

**Board of Fire Commissioners
Regular Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, September 14, 2016
7:30pm East Brooklyn Fire Station**

1. Call to Order: Chairman, Peter Considine, called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. (19:30 hours).

Attendance: Peter Considine, Chairman; Patrick Gauthier; Jeffrey Otto; Felix Ramos; Stephen C. Breen.
James Soler was absent.
Richard Ives arrived at 7:36 p.m.

Others Present – Jim Warren, East Brooklyn Fire Chief; Lou Brodeur, Mortlake Fire Chief; David Dow and Rich Peck from New England Fire Equipment & Apparatus; Patrick Dragon; Heath Kesling; and Matt Bomster.

2. Approve Minutes of Regular Meeting of August 10, 2016

Motion by J. Otto to approve the Minutes of Regular Meeting of August 10, 2016 as presented. Second by S. Breen. Motion carried unanimously (5-0).

3. Public Comment – There were no comments from the public.

4. Equipment Discussion

J. Warren stated that David Dow and Rich Peck were present to present information and answer questions.

a. Apparatus

1. East Brooklyn - Mini-Pumper

J. Warren, D. Dow and R. Peck explained that instead of replacing ET-192 with another ET, it would be replaced by a mini-pumper as described below:

- Ford 4-Wheel Drive, F-550 Cabin Chassis (7.4 liter diesel engine)
- 4-Door Cab
- 1500 gallon-per-minute pump with a 300-gallon, poly tank
- Adequate Compartments to support the mission it is designed for
- Approximately 27-feet long (height and GBW far less)
- Can serve as front line/water source piece
- Does not need special licensing
- Designed to take some of the work load from the bigger trucks to prolong the life of the bigger trucks. In a rural Town, the life expectancy is approximately 18 to 20 years.
- Price at this time \$279,000 - 260 days from the time of order to the time of delivery.
- It has to go through all the testing.

If the Town sells ET-192, it could sell for \$40,000 to \$65,000 depending on how the market is at that time for that age truck. If taken as a trade, they would only give \$18,000 to \$20,000.

J. Otto spoke about a cost analysis which was done several months ago: new vehicles vs. refurbished vehicles vs. used vehicles. The study showed that there was hardly any difference in the cost (over two cycles of replacement vehicles). He re-ran the numbers and found that it comes out the same (because of the inflation rate on the cost of fire apparatus). He feels that the benefit of buying new from the beginning is that you have the opportunity to correct design problems in the 25 year-old vehicle that you are replacing and to add features. You need to keep up with technology. He is in favor of buying new rather than refurbishing.

Mr. Peck told a story of a department that had a \$190,000 refurbishment done on a vehicle and then, the department was looking to replace the vehicle one year later. There was discussion.

2. Mortlake - Refurbish ET

L. Brodeur stated that the more he looks into it and finding more things that are starting to fail (both hose rails, replace the tank), he is starting to think that it would be better to replace rather than refurbish.

J. Otto stated this is a low utilization community and that changing the replacement schedule from 20 years to 25 years on major pieces of fire apparatus doesn't hurt and saves the community half-a-million dollars over the first replacement cycle.

L. Brodeur stated that they are still running a 1986 pumper truck which he considers to be in excellent shape. The ET that they need to replace is a 1995/1996.

J. Otto stated that he feels strongly that the inflation on fire apparatus will do harm if refurbishing is chosen.

Motion by J. Otto that the Fire Commissioners go on record that they are in support of the replacement of ET-190, at 25 years of age, with a new vehicle. Second by S. Breen. There was discussion:

R. Ives stated that he is not opposed to having new vs. refurbished, but he pointed out that the motion would mandate replacement at 25 years of age.

Motion by J. Otto to amend his motion to say that the Fire Commissioners go on record that they are in support of the replacement of ET-190, at no less than 25 years of age, with a new vehicle. There was no second. There was discussion:

P. Gauthier asked if the Board was also in favor or replacing ET-192 with a mini-pumper.

Mr. Otto withdrew his motion to allow discussion of the mini-pumper.

P. Gauthier asked if the motion locks it in. R. Ives stated that it locks in that it would be new rather than refurbished. J. Otto stated that a motion on a mini-pumper would lock in a scope of the vehicle.

Discussion ensued. J. Warren explained that discussions between the two Fire Chiefs led to an agreement that, after the mini-pumper is purchased and ET-192 is sold, Mortlake can get the new ET to have more water and a bigger truck. This helps both Departments and seems better moneywise.

P. Gauthier about the replacement date of the ET and voiced concern regarding depreciation. Mr. Dow explained that J. Otto has a good understanding of price increasing and depreciation. Mr. Peck stated that they become worthless at about 30 years.

J. Otto explained that the schedule calls for the replacement of ET-192 during the 2018/2019 fiscal year and the Board of Finance has seen that (however that does not lock it in). He stated that this is going to be a bad year for the Town (from a financial point of view). R. Ives stated that it will take some work, but there is time to do that. He feels this is a great compromise and good for the Town.

J. Warren asked if a price could be locked in. Mr. Dow stated that a commitment would need to be established. Mr. Peck explained that the best they could possibly do is about a year. J. Otto stated that it has to be competitively bid, but it opens the door to solid discussions. Discussion ensued regarding a pre-pay option for the chassis (\$75,000 range).

Motion by J. Otto that the Board of Fire Commissioners support a plan in which ET-192 is replaced by a mini-pumper, of the type discussed, for purchase early in the 2018/2019 fiscal year (not locking into any particular supplier or amount). They will look at pre-funding the chassis purchase or some other pre-manufacturing options that may be beneficial. Additionally, the Board of Fire Commissioners supports the idea of replacing ET-190 with a new vehicle at no less than 25 years of age from its original purchase. Second by F. Ramos. There was discussion:

R. Ives stated that the motion states that the mini-pumper will be purchased in the 2018/2019 fiscal year and stated that he is okay with it if everyone else is, but it is a plan and it still has to go through the Board of Finance.

Motion carried unanimously (6-0).

Mr. Dow and Mr. Peck left at 8:13 p.m. (20:13 hours).

5. Department Discussion – No discussion.

6. Financial Reports Discussion

J. Otto explained that, for the Chart of Accounts, the State wants only one number for all Public Safety Expenditures (police, fire and ambulance). The Town Chart of Accounts will have many more entries than the State requires. He stated that the Fire Department budget cycles will move from calendar year to fiscal year. Mortlake is willing to do a short year from January 1, 2017 through June 30, 2017, and will be on board with the Town for July 1, 2017. J. Otto asked if East Brooklyn had spoken about this. P. Gauthier stated that they will cooperate, but are waiting for instruction. R. Ives stated that the Finance Director is working on how to map out the section for fire and ambulance. It won't work unless everyone is on the same fiscal year.

J. Otto provided copies of a proposal for a Chart of Accounts for the Departments to fine tune for the Finance Department. He explained how it can be used/adjusted by the Departments. The ambulance can be merged in also. J. Otto asked that the two Departments discuss this with their treasurers to fine tune and return to him and he will provide them to the Finance Director for feedback. To be discussed again at the October or November meeting.

J. Otto asked about an expenditure in the amount of \$8,829 under vehicle cost on the East Brooklyn Fire Department's Finance Report from April through July period. P. Gauthier explained that the money was for buying the truck and it went to that account. He stated that they look at the calendar year. When they close, they will provide outside-of-budget revenue to overcome that expenditure. J. Otto was satisfied.

7. Other Business

a. Recruitment Discussion

P. Considine asked if anyone has any ideas. L. Brodeur stated that Mortlake has 20-22 active member that perform/go to calls (60 members on the books). J. Warren has East Brooklyn has about 30 active members (about 50 members on the books). East Brooklyn just got a couple new members.

P. Considine asked about the "Help Wanted" sign. Patrick Dragon stated that, at events, they try to answer questions and they supply applications to those who are interested in becoming members. They have gotten some new members this way. They have not had an open house for recruitment.

P. Considine asked how they feel about an open house in the fall. He stated that people should be greeted with a smile and made to feel like they are welcomed by showing them around.

L. Brodeur stated that at their open house next week they will have people staff the Department for those two days.

Heath Kesling stated that they have picked up a few members by hosting classes. He suggested creating literature and providing it to high schools to let students know that the Departments would provide training and they would learn life skills.

R. Ives suggested that members be made aware of their role in the recruiting process. He thinks it may be worth hiring or budgeting for a marketing firm to identify and find candidates. He will explore this.

Discussion ensued.

Matt Bomster stated that the young people would rather spend their time doing other things. He suggested that young people should be recruited while they are still in high school. He also mentioned dual memberships.

P. Considine suggested calling area high schools to make announcements about the open house at Mortlake. Patrick Dragon mentioned Killingly High School's Career Development Day and that last year they recognized the need to bring in volunteer fire departments (there was a lot of interest). He suggested bringing the vehicles and setting up a table. He also suggested the Career Days at Ellis Tech.

S. Breen stated that it is not just a matter of recruitment, it is a matter of public image/awareness.

F. Ramos stated that the two departments provide very professional service and he doesn't want to see the demise of volunteer fire departments. He feels it is one of the most important things that the Board should stay on top of.

L. Brodeur spoke of putting together a junior department together as some area towns have done it successfully.

8. Public Comment

L. Brodeur stated that the cracks in the parking lot were sealed and two catch basins were fixed at a cost of \$4,300.00. He hopes to get five years before having to go to a capital project to blacktop the parking lot.

P. Gauthier stated that there will be a Steak Dinner on Saturday, October 1st from 4 p.m. to 7 pm.

9. Next Meeting – October 12, 2016, at Mortlake Fire Department.

10. Adjourn

Motion by S. Breen to adjourn at 8:35 p.m. (20:35 hours). Second by J. Otto. Motion carried unanimously (6-0).

Respectfully submitted,

J.S. Perreault

Recording Secretary