

Board of Fire Commissioners

Regular Meeting

Wednesday, August 9, 2023 (scrivener's error – incorrect date of June 9, 2023 was on the agenda for this meeting)

7:00 pm via Zoom &

Community Center

31 Tiffany Street, Brooklyn, CT

To join this meeting, follow the below instructions:

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88417693055?](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88417693055?pwd=alh6K1NkellZL1lLcHJCnklqV3pWQT09)

[pwd=alh6K1NkellZL1lLcHJCnklqV3pWQT09](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88417693055?pwd=alh6K1NkellZL1lLcHJCnklqV3pWQT09)

Meeting ID: 884 1769 3055

Passcode: 438618

One tap mobile

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MINUTES

1. **Call to Order** – Michael Podzaline, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m. (19:07 hours).
2. **Attendance:** Michael Podzaline, Chairman; Austin Tanner, First Selectman, Leo Berube; R. David Lee, Board of Finance Liaison; James Soler; Matthew Alexander, East Brooklyn F.D. Representative (arrived at 7:12 p.m.) (all present in person).

Others Present (in person) – Steve Breen, Mortlake Fire Chief; William Skene, East Brooklyn Fire Chief; J.S. Perreault, Recording Secretary.

There were three additional people present in the audience: David Costa; John Livernoche; and Aimee Genna.

Present via Zoom – There were four people present via Zoom: Lou Brodeur; Jenn Nemeth; John Donfrisco; and Carrie Juhasz-Horton (joined at approximately 7:25 p.m.).

3. **Approve Minutes**
 - a. **Regular Meeting of June 14, 2023**

Motion was made by L. Berube to approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of June 14, 2023, as presented.

Second by R.D. Lee. No discussion.

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote (5-0-0).

- b. **Special Meeting of July 12, 2023**

Motion was made by L. Berube to approve the Minutes of the Special Meeting of July 12, 2023, as presented.

Second by R.D. Lee.

Discussion:

R.D. Lee noted the following corrections to misspelled names under Item 5 - Executive Session: Correct spellings - James Soler and Aimee Genna

Motion, including the noted corrections, carried unanimously by voice vote (5-0-0).

4. **Public Comment** – There were no comments from the public either in person or online.

5. Equipment Discussion

a. Inventory

Chief Breen reported that the equipment is good.

Chief Skene reported that they are starting to go through all the gear/air packs to find out what they have, status and age.

b. Apparatus

Chief Breen reported that the ambulance has not returned yet, but he expects that it will be back either the Monday or Tuesday before the Brooklyn Fair. Some parts won't be in until sometime in September, but the ambulance can be on the road without those parts.

Mr. Lee asked about keeping track of missed calls.

Chief Breen will have QV query that after the ambulance goes back into service. There is potential for lost revenue.

Chief Skene reported that the apparatus is here and it is working.

Matthew Alexander, East Brooklyn F.D. Representative arrived (7:12 p.m.).

6. Department Discussion

a. Recruitment, Retention, Training

Chief Breen reported that they just had five people complete the Firefighter I Class. A number of people did an EMT and EMR reinstatement course, so they got back 3 EMT's and 1 EMR. He currently has one person in an EMT class.

Chief Breen explained that they are starting to organize a Fast Team as he feels the time is right. He hopes to get it into shape within the next six-to-twelve months. He feels this will help give younger Members a chance to gain more experience/exposure and keep them interested. He will try to support as much as he can through grants, but at some point, it will impact the budget. He does not see it as being a huge impact.

Chief Skene did not have anything to report.

b. Organizational Vision

Michael Podzaline explained that he feels that this should be a line item on the regular agenda going forward. With Chief Skene stepping into leadership, it is an opportune time to put the vision on the forefront of what this Town desires/needs and what each Organization independently thinks of themselves in moving forward and how the BoFC facilitates what is best for both Organizations and how to attain that organizational vision (training/resources/financial concerns).

Mr. Podzaline asked the Chiefs to prepare for next month, a boilerplate outline of where they want to go in the next six months, year, two years, five years not only to see how independently those are cohesively together, but also, so the Board can prepare the overall big picture, Townwide, to present to the Selectmen for budget season.

R. D. Lee commented that there needs to be a planned-out pathway to where they want to go in the future for the fire service in the Town of Brooklyn. The Board can help support that vision. He recommended that it be developed and put in writing for the Board to look at.

Mr. Podzaline explained that large areas would be budgeting (whether separately or with the vision of going forward together at some point) and operational responses.

7. Financial Reports Discussion

R. D. Lee stated that the Board of Finance has asked that the Board of Fire Commissioners ask the Fire Departments to come up with a common Chart of Accounts. He asked that, for the next meeting, the Chiefs report as to whether there has been either progress or completion of that task.

8. Old Business

a. Volunteer Tax Abatement

Discussion back in June left off with the Board of Finance requesting that the BoFC come up with a better way to provide information to the Town.

R.D. Lee explained that there needs to be some documentation on an individual basis showing detail that the particular taxpayer qualifies for: level of abatement for: particular timeframe. He said that the document should be able to be used from an auditor's perspective.

Mr. Podzaline explained that it is as simple as a unified document/affidavit between the two Departments, certified by both Chiefs, stating that the information is accurate/correct and able to be audited (with documentation to back it up). Mr. Lee agreed and added that it should be certified/notarized. It would enable the Tax Assessor and the Auditor to figure who gets what abatement.

Chief Breen asked how many years, going back, they would need to keep the records on file.

Mr. Lee stated seven years. Chief Skene stated six years. There was discussion and Mr. Podzaline stated six or seven years.

The Chiefs will work on this to present at the September meeting. Mr. Podzaline will also work on it and will forward what he comes up with to the Chiefs for review.

b. Fire Department Self-Assessment – status update

Mr. Podzaline explained that this had been tabled for a month or two. He asked if the Chiefs had a chance to review it.

R.D. Lee referred to and reviewed pages 7-9 (dealing with NFPA 1720) of the self-evaluation survey that had been provided by Mr. Podzaline in April 2023. Mr. Lee said that we fit under the staffing requirement for rural (less than 500 people per square mile) and the minimum staffing requirement per the standard is six people responding within fourteen minutes, eighty percent of the time. Regarding the Fast Team that was proposed, Mr. Lee asked if we are meeting this standard for our own responses presently and, if we are, he suggested finding ways to keep people engaged. He said that his understanding is that the level of training needed for a Fast Team is pretty extensive, above and beyond basic firefighting skills and there needs to be significant management of that process and coordination of that training. He said that if we are not meeting the minimal criteria at this time, we should focus on that before looking into doing anything else. He asked the Chiefs if we are meeting any or all of the standards presently. The Chiefs were not

prepared to answer, but will analyze the data with a goal to present information for pages 7 thru 9 at the October meeting.

c. Fire Lanes

Mr. Podzaline reviewed the following topics of the draft document:

- Establishment of Fire Lanes
- Appeals
- Minimum Requirements
- Delineation
- Installation of Signs and Markings
- Pre-installation On-Site Inspection
- Maintenance
- Parking or Standing of Vehicles in Fire Lanes
- Penalties for Standing or Parking in Fire Lanes
- Penalties for Other Offenses
- Towing of Vehicles

There is currently nothing to this degree in Town now, just references to State Statutes for the ability to create an Ordinance. Mr. Podzaline stated that if the Board is in agreement that this is an area that we should touch as Fire Commissioners, he would present it formally next month to move forward with it. There was discussion.

Leo Berube asked about what the Fire Marshal's involvement would be. Mr. Podzaline explained that he is referenced a lot and would be involved in the processes. Chief Skene added that the Fire Marshal would be the Authority having jurisdiction and should be included in the discussions. Mr. Tanner stated that Brooklyn never created an Ordinance, but should to be clear. Mr. Tanner will invite Douglas Kramer, Fire Marshal, to the next meeting. The draft document will be forwarded to the Mr. Kramer for him to review.

9. New Business

a. Standard Operating Guidelines

Mr. Podzaline explained that discussion in June was prioritizing the SOG's and coming up with Townwide SOG's that are prudent due to the combined responses going forward.

Chief Breen explained that due to the regime change, nothing has moved forward at this point.

The Chiefs will present information, at the October meeting, on the following: Apparatus Response; On-Scene Duties; Arrival.

R.D. Lee recommended evaluating the responses to certain types of calls to make sure you have the right tool/apparatus for the type of call so as not to create a hazard for the Community. Chief Breen explained that there is an understanding between the Departments regarding the apparatus to use for which type of call. He explained it is a matter of putting it on paper. Mr. Podzaline commented, as a third party, that the Departments do a very good job of recognizing that the emergency is what the emergency is and it seems to be working very well. Chief Breen explained about the importance of making that assessment fast as there is not only a risk to the Community, but also a

risk to the responders. Discussion continued. Mr. Berube stated that the Departments are aware and try to minimize it as much as possible.

b. Response Procedures

This item had been touched on in discussion above.

At this time, Chief Skene introduced Matt Alexander who will be representing the East Brooklyn Fire Department.

Mr. Lee asked if there is anything that is not on the Agenda for this meeting that the Board of Fire Commissioners should be cognizant of. Both Chiefs stated that there was not at this time.

At this time, Austin Tanner explained that the renovations at the Green Building is to be completed by October 1st and he suggested that a motion be made to move meetings back there in October.

Motion was made by A. Tanner to move the regular meetings of the BoFC back to the Clifford B. Green Meeting Center, 69 South Main Street, Brooklyn, CT, second Wednesday of each month, at 7:00 p.m., beginning with the October 11, 2023 meeting.

Second by R. D. Lee. No discussion.

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote (5-0-0).

10. Public Comment - There were no comments from the public either in person or online.

11. Next Meeting – September 13, 2023 (Brooklyn Community Center, 31 Tiffany Street)

12. Adjournment

Motion was made by L. Berube to adjourn at 7:44 p.m. (19:44 hours).

Second by R.D. Lee. No discussion.

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote (5-0-0).

Respectfully submitted,

J.S. Perreault

Recording Secretary

Attachments: Self-Assessment

DRAFT “Fire Lane Ordinance”

Mortlake Call Volumes