



TOWN OF BROOKLYN
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BROOKLYN, CONNECTICUT 06234

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Board of Finance Special Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, April 23, 2024, 7:30 pm
Clifford B. Green Memorial Building and
via Google Meet

Google Meet joining info.

Video call link: <https://meet.google.com/mce-hxnx-art>

Or dial: (US) +1 406-518-1902 PIN: 875 241 626#

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1. Determination of a quorum and Call to Order

Sandy Brodeur, Heather Allen, R. David Lee, Lance Metzger, Sr., Cindy Dehner. (All in person).

Andrew Dionne was absent with notice.

Amy Genna and Dave Kowolenko. (In person)

Joe Voccio, Selectman and Michael Podzaline, Chair of Fire Commissioners (Via MEETS)

Staff Present: Austin Tanner, First Selectman

Lisa M. Lindia, Building & Land Use Assistant

2. Public comment

None

3. Action on minutes from April 15, 2024

A motion to accept the minutes as presented was made by Cindy Dehner and seconded by Heather Allen.

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote (5-0-0)

4. Review of Fire Commissioners' Budget proposal

Mike Podzaline asked that Aimee Genna present the Brooklyn Board of Fire Commissioners Budget Proposal for Fiscal Year 2024-2025 (see attached).

5. Discussion on that budget

S. Brodeur – Asked if everyone had time to review the budgets submitted from both departments. Does anyone have a chance to review all the attachments? Does anyone have questions? R. David Lee said the biggest question I have is the ambulance. S. Brodeur replied that D. Kowolenko is present if you have any questions.

A motion to accept the report as presented for further discussion was made by R. David Lee and seconded by Heather Allen.

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote (5-0-0)

R. David Lee – I agree the biggest issue is the \$83,000 for the ambulance. What happens if you do not get the funding?

S. Brodeur – I open it for someone to answer. It is better for me not to answer.

R. David Lee – Will it shut down tomorrow or July 1st?

D. Kowolenko – No not July 1st it will be a slow drain to run the ambulance.

R. David Lee – Notated that he is a member of the Mortlake Fire Company and receives a stipend operating for the ambulance. I recused myself from the discussion at the Board of Fire Commissioners. Is it okay if I participate in this conversation?

S. Brodeur – I do not have a problem with that, does anyone have a problem? You are fine to participate.

D. Kowolenko – It is based upon the calls when people get sick. You don't want people to get sick, but you need the calls to pay for the ambulance. The \$83,000 number came from the call volume from 2023 and model that into 2024. What we do know is 67% of calls happen during the daytime with paid staff and the rest happen at night. We know that the payments from Medicaid and Medicare rates are about 40% of what we charge. There are higher returns on private medical. Currently most of our calls are Medicaid and Medicare. The state is looking into the reimbursement rate but that does not help right now. The reimbursement time from billing until we collect is unpredictable. There are months we have run in the negative. Based on the data we have we will be closed in 5-6 months. We basically have \$40,000 available. We will provide quarterly financial statements for review to see if we are doing better or worse. We want full transparency.

R. David Lee – We still need to provide a service. The Town faces significant issues that need to be addressed and we need to be conscious of raising taxes. While \$83,000 does not sound like a lot, it is still an increase. However, the service is still needed.

D. Kowolenko – When someone contacts 911 they expect someone to respond. It is the cost of doing business unfortunately.

H. Allen – What is the difference between the \$83,000 that the Fire Commissioners

presented versus \$135,800 that they asked for.

R. David Lee – The \$83,000 is brand new. The operating expense for the fire company and the safety capital is \$135,800.00. The Town has funded the ambulance in the past. The operating and safety is a flat rate for both Fire Companies from year to year.

S. Brodeur – I am not voting, Dave and I went through everything and looked at the numbers to cut the cost. We got it down to \$83,000.00 from \$135,800.00.

D. Kowolenko – We have paid staff during the day. That cost does not change whether we have no calls or many calls. From 6:00pm to 6:00am we pay volunteers a stipend. Multiple calls during those hours increase our costs per call. After analyzing the time of day for calls we were able to reduce the anticipated cost for stipend payments.

R. David Lee – Suggested that this be the last year we support two different Fire Departments. We need to move to a consolidated single organization.

H. Allen – They do have a duplicate of tools, equipment, and trucks. East Brooklyn membership is low. They are doing a lot of joint training. If we are doing all these things together, I would be in favor of one consolidated department.

S. Brodeur - There is software that runs the operation that would be a cost reduction. They cannot just have one for two departments. The software would be one way for a reduction. Everyone on the Board of Finance has received all the attachments, minutes, reports, and back-up schedules to look at.

All in favor of accepting the Fire Commissioners proposed budgets as proposed.
Motion carried by voice vote (3-1-1)

6. Any further questions/discussion on any of the other budget proposals received to date?

None

7. Public comment

None

8. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by H. Allen and seconded by R. David Lee at 7:48 pm.

Motion carried by voice vote (5-0-0)

Respectfully Submitted,
Lisa M. Lindia