



CITY OF FRANKLIN, NEW HAMPSHIRE
Fire Department
"The Three Rivers City"

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Michael J Foss, Fire Chief/EMD

David J Hall, Deputy Chief

Fire Committee Meeting

Wednesday, January 19, 2022

Held at the Franklin Fire Department

All Present:

- *Mayor Jo Brown*
- *Councilor Paul Trudel*
- *Councilor Olivia Zink (left early at 1900)*
- *Councilor April Bunker (late arrival at 1834)*
- *Chairmen Ted Starkweather*
- *Chief Michael Foss*
- *Deputy Chief David Hall*
- *City Manager Judie Milner*
- *Administrative Assistant Nicole Havey*

The Meeting:

Chairman Starkweather calls the meeting to order at 1734.

Chief Foss thanks everyone for coming

Agenda Item I

Previous meeting minutes from, October 13, 2021 were reviewed prior to meeting my committee members. The committee moves to accept minutes as presented. Mayor Brown makes a motion to accept, Councilor Trudel Seconds Motion, Olivia Zink abstains and motion is carried.

Agenda Item II

Chief Foss discussed the current Fire department statics and staffing shortages with the need to add additional firefighters to the Career Staff.

The current statics that Chief Foss discusses are from Calendar Year 2021, they recap all the incidents that occur in the City of Franklin. For the Calendar year the Fire Department responded to 2080 incidents, which is the departments busiest year yet and we seem to be getting busier. Out of the 2080 calls, 496 of those incidents are concurrent incidents occurring simultaneously within the City. This means that the City is either calling mutual aid, requesting off duty staff or stacking calls to help cover the incidents. The Fire Department will and has stacked multiple calls when feasible to do so. Chief Foss also discussed the incidents per ward and the type of incidents that occur in the City. The Fire department covers the 3 Wards in the City of Franklin, but also covers all of Andover EMS calls as well as any mutual aid needed outside of the City.

The Chief discussed statics for Q3 and Q4 for the year for the “off Duty” assistance that is required when concurrent incidents or additional assistance is needed in the City. This information is only for the two quarters due to lack of tracking in the past. For these 270 incidents the department may need 1, 2, 3 or more than 3 members to come into the station for coverage. For these requests the City receives only 22% adequate coverage, 15% partial coverage and 63% no coverage. The City is seeing a high percentage of no coverage because of burnout/fatigue, or low pay so employees have second jobs on their days off therefore unable to come into the Fire Department for coverage.

Chief Foss discussed the need for an additional 6 Fire Fighters, but to help bridge that gap he would like to apply for a SAFER grant with the state of NH. He is working on writing this grant to request 2 additional staff that would allow the department to staff 4 personnel for all 24-hour shifts. With the approval of the Committee they support the Chiefs decision to move forward with applying for the grant.

Chief Foss discusses the payrates scale for the City compared to other departments within the State of NH. On average the City of Franklin’s firefighters are handling more calls per person than other comparable departments in the State and they are being paid on average about -\$4.50 dollars less on average. In order to add two additional firefighters, the City would need to budget roughly 180K in additional funds in the budget, however if the City receives the SAFER grant this would have to be addressed in 3 years when the grant is set to expire. There was additional discussion about the health benefits that the City offers it employees compared to other departments in the State and how that effects employees’ pension and the cities bottom line budget expense for health insurance and employee payrates.

Agenda Item III

Chief Foss discussed the current Fire Hydrant Ordinance that was proposed and tabled at a previous City Council meeting. Chief Foss would like to resubmit the new updated ordinance to the council with the support of the Fire Committee. Committee members agreed to the new ordinance and will make a motion at next Council meeting to remove from table, so Chief can propose new ordinance. The current ordinance doesn’t clearly define what is public and private, the new ordinance addresses what is a public and private hydrant and the need for testing and maintenance on private hydrants within the City. Currently the private hydrants are not being tested and the ordinance would require annual records of testing be completed and shared with the Municipal Service Director. A letter to the property owner and a confirmation form was given to each member at the meeting to review.

Agenda Item IV

Chief Foss discussed the need to upgrade the current boat and referenced the proposed capital improvement worksheet for the boat which would happen in FY23 for 20K as well as a quote for the new boat they would be looking to purchase. He is looking for support to upgrade the boat this year FY22 using the Turcotte fund instead of adding this item to the FY23 CIP. Councilor Trudel made a motion to present proposal to Council at next meeting, Councilor Bunker seconds and the motion was carried.

Agenda Item V

Chief Foss discussed the current cardiac monitors that are used in A1 and A2 that will no longer be supported by the provider come November 2022, because of their age. In order for the Ambulances to continue to run service calls for the City of Franklin and Mutual aid, the City will need to purchase 2 cardiac monitors. Currently there is a grant that exists that the City can apply for to help offset the cost by an estimated \$50,000 the remaining balance owed by the City for the purchase would be about \$20,000. It was proposed to use the Turcotte Fund to help offset the cost of the \$20,000. A motion was made by Councilor Zink to apply for the Grant, Councilor Bunker seconds and the motion was carried.

Agenda Item VI

Chief Foss discussed apparatus updates that the department will be looking to update in the near future, A1 we need to start thinking about, however Car 3 needs review for replacement. Car 3 just passed inspection, however needed \$6,650 worth of work to pass, and is estimated to cost the department an additional \$5,000 to maintain the vehicle with just body work repairs for the year. This vehicle is 15 years old. The committee was given a proposed estimate for the cost of a new 2022 Chevy Colorado at \$49,345. The committee question if there were other options available. Chief Foss will work with the City Manager on the best option available and bring forth any updated and new information at the next meeting

Agenda Item VII

Chief Foss asked if there were any additional items that needed to be discussed. Chairman Starkweather, spoke about a municipal association grant for building upgrades that is currently available to apply for. It was discussed that this could be an option to look at to off set cost for a building study of the station and possibly additional upgrades. City Manager took this under advisement and will look into this further.

Agenda Item VIII

Chairman Starkweather advised the committee that he will work with Chief Foss on a proposed meeting date which will occur sometime after April 4th.

Councilor Bunker made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 1915, Councilor Trudel seconds and motion was carried.