

**Board of Fire Commissioners  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, October 10, 2018  
7:30 pm East Brooklyn Fire Department**

- 1. Call to Order** First Selectman, Richard Ives called the meeting to order at 7:30p.m. (19:30 hours).

**Attendance:** Rick Ives; Lou Brodeur; Patrick Gauthier; Jeff Otto.  
Felix Ramos and James Soler was absent with notice.

**Others Present** –Sandra Brodeur: Jim Warren, East Brooklyn Fire Chief; S. Breen, Mortlake Fire Chief;  
Matt Bomster, East Brooklyn Fire Department.

**2. Approve Minutes of**

- a. Regular Meeting of June 13, 2018**
- b. Special Meeting of June 28, 2018**
- c. Informal Discussion August 8, 2018 (Regular Meeting had been cancelled due to lack of quorum). –**  
No action required for this item.

**NOTE: July 11<sup>th</sup> and September 12<sup>th</sup> Regular Meetings had been cancelled.**

Motion was made by J. Otto to approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of June 13, 2018, and the Special Meeting of June 28, 2018. Second by L. Brodeur. Motion carried unanimously (4-0-0).

**3. Public Comment – None.**

**4. Equipment Discussion**

R. Ives stated that he had received a copy of the ladder test (from Mortlake) and he will take care of it with the insurance company.

S. Breen stated that ET-190 was back in time the Brooklyn Fair, but there were a couple of punch list items that had not been done before the Fair. He had discussed the delays with Mr. Bowen. There was nothing concrete to report on ET-2 at this time.

**5. Department Discussion**

- a. Recruitment**
- b. Retention**

There was discussion regarding what the Town of Scotland is doing regarding paid staff (started October 1<sup>st</sup>):

- 12-hour shifts
- 365 days per year
- 2 people per shift
- Fire and EMS
- \$15 per hour
- Maximum of two shifts per week (which would allow to finish if out on a call and stay under 30 hours)

- Town Employees
- Provide salary and workers comp
- Managed by the Department
- Not sure who pays for gear and training

Mr. Ives stated that it gives you Fire and EMS personnel and the ability to respond. Scotland had no problem filling the spots (24 applicants). There was discussion regarding the number of calls per year (fire/ambulance). There was a suggestion to have a staff of 3 people at the Station with 2 dedicated to the ambulance and 1 dedicated as a driver for apparatus (and hoping for a volunteer if all are needed at the same time). Call volumes need to be considered to be sure all bases are covered. There was discussion regarding minimum staffing requirements (NFPA Standards). There was discussion regarding possibly working small with neighboring municipalities which would add revenue.

S. Breen stated that he would like to have enough volunteers so he wouldn't have to worry about staffing. However, he likes the idea of having the ambulance staffed 24/7 and he stated that we are approaching the number of calls per year to start to consider that. An additional 400-500 calls per year would justify looking into it. He feels that the culture in the Firehouse right now works with the ambulance staff, fire staff and volunteers work well together and they work hard to make sure that continues. He feels that it could also continue to work with paid fire staff, but he has concerns. He spoke about the importance of having a good volunteer base to rely on. He stated that 1/3 of the time, they are running both ambulances simultaneously. He feels that the model of Scotland is a good starting place, but is not exactly what is needed for Brooklyn. Discussion ensued.

There was discussion regarding the times/shift that the ambulance should be staffed and also when volunteers are most available. Mr. Otto discussed costs that need to be considered.

There was discussion regarding employees vs. using a service. P. Gauthier noted that a lot of area fire departments are leaning toward paid staff during the day.

What questions need to be answered for this to move forward:

- An explanation of why it is needed needs to be adopted by the Board of Fire Commissioners and then presented to the Townspeople: Difficulty getting the ambulance on the road; R-1's can't get out to all of the calls; there is a town-wide need to increase the staffing.

P. Gauthier noted that there is good mutual aid for fire. He asked if it would be better to go with just 24/7 for ambulance. S. Breen feels that moving forward incrementally by increasing hours from 12 hours per day to 18 hours per day is a more accurate solution for the ambulance. There was discussion regarding nuisance fire calls which are a problem because they don't get enough people to answer the calls. Discussion continued.

J. Otto commented that how it is managed is important and he suggested that they should think through all of the steps for establishing a paid fire department (employment agreements). These employees of the Town of Brooklyn assigned to emergency response duty would have to be supervised and managed by the Fire Department with an oversight board (of 2 or 3 people).

There was discussion regarding Workers Compensation Insurance. Volunteers are ten times higher. No ambulance on it. Mr. Ives will work to get it straightened out. Discussion continued.

There was discussion regarding three homes on Route 6 (near the prison) with polluted wells.

Ongoing discussion regarding paid staff is to be added to the agenda until resolved.

P. Gauthier asked if the Town would be extending the water line. There was discussion.

## **6. Financial Reports Discussion**

J. Otto gave a reminder that the Financial Reports are due by May 15<sup>th</sup>, August 15<sup>th</sup>, December 15<sup>th</sup>, and February 15<sup>th</sup>. He said it would be great if they were in earlier.

**a. Budget Discussion** – No discussion.

## **7. Other Business**

P. Gauthier suggested that meetings be held at East Brooklyn on the even months and at Mortlake on the odd months to alleviate confusion. Everyone agreed.

## **8. Public Comment**

**Matt Bomster**, East Brooklyn Fire Department, suggested offering re-imbursement on taxes (as in Danielson). Mr. Ives explained that it had been discussed and he stated that it hasn't worked in Danielson or Pomfret. He said that it hasn't been a proven recruiter, but it helps to retain people who are already members a little longer. There was discussion. It needs to be closely managed. It was agreed that it is a good retention tool. Sandra Brodeur stated that there is a required amount of participation and there is a lot of record keeping involved. Mr. Ives has looked into 4 or 5 towns and offered that he could look into it again. S. Breen commented that employers aren't willing to let employees leave to answer calls (EMS). He asked if there could be some incentive to employers to help volunteer organizations.

## **9. Next Meeting** – November 14, 2018, at Mortlake Fire Department.

## **10. Adjourn**

Motion was made by L. Brodeur to adjourn at 8:31 p.m. Second by J. Otto. Motion carried unanimously (4-0-0).

Respectfully submitted,

J.S. Perreault  
Recording Secretary