

Board of Fire Commissioners
Special Meeting
Wednesday, March 27, 2024
7:30 pm via Zoom &
Clifford B. Green Memorial Center
Conference Room
Suite 24, 69 South Main Street, Brooklyn, CT

To join this meeting, follow the below instructions:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87380913097?pwd=dtraOtYhu5JgkzLeb6v3z9JBnaCbK.1>

Meeting ID: 873 8091 3097

Passcode: 716537

One tap mobile

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+13017158592,,87380913097# US (Washington DC)

MINUTES

1. **Call to Order** – Michael Podzaline, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m.
2. **Attendance:** Michael Podzaline, Chairman (Citizen Representative); Aimee Genna, Vice Chair (Citizen Representative); R. David Lee, Board of Finance Liaison; Austin Tanner, First Selectman; James Soler, Citizen Representative; David Kowelenko (all present in person).
Matthew Alexander, East Brooklyn F.D. Representative arrived at 7:38 p.m.

Others Present (in person) – Steve Breen, Mortlake Fire Chief; William Skene, East Brooklyn Fire Chief (arrived at 7:39 p.m.); J.S. Perreault, Recording Secretary.
There were three people present in the audience: Sandra Brodeur; Lou Brodeur; Gil Maiato.

Present via Zoom – None.

3. Financials

a. East Brooklyn Fire Department Capital Request

Chief Skene was not present at this time. Therefore, the discussion below took place after Agenda Item 3.c:

Chief Skene explained that the request is for \$44,114.00 for three hydraulic E-tools (cutter/spreader/ram) to replace what is on their Engine (leaking badly) due to them being approximately twelve years old and never having been serviced. It was recently found out that there are no service representatives in the area, so the equipment and the truck would need to go to New Jersey. Chief Skene explained that he submitted the invoice to the Town per instruction he had received in an email from the Town.

There was discussion about the amount of extrication equipment the two Departments currently have. It isn't very often that all of it gets used at the same time, but there are instances where it is all needed at the same time.

No action could be taken by the Board since the invoice had already been submitted.

b. Mortlake Fire Company Capital Request

Chief Breen explained that, at their Board of Directors Meeting last night, it was decided that they would not submit a Capital Request from Mortlake Fire Company this year.

c. Ambulance Funding

R.D. Lee recused himself and left the room.

M. Alexander arrived at 7:38 p.m., recused himself and left the room.

D. Kowelenko reviewed the Ambulance Budget Presentation which was reduced from \$135,000 to \$84 as they feel very confident that there will not be a rate increase with the contracted vendor for the 2024/2025 Budget. Copies of the Presentation were provided to the Board, as well as updated budget figures - both are attached to these Minutes).

- Sandra Brodeur explained about the Mortlake Fund Balances and she explained about how they are setting aside \$30,000 (from the Firemen's Fund) for what they anticipated for Ambulance losses for the rest of the year.
- Proposed quarterly meetings with the BoFC to keep tight control and visibility on the Budget.
- Chief Breen explained about the importance of providing competitive rates to maintain staffing. They anticipated an increase this year, but met with Vintech and all indications are that there will not be a rate increase this year. There was discussion regarding Medicare and Medicaid.
- There was review and discussion of the line items: Revenue; Pay Per Call/shifts (Mr. Podzaline brought up a \$20,000 FSLA issue and Mr. Kowelenko explained that they met with the FSLA Attorney on Monday, but there is no answer at this time. They have work to do and get back to the Attorney.); Physicals; Education; Vintech; Audit; Alarm/Security (it was suggested that install should be Capital Expense/separated out); Vehicle Maintenance; Forensic Audit (it was suggested that the name may be changed); Oxygen; Software Licenses; Diesel Fuel; They will apply for more ARPA money for the difference in the price of the Ambulance (if ARPA money is not available, they will need look for another way to cover that expense); Background Checks are all under Fire Department;

Mr. Podzaline spoke of transparency in shifts and incorporating that into the quarterly fiscal analysis. Mr. Kowelenko stated agreement. Mr. Podzaline stated that the \$83,000 includes all of the volunteer shifts getting covered. Mr. Kowelenko stated agreement and he stated that anything that is a surplus for the Ambulance Budget, that we receive, would go back to the Town.

Chief Breen gave a history of Mortlake's requests for the Ambulance/paid staffing, over the years, and how it had sustained itself, but that is no longer the case. There was discussion regarding other possible ways to bring in money. Treat No Transport and Highway Calls were discussed.

Michael Podzaline asked if there was any opposition to BoFC representatives being involved in Vintech discussions. No opposition was expressed. Mr. Kowelenko will send the contract that they have for review and feedback.

Motion was made by M. Podzaline to approve \$83,040 for the Ambulance Budget for FY 2024-2025.

Second by J. Soler.

Discussion: Mr. Tanner stated that he is glad that we are heading in the right direction. Mr. Kowelenko stated that he would try to accommodate requests for formatting changes and he suggested sharing information before the quarterly meetings.

Motion carried by voice vote (5-0-0). R.D. Lee and M. Alexander had recused themselves.

R.D. Lee and M. Alexander returned to the room.

At this time there was discussion regarding the East Brooklyn Fire Department Capital Request (see above Agenda Item 3.a).

4. Adjournment

Motion was made by R.D. Lee to adjourn at 9:07 p.m.

Second by M. Alexander. No discussion.

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote (7-0-0).

Respectfully submitted,

J.S. Perreault

Recording Secretary