

BOLTON FIRE COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY, JANUARY 23, 2023
BOLTON FIRE HOUSE – 7:00 P.M.
AND VIA ZOOM

Fire Commission chairman John Morianos convened the Bolton Fire Commission meeting at 7:00 P.M. at the Bolton Fire House.

Commission members present were Chris Moquin, Danny Moquin and Robert Langton. Elizabeth Malone was absent. Also present were Fire Chief Bruce Dixon, Deputy Fire Marshal Bill Call and James Rupert. Everyone attended via zoom except John Morianos and Bruce Dixon.

PUBLIC COMMENT – None

CORRESPONDENCE – None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Motion was tabled to the February 27, 2023 meeting. RL/CM.VU

PAYMENT OF BILLS – Bills were circulated.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHIEF

- Attended a structure fire in Vernon.
- It was a busy month with 72 calls including 4 cover assignments, 10 motor vehicle accidents, a fire on Cider Mill Road and Keeney Street.
- Storm on December 23, 2022 at 6:00 am with many calls, 11 within 2 hours. CPR on Llynwood Dr. that unfortunately was unsuccessful. Accident on 384 total with 13 vehicles. The call worked out nicely, as the scene was divided in half for operational purposes. Our fire fighters/EMS personnel did an excellent job.
- ET134 – The potential build schedule for this new truck was sent to John M., Jim Rupert, and Mike Emerita, and the truck committee. It is scheduled to be built in July with delivery date of end of August and should be in Bolton in September. This delivery date is good for town and internal financing. The Committee is anxious to sit down with the factory for a pre-conference meeting. We decided to have this conference as a zoom meeting to save money rather than to travel to WI.
- The Chief will present the department a list next month of who can vote for the Chief Officers at the annual meeting in May. In order to be eligible to vote, members have to attend a set number of calls, drills, and monthly meeting during a 12 month time period. The Fire Commissioners are reviewing the Chief's job description.
- Budget – The Fire Commission approved the budget that was presented to BOS in December. There will be several additions that are not negotiable and will need to be added to the budget. Chris asked about the meeting with the Selectmen tomorrow and how to attend it to support this budget. It was confirmed that the budget workshop would start at 5:30 pm. at town hall. The Tax Department and Library will present their budgets before the Fire Commission. Chief Dixon confirmed that fire commission members should plan to be at the budget meeting at 6:00 PM. Everyone confirmed they would attempt to attend.

- Jim mentioned that the Board of Selectmen received notification today via email that the Town of Bolton got 1.531 million dollar grant for the LOTCIP connectivity trail. The trail through these grants will be able to connect entire center of town with multiple pathways from Bolton Center School all the way to BHS so people can visit all town office, library, fire station, and both schools by without ever having to walk on the road. Pretty exciting.

Fire Marshal's Report

- Fire Call on Christmas Day on Keeney Drive Jim started and Bill finished. Jim thanked Bill. There was no property damage. It was a furnace misfiring likely due to lack of maintenance. When the fire department arrived there was light smoke in the structure, no property damage and was not occupied. The state police also arrived.
- Fire call on Cider Mill Road with very little property damage. It was an accidently fire by the man who lives there and uses a woodstove to heat the house. The pipe goes outside of house. The leaf litter caused small fire from the structure and into a porch that was sitting on ground very little space under. The majority of the fire was out before the fire department arrived. The fire department made sure that the fire was dead. Jim is still working on finishing up fire investigation and will follow up letter to owner and list things that need to be repaired and hopefully done.
- Bill started on annual inspections of residential apartments. We continue to work on plan reviews for the building department and planning office.
- Bill continues to work with Dollar General in town and issues continue across the State. They have a tendency to plug up the aisle and storage room with material creating a fire hazard, as well as access and egress within the store and storage room and block access to electrical panel. Bill has been making unannounced visits and receiving cooperation.
- Lake House – Bill working on these issues communication with challenges and follow through. Bill gets cooperation. Bolton is a safer place this year than it was last year. Inspections ensuring everything is as safe as it can be for those that live, work and play in town.

DEPUTY FIRE MARSHAL'S REPORT

- 1- Office Duties
- 2- ESO inspection reports
- 3- Town Safety Meeting
- 4- 1 Knox Box install
- 5- Poster Contest Duties
- 6- Assist Elderly Homeowner
- 7- 1 Fire Investigation
- 8- 2 CRFMA meeting
- 9- 1 Burn Permit

Inspections since last meeting:

- 1- Dollar General – four times
- 2- Sunset Apartments

- 3- South Road Apartments – 4 separate days
- 4- Villa Louisa Restaurant

Chief Dixon asked about the status of 180 West Street. Jim Ruppert replied that this was formerly a restaurant. A church has a contract to purchase. It would change use from one type of assembly to another type of assembly. The current owner applied for modification to the Fire Marshal for the second floor, which was denied. They applied to the State Fire Marshal's office which was denied as well. The church group plans to provide meals to unfortunate families and have small prayer groups and bible study.

OLD BUSINESS – Chief Dixon mentioned the budget meeting with the Board of Selectmen which is scheduled for Tuesday, January 24, 2023 at 5:30 via zoom. There are two other budget meetings before the Fire Commission. All members said they plan on attending the meeting. Chief Dixon said he would send out the zoom information.

John asked about the status for the Fire Chief job description. Chief Dixon would like to have the job description finalized before May. Chief Dixon asked Board Clerk Janet Assard if she could email the document to all members.

NEW BUSINESS – Mike Emerita, Selectmen, told the board that there is a need to hire 1 or preferably 2 full time people to maintain the fire house, equipment and vehicles. We are looking for someone to write a grant to provide funding for these positions. There will come a time where the Town of Bolton will need a paid Fire Department. It is very difficult to get volunteers. Maintenance for the truck checks is being done 5-6 hours once a month however they should be done 4 times month. Emergency services are very valuable. We also need to train more volunteers to drive the apparatuses and obtain the proper license.

It is critical that the town look at this during this year. Seriously, before you are looking at a much bigger price tag to do something more significant.

Chief Dixon mention recruitment and retention. Many surrounding towns are paying people on an hourly basis. We have to look at something differently. Bob Langton attends many calls during the day however he does not drive apparatus. He does provide a service. Presently the fire department consists of approximately 42 members, 15 active fire fighters, however all but 3 work during the days.

Mike said the volunteer members do not get paid to go to school. The total EMT training consists of about 500 -1000 hours with an exam, including Firefighter 1, to get someone up and running is approximately 1000 hours and many times members move on to paid fire departments after completing these trainings. Many paid departments that are unionized discourage them from volunteering. The town has to address this. Time is now. Money is available if the town wants to go after. Jim mentioned that the town has 4 other grant applications that are due in February.

Mike said that we have to start now. Once a grant is submitted, a job description will be prepared. Other towns are paying between \$25 - \$40 per hour.

Bob Langton said he is very concerned that it has been going on for too long. We don't want something bad too happened if you don't have volunteers to show up. We have to start funding as the warning signs are there. We cannot have all of the weight on the Officers. It is not up for debate.

A comparison was made between the funding of the 2 state police officers and what we would need to fund one or preferably 2 people for the fire department. Jim will start the conversation tomorrow night and suggest we apply for the Safer Grant. John mentioned that we have been

talking about it for 15 years. Now is the time. Jim mentioned that he and Chief Dixon started this conversation several years ago.

Next meeting scheduled for February 27, 2023.

ADJOURNMENT – Motion to adjourn at 8:08 pm (RL/CM) VU

Respectfully submitted,

Janet K. Assard

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