

**Board of Fire Commissioners
Regular Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, May 8, 2019
7:30 pm Mortlake Fire Department**

- 1. Call to Order** - Jeff Otto, Acting Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:39 p.m. (19:39 hours).

Attendance: Jeff Otto; Lou Brodeur; Patrick Gauthier; James Soler. Rick Ives and Felix Ramos were absent.

Others Present – Jim Warren, East Brooklyn Fire Chief; S. Breen, Mortlake Fire Chief; Dave Lee, Mortlake Fire Department; Matt Bomster, John Livernoche, Nancy Livernoche and Ray Gallup all of East Brooklyn Fire Department; Sandra Brodeur.

- 2. Approve Minutes**
 - a. Regular Meeting of March 13, 2019**

Motion was made by L. Brodeur to accept the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of March 1, 2019, as presented. Second by P. Gauthier. Motion carried unanimously (4-0-0).

- 3. Public Comment** – None.
- 4. Equipment Discussion** – No discussion.

- 5. Department Discussion**
 - a. Recruitment**

- Mortlake attended a recruitment program and Dave Lee reported that Nick Wonk, Chief of Hebron (who is also the President of the Connecticut Fire Chiefs Association) was a speaker. They had a two-hour discussion which included marketing regionally. Other topics included FSLA and the increase in minimum wage which may affect services.
- Mortlake had two new applicants.
- East Brooklyn – no new applicants over the past month.

b. Retention – No discussion.

c. Paid Staff

Mr. Otto stated that a special meeting would need to be scheduled for discussion with Dan Sym of Scotland. He will speak with Mr. Ives about rescheduling.

Mr. Brodeur provided copies of an article by Benjamin Kail of *The Day* (New London), entitled, "Labor laws prevent Conn. Volunteer firefighters from working paid shifts."

Mr. Gauthier commented that it is important to establish the goal. Discussion ensued and Mr. Otto commented that there is a trend all over the country for less and less participation in organizations that have depended on volunteers for years. He explained that one of the purposes for exploring this now is to find out how much change needs to be done to be confident that we will have an active fire service in the future. He feels that, due to the need for a large volunteer force, paid people and volunteers would need to serve at the same time which creates a whole new set of management problems for the two volunteer fire departments. Discussion continued regarding Bozrah and Preston.

6. Financial Reports Discussion

a. Budget Discussion

Mr. Otto stated that the Board of Finance agreed to move forward on the Budget. The Budget hearing is scheduled for May 14th, which would then move to a Town Meeting on June 3rd. He said that both, the East Brooklyn and Mortlake budgets, as presented, were incorporated into the Budget that is moving forward and that there were no questions about the fire department budget portion of the overall Town Budget or Financial Reports. He explained that this is a big year for Capital items to be funded by short-term borrowing. He encouraged everyone to attend the meeting on May 14th.

The budget that will be recommended to Brooklyn taxpayers next week will require a 0.84 mill increase in the tax rate. This increase represents a 3.0% increase in taxes.

7. Other Business – None.

8. Public Comment

Sandra Brodeur stated that both Fire Departments had turned in their quarterly reports and that they had already been reviewed by the Board of Finance.

9. Next Meeting – June 12, 2019, at East Brooklyn Fire Department.

10. Adjourn

Motion was made by L. Brodeur to adjourn at 7:59 p.m. (19:59 hours). Second by P. Gauthier. Motion carried unanimously (4-0-0).

Respectfully submitted,

J.S. Perreault
Recording Secretary