



WESTFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS
WESTFIELD FIRE COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 2, 2023

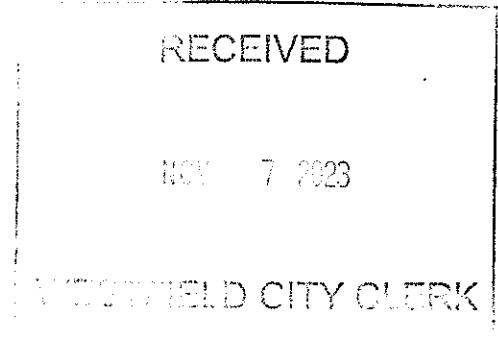


Fire Commissioner C. Lee Bennett called the meeting of the Westfield Fire Commission (hereinafter WFC) of October 2, 2023 to order.

Location: Westfield Fire Department Station 2
 Community Room
 366 Little River Road
 Westfield, MA

Date: Monday, October 2, 2023

Time: 18:00



MINUTES TAKEN:

Christie Fillion, Westfield Fire Department (hereinafter 'WFD') Head Clerk

Chairman's announcement:

Westfield Fire Commissioner C. Lee Bennett in accordance with the Open Meeting Law Changes (Reference Memorandum dated June 18, 2010 'Open Meeting Law Changes'), from the Office of the City Solicitor, made the following announcement to all participants and attendees that the Westfield Fire Commission meeting of October 2, 2023 is being audio recorded.

Westfield Fire Commissioner C. Lee Bennett also made the following inquiry, that if there is anyone making a video or audio recording of the meeting, please provide your names and address to the Chairwoman.

PRESENT IN ATTENDANCE:

Commissioner C. Lee Bennett, Commissioner Jeffrey Siegel, Commissioner Jeffrey Trant, Fire Chief Patrick Egloff, Deputy Chief Patrick Kane Jr., Pat Breton, Office Manager, Firefighter/Local 1111 President Travis Lucia, Firefighter Niles Lavalley and Attorney John Connor, Local 1111 Council

Commissioner C. Lee Bennett asked for a roll call.

ROLL CALL:

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| Commissioner Jeffrey Siegel | Present |
| Commissioner Jeffrey Trant | Present |
| Commissioner C. Lee Bennett | Present |

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

READING OF THE RECORD OF:

a. WFD Regular Scheduled Meeting Minutes September 11, 2023. Vote to accept.

Motion: Fire Commissioner C. Lee Bennett ascertained a motion to accept the WFD Executive Session Meeting Minutes of September 11, 2023.

Commissioner Trant made the motion.
Commissioner Siegel seconded the motion.

Roll Call

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| Commissioner Jeffrey Siegel | YES |
| Commissioner Jeffrey Trant | YES |
| Commissioner C. Lee Bennett | YES |

YES (3) NO (0)

Motion Passed

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Firefighter Travis Lucia, President of the Local 1111, mentioned the Local 1111 E-board Members sent a letter to the City Council regarding comments made at a September City Council meeting. A City Councilor member had said that he had spoken to both unions at the Fire Department and both unions were okay with the top-to-bottom review that the City Council would like to have performed at the Fire Department. The letter from the Union E-board Members stated that the union did not make these comments, that the Local 1111 E-board did not have a conversation with the City Councilor and requested the letter be read for the record at the next City Council meeting.

Firefighter Lucia said he had spoken during public participation at the City Council’s June meeting when the review was listed on their agenda. He had told the City Council he “wouldn’t stand in the way” but to be cautious of what would be found in regards to costs to the City and what could be incurred and also encouraged the City Council to do this review with other City Departments.

Deputy Chief Patrick Kane Jr, President of the Supervisor’s Association, mentioned he also sent a letter to the City Councilors regarding the review. He voiced his concern for the City’s cost of this review and then not act on any of the findings like the previous review.

Commissioner Bennett thanked the two Union Presidents for the work that they do for their members.

ROUTINE BUSINESS:

- a. Letter and Communications – None

REPORTS FROM THE WFD & WFC:

- a. Chief Egloff to report on status of key areas of the department.

Promotional Lists

Chief Egloff was contacted by Kimberly Cheng from MA HRD. She is the Civil Service Test Development Coordinator. She stated:

“Good morning Chief Egloff, I’m writing to inform you that your town has been automatically rescheduled to participate in the 2024 Fire Chief (1YP-442) examination taking place on May 1, 2024. This exam will be open to both Deputy Fire Chiefs and Fire Captains and you will not need to submit a new requisition to participate. Participants will need to apply and pay when the application for this examination becomes available.”

This automatically happened because only one person registered for the Fire Chief’s Exam and it was then cancelled for this year. There is a 6-week window to register for the exam and the reading list is available 3-to-6 months prior to the exam.

Organization Status

We currently have one member, Firefighter Jackie O’Brien, at the Fire Academy. Chief Egloff received an update on her status and she is doing very well. Her test scores are higher than the class average. Nicholas Hope attended the mandatory fire academy orientation last week and will be attending the next academy session at the end of November.

Pat Breton will be retiring this Friday, October 6, 2023. Christie Fillion was promoted to the Office Manager position and she will be taking over as Office Manager on Tuesday, October 10th. Christie, Personnel Director Annie Larkham, and Chief Egloff interviewed and promoted Colleen Fagan-Nunez to the Head Clerk position. She will start on October 23, 2023. She is coming from the Collector’s Office at City Hall as a Principal Clerk. Pat Breton will be coming back after she retires to work part-time for 90 days to do some of her old duties so that Christie can train Colleen.

Replacement Equipment

We are anticipating having our two new ambulances this upcoming spring. We continue to anticipate receiving our new Pierce Velocity pumper next year as well. These are all being funded through the ambulance enterprise account and not taxpayer money.

The new airboat will have both river search and rescue capabilities as well as ice rescue operations continues to be on track for a November delivery date. This airboat was purchased with ARPA funds. It has been decided that only the Captains will be trained to operate and drive the airboat due to safety concerns and accountability. Chief Egloff will have to ask the Mayor for the funds to have an expert train the Captains as training did not qualify under ARPA.

Hiring Process

We are anticipating another retirement within the next two months.

Call Volume

September’s call volume:
293 for Fire Apparatus responses
691 for Ambulance responses

For the time period of January 1- September 30, 2023, we are at 2,388 Fire Apparatus responses and 5,957 Ambulance responses.

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

- a. Discuss and Vote for changes to the Authorized Signature Form for Boards and Commissions so that the members can sign bills.

Commissioner Bennett and Commissioner Siegel are already on the list to sign bills. However, Commissioner Jeffrey Trant needs to be added to the list and former Commissioner Albert Masciadrelli needs to be removed from the list. The form requires all 3 current Commissioners to sign and date the form.

Motion: Fire Commissioner C. Lee Bennett made a motion for all three current Commissioners to sign the Authorization Signature Form.

Commissioner Jeffrey Siegel seconded the motion.

Roll Call

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| Commissioner Jeffrey Siegel | YES |
| Commissioner Jeffrey Trant | YES |
| Commissioner C. Lee Bennett | YES |

YES (3) NO (0)

Motion Passed

- b. Discussion and Vote on calling for a Deputy Fire Chiefs exam for 2024.

The current list expires next September (2024). There aren't currently any openings for Deputy Chief.

Motion: Fire Commissioner C. Lee Bennett made a motion to call for the Deputy Fire Chief's exam for 2024.

Commissioner Trant seconded the motion.

Roll Call

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|-----------------------------|-----|
| Commissioner Jeffrey Siegel | YES |
| Commissioner Jeffrey Trant | YES |
| Commissioner C. Lee Bennett | YES |

YES (3) NO (0)

Motion Passed

- c. Discussion on the Motion of Councilors Bean, Beltrandi, Figy, Burns and Adams to request the Mayor to appropriate funds to conduct a top-to-bottom review of the Westfield Fire Department and its four subdivisions. **Referred to the Mayor and Fire Commission.**

The two Union Presidents spoke about the subject in public participation. The Fire Commission, even though it was referred to them, may not be in their purview. The Fire Commission doesn't have funding and it was mentioned the last time there was a department review, the suggested changes from the review were not implemented.

Commissioner Trant, having familiarity with peer reviews in the medical field and the methodologies that go into different types of reviews, asked what a top-to-bottom review entails. Chief Egloff and the other Commissioners do not know what the requested review includes. The review could include information on personnel, equipment, organizational status, and response. There was a whole City review that was performed in 1989 and very few suggestions were put into effect for the Fire Department.

The discussion continued regarding a possible review process, if there are National Best Practices that could be used for guidelines and NFPA (The National Fire Protection Association) Standards. For example, NFPA states, for personnel on fire apparatus and for safety wise, if an engine has four seats, there should be four firefighters on that engine with one of them being an officer. Currently, only two of

our engines have an officer. Depending on the day's staffing, sometimes Engine 4 may have the four personnel for the engine crew.

Chief Egloff stated more than 90% of the Fire Departments in the State of Massachusetts do not meet NFPA Compliance and it all has to do with funding. Fire Departments do more now with less.

- We were mostly a fire service with a little EMS service (911 calls).
- We added transports (hospital to hospital & hospital to nursing home).
- We started as a Basic EMS service and we are now at an ALS (Advanced Life Support) service.
- We went from Fire Department to an EMS Fire Department.
- We added tech rescue, hazmat, elevator rescues, basement pumping, car lock-outs (for children/animals).
- Two firefighter positions were cut from this year's budget and these positions cannot be filled.

The discussion continued regarding the review, budgets, resources and safety issues.

If the type of review consists of looking at the whole organization and references the good and the bad, any deficiencies could be corrected monetarily. If the review were to occur and the report states the department needs eight-to-ten more personnel, the Department and the two Unions would fight for adding those personnel.

Commissioner Trant spoke about the reviews and audits, best practices and regular peer reviews he is familiar with and the benefits of how to establish and implement the outcomes.

Commissioner Trant suggested "proposing and making a recommendation of not just what a retrospective review would look like but what would a comprehensive process look like, what would be proposed and ultimately, what would be the appropriational ask to be able to implement a system such as that to ensure that there continues to be a rigorous CQI that meets a national benchmark. Part of it is going to be a resource allocation and a resource request that comes along with it. Essentially saying, these are National Standards we are holding ourselves to".

Executive Session:

Motion: Fire Commissioner C. Lee Bennett ascertained a motion to enter into Executive Session.

Commissioner Siegel made the motion.
Commissioner Trant seconded the motion.

Roll Call

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| Commissioner Jeffrey Siegel | YES |
| Commissioner Jeffrey Trant | YES |
| Commissioner C. Lee Bennett | YES |

YES (3) NO (0)

Motion Passed

The Commission's regular meeting ended at 18:29 and entered into Executive Session.

The Commission Meeting was adjourned at the conclusion of the executive session.

Time: 18:58 hours

Respectfully submitted,



C. Lee Bennett, Chair
Westfield Fire Commission
caf

