they be turned over to the Recreation or Highway Department and get a new emergency vehicle? He explained that when he made up the schedule, he was looking at the functions of the vehicles, not whether the fire departments could raise the money to replace them. The Board of Finance needs to look at the total cost of fire protection.

P. Gauthier stated that he has a hard time with not replacing the ET and would support it if an outside consultant were hired to do a truck study and suggested not replacing it. He feels this is J. Otto's personal view and not really the best interest of the Town. He stated that he feels the Town has enough apparatus now, but is not sure if there is too much apparatus and feels a consultant should be hired to determine that.

P. Considine stated that there is a responsibility to the citizens of the Town and that's how it has to be looked at.

R. Ives suggested that, maybe, the two fire departments should be put together which would really eliminate equipment and also help out the manpower issue. The Town is not ready for discussions about that right now, so it needs to be about apparatus. He does not agree with hiring a consultant.

S. Breen stated that there are two ways to look at it:

- Merge the two Departments and decide where cuts could be made. He also does not feel that anyone is ready to have that discussion.
- Resources are pooled together as two agencies that respond together for probably 95 percent of the time anyway. So, for Town-wide response from both Departments, do you have the equipment needed to take care of whatever problem comes along?

Jim Warren asked if S. Breen had changed the alarm card. S. Breen stated that he had not reviewed it and it has not been his position to do that, but duly noted.

F. Ramos asked about the main function of ET-192. Jim Warren explained that it is the attack tanker that has more water on it than the engine and it used as the first attack piece. He was not opposed to eliminating it as it "goes down the road sideways." J. Otto stated that if ET-192 were not replaced, he suggests, when ET-190 is replaced that it be moved to East Brooklyn as a back-up attack tanker which he feels may still be in good shape. Jim Warren asked why East Brooklyn gets the hand-me-down and Mortlake gets the new one. P. Gauthier feels that J. Otto does not have a fair point of view. J. Otto stated that in the Mortlake part of Town, where the response distances are significantly longer and there isn't as much readily available mutual aid, it deserves, after 25 years, to have a

replacement ET. Jim Warren disagreed about the available mutual aid and stated that the same argument can go either way. J. Otto stated that he is trying to get ideas out on the table.

Lou Brodeur provided copies of and discussed a capital plan for the next five years for Mortlake which he had put together. He suggested refurbishing the truck they have and running it for another ten years which would cost \$150,000.00 to \$200,000.00. He also suggested looking for used ET's as a lot of departments replace them after 10 to 12 years which you can get for about \$200,000.00.

R. Ives stated that this is a good start and that this is not an easy conversation. He stated that L. Brodeur's idea is an interesting point of view, but doesn't do anything about the long-term problem.

Discussion ensued regarding insurance liability.

F. Ramos expressed interest in knowing what the functions are of the different trucks. L. Brodeur stated that the ET's are the most important trucks in both stations.

There was discussion as to whether purchasing used trucks would be more cost effective stretched over a 30-year period. In ten years, there may be only one station with paid staff.

J. Otto suggested thinking about what vehicles you would have if there were only one station in the middle of Town which would mean longer response times to the extremities of Town, but less spent on replacing trucks. He explained how New London, having trouble getting enough volunteers, went with having one paid station and one volunteer station.

P. Considine asked the Commission how they want to proceed. R. Ives stated that he is not in favor of hiring a consultant and asked to hear how everyone else feels about it.

- L. Brodeur – It will go the way the consultant is steered and he feels money was wasted on a report in the past;
- J. Otto – He hopes that, within the next year, they can come up with a plan that everyone agrees to. He is not in favor of hiring a consultant.
- F. Ramos – Is open to hiring a consultant and suggested a sub-committee to work with the consultant so he/she wouldn't be steered either way.
- P. Considine – His experience with consultants is it comes down to who is writing the check.
- S. Breen stated that the responsibility of the Commission is a Town-wide picture and not just to their own Fire Department. He would like to see a cost analysis of used/refurbished apparatus vs. purchasing a new piece of apparatus and running it out 25 years (long-term projection 30-35 years). J. Otto can put together a financial analysis (estimated) for the next meeting.
- P. Gauthier – See Above.
- R. Ives – See Above.

P. Considine stated that the Commission's responsibility is to the people of this Town both monetarily and for fire protection.

Discussion ensued.

5. Unfinished Business – None.

6. Motion to schedule next meeting on February 10, 2016, at East Brooklyn Fire Company – There was no motion. P. Gauthier stated that he will not be able to attend in February.

7. Motion to Adjourn

Motion by J. Otto to adjourn at 8:23 p.m. Second by S. Breen. Motion carried unanimously (7-0).

Respectfully submitted,

J.S. Perreault
Recording Secretary