

**Board of Fire Commissioners
Regular Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, June 12, 2019
7:30 pm East Brooklyn Fire Department**

1. Call to Order – Rick Ives, Acting Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:38 p.m. (19:38 hours).

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

Others Present – Jim Warren, East Brooklyn Fire Chief; Sandra Brodeur; Ray Gallup, East Brooklyn Fire Department. S. Breen, Mortlake Fire Chief, was absent with notice.

2. Approve Minutes

**a. Regular Meeting of March 13, 2019 – Incorrect Date was stated on the Agenda
Should be Minutes of the Regular Meeting of May 8, 2019.**

Motion was made by L. Brodeur to approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of May 8, 2019, as presented. Second by P. Gauthier. Motion carried unanimously (4-0-0).

3. Public Comment – None.

4. Equipment Discussion

East Brooklyn Fire Department hose and ladder testing is done. One length of hose (Goodyear) failed.

Jim Warren reported that the new truck is expected to be ready in the fall.

5. Department Discussion

There was discussion regarding the PTSD Bill. EMT's must be a member of a fire department. Paramedics are not covered. KB Ambulance does not appear to be covered. Benefits seem to be okay, however, it is unclear regarding whether or how volunteers get compensated.

a. Recruitment

Mortlake reported that they got two new applications (high school students).

Mr. Otto requested that each Department provide head counts for the following:

- Total number of Members
- Members under 65 years of age
- Medically qualified Members (EMT's/MRT's)
- Qualified drivers (vehicles over 26,000 lbs.)

He suggested that these numbers be kept up-to-date from month to month. Discussion ensued.

b. Retention – See paragraph 3 under Paid Staff below.

c. Paid Staff

There was discussion regarding a suggestion made by L. Brodeur that a committee be formed to work on this.

There was discussion regarding whether the issue is with fire calls vs. medical calls and response vs. prompt response (during day time). P. Gauthier feels that East Brooklyn has a good mutual aid situation with Mortlake, Danielson and Williamsville.

There was discussion regarding what the Town would do for the guys that have been there for 20 or 30 years. Mr. Ives stated that a written request, from each Department, must be submitted for a program such as tax abatement. Then, he will present it to the Board of Selectmen.

J. Otto noted that adding some paid people to the Town's payroll to address slow, inadequate numbers of responders, is an issue that it does not matter if someone has been in the Department for 2 years or 25 years. It addresses a really important problem that is going to get worse as time goes on. He feels that the Town should start addressing it within its means and see how it develops over time. Discussion ensued. The paid people will need to pass all testing for both fire and ambulance. Mr. Otto had done some calculations (he figured 16-18 part-time people at a maximum of 25 hours per week split between the two Departments). Mr. Otto stated that they could do equipment maintenance/checks and vehicle checks which would reduce the burden on the remaining volunteers. He said that a strong volunteer Fire Department is still needed in Town. Mr. Otto feels that if there is confusion, it is probably due to a clear idea of what will be involved, has not yet been presented. A committee could address this by putting together a detailed plan.

There was discussion regarding training requirements. A plan for training/educating the Officers in the Fire Departments would be needed because they will be supervising paid employees vs. volunteers. There was discussion regarding a paid supervisor. Mr. Otto explained that an integrated command structure needs to be considered.

Mr. Otto suggested that there needs to be a firm management program that makes it clear to the employees what their responsibilities are (including a regular work schedule and a daily exercise program). There was discussion as to whether bunk rooms, showers and an exercise facility would be needed. Bunk rooms and showers would not be necessary, but there could be exercise equipment located at one of the Departments for use by both.

There was discussion regarding that, eventually, there would probably be a union.

It was decided to form a Committee of four members (one or two people from each Department and the Chiefs) that would report back to the Board of Fire Commissioners. The Departments will provide the names of people for the Committee to Mr. Ives and it will be set up at the next meeting of the Fire Commissioners to move forward.

6. Financial Reports Discussion

Mr. Otto noted that the quarterly Financial Reports are due on the 15th of August, November, February and May. However, he stated that there would be no problem if they were submitted earlier.

a. Budget Discussion – None. This will be removed from the agenda.

7. Other Business – None.

8. Public Comment

There was more discussion regarding paid staff hours. Sandra Brodeur suggested sharing the training costs. Mr. Ives agreed with Ms. Brodeur as long as there is agreement regarding goals and what is wanted from it.

The need for paid staff is primarily driven by ambulance calls. The Town government has a responsibility to provide for public safety. Times are changing and things need to be looked at differently. People will need to adjust to change.

9. Next Meeting – August 14, 2019, at East Brooklyn Fire Department.

Motion was made by L. Brodeur to suspend the Regular Meeting scheduled for July 10, 2019, since a quorum is difficult to get in July. Second by P. Gauthier. Motion carried unanimously (4-0-0).

10. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8:22 p.m. (20:22 hours).

Respectfully submitted,

J.S. Perreault
Recording Secretary