

**Board of Fire Commissioners**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**Wednesday, June 14, 2023**  
**7:00 pm via Zoom &**  
**Clifford B. Green Meeting Center**  
**Suite 24, 69 South Main Street, Brooklyn, CT**

To join this meeting, follow the below instructions:

**Join Zoom Meeting**

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88417693055?pwd=alh6K1NkellZL1lLcHJCNklqV3pWQT09>

**Meeting ID: 884 1769 3055**

**Passcode: 438618**

**One tap mobile**

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**Dial by your location**

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+1 309 205 3325 US

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+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

+1 360 209 5623 US

+1 386 347 5053 US

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**MINUTES**

- 1. Call to Order** – Michael Podzaline, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. (19:04 hours).
- 2. Attendance:** Michael Podzaline; Austin Tanner, First Selectman, Leo Berube; David Costa; James Soler; R. David Lee, Board of Finance Liaison; (all present in person).

**Others Present (in person)** – S. Breen, Mortlake Fire Chief; B. Pepin, East Brooklyn Fire Chief.  
J.S. Perreault, Recording Secretary.  
There were five additional people present in the audience.

**Present via Zoom** – There were six additional people present via online: Joe Voccio;, John; Mike; Kayla Burgess; and two unidentified.

- 3. Approve Minutes**
  - a. Regular Meeting of April 12, 2023**

Motion was made by D. Costa to approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of April 12, 2023, as presented.

Second by L. Berube.

Discussion:

R.D. Lee noted the following correction: Page 3, Item 6.a., last sentence, to read as follows: **Mr. Tanner** did not have information regarding the Highway Department employees.

Motion, including the noted correction, carried unanimously by voice vote (6-0-0).

4. **Public Comment** – None, either in person or online.

5. **Equipment Discussion**

a. **Department Inventories**

Chief Breen reported:

- No issues with equipment.

David Costa reported:

- No issues with equipment.
- Conducting hose testing.

b. **Apparatus**

Chief Breen reported:

- Ambulance was involved in a minor motor vehicle accident late in May (\$19,000 plus damage). It is being repaired and he does not have a firm date when it will be back in service. There will most likely be loss of revenues.  
Only one ambulance in service at this time.

David Costa reported:

- All apparatus in service.

6. **Department Discussion**

a. **Recruitment, Retention, Training**

David Costa reported:

- They got a few new applicants for cadet members.
- They've been doing their usual dual training with Mortlake. It's going well.

Chief Breen reported:

- They have had a couple of applicants.
- They have five people in the Firefighter One Class at this time. It ends in July.
- All trainings are done together with Mortlake now. They layout a basic schedule at the beginning of the year.

b. **Emergency Responses** – No discussion.

7. **Financial Reports Discussion**

Budgets were passed with some cuts. Mr. Lee will work with Shelley Cates to come up with a common chart of accounts so that each Department will report using the same account numbers that will align with both the State and the Town accounting. This was a specific request of the Board of Finance. It should be ready before the end of August.

8. **Old Business**

a. **Volunteer Tax Abatement**

Mr. Podzalne reported that the Board of Selectmen forwarded it to the Town Attorney, who kicked it back to the Board of Finance, and they kicked it back to the Board of Fire Commissioners. He explained that they are looking for a way to provide further verification of the run numbers. Mr. Lee explained that the expectation is that there be some paper trail so that the auditors can trace it all back, if they need to.

Mr. Costa said that they will have to do some research. He hopes to have an answer as to how that to provide the information, for the next meeting. Mr. Podzaline will put it on the agenda for next month.

**b. Fire Department Self-Assessment**

Mr. Podzaline explained that this is to see where our levels are good and where we need improvement. He asked the Chiefs to provide their Departmental SOG's regarding incidents, Department structure, response procedures, apparatus response, arrival duties and assignments. Both Departments provided copies. Mr. Podzaline explained that he will review them over the next month and will report on his findings at the next meeting.

Mr. Podzaline explained that he also asked the Chiefs for incident management SOG's and medical requirements which could also fall onto the Town's responsibility.

**9. New Business**

**a. Fire Lanes**

Mr. Podzaline explained that Fire Lane Ordinance was an item on the Board of Selectmen's agenda last month due to the current law suit between the Brooklyn Fire District, the East Brooklyn Fire Department and all Plaintiffs involved. So that the Town doesn't run into this problem again, he feels that it is within the scope of the BoFC to offer suggestions in re-writing the Ordinance. Once a draft is complete, the Fire Marshal should weigh in. The draft would, then, be presented to the Board of Selectmen and then to a Town vote.

Mr. Tanner explained that legislation had been passed that towns have an ordinance for fire lanes. Since Brooklyn does not currently have one, he feels that this should be done to have a clear understanding for the future. No opposition was expressed.

Mr. Podzaline will prepare a draft for the next meeting of the BoFC. There was discussion.

Motion was made by A. Tanner to move the Board of Fire Commissioners meetings to the Community Center, 31 Tiffany Street, Brooklyn, CT, indefinitely, to avoid the need to set up special meetings.  
Second by R.D. Lee.

Discussion: Mr. Tanner explained that the same process will need to be followed for meetings to return to the Green Building (after the renovations are completed).

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote (6-0-0).

The meetings at the Community Center will also have online capabilities.

The following topics were also discussed:

- Mr. Tanner commented that someone had asked him about Fire Prevention Month which is in October. He will follow-up and provide them with the Chiefs' contact information.
- Mr. Tanner asked if we have standards regarding qualifications for drivers.  
The Chiefs explained that there are standards which are included in the training policy. Mr. Podzaline commented that it is usually an insurance requirement.  
For the Record, both Departments stated that they do a background check on anyone incoming to the Fire Department.
- Mr. Tanner explained that the last Legislation Session passed a bill to study fire recruitment and retention.

- Mr. Lee asked if there were any grants coming up.  
Chief Breen got the letter yesterday for the DEEP AFG Grant which is due August 16<sup>th</sup> (forestry, training, maybe Class A foam).  
Chief will be applying for WalMart (PPE) and Eversource (battery-operated PPE fan).
- There was discussion regarding Heart Safe. Chief Breen explained that they have completed the assessment on all of the defibs in Town and are compiling information. He does not have a target date for completion.
- L. Berube asked about the status of the ARPA Grant.  
Mr. Tanner explained that they have approval and that he is meeting with Shelley Cates tomorrow. She is writing the contracts to be signed.

**10. Public Comment** - None, either in person or online.

**11. Next Meeting – August 9, 2023**

Motion was made by M. Podzaline to cancel the Regular Meeting scheduled for July 12, 2023, and that the next meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners, will take place at the Community Center, on Wednesday, August 9, 2023, at 7:00 p.m.

Second by L. Berube. No discussion.

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote (6-0-0).

**12. Adjournment**

Motion was made by D. Costa to adjourn at 7:31 p.m. (19:31 hours).

Second by L. Berube. No discussion.

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote (6-0-0).

Respectfully submitted,

J.S. Perreault  
Recording Secretary

Attachments