

Board of Firewards – Town of New London Meeting Minutes – January 31, 2022

The meeting was called to order at 4:31pm with the following board members in attendance: Pete Lauridsen, Doug Lyon, John Ryan, Karen Hoglund, and Steve Ensign. Also in attendance were Fire Chief Jason Lyon and Selectboard member Nancy Rollins, Clerk Kyla Pillsbury. Upon recommendation by Steve Ensign, and no objection from the Board, the minutes of the December 20th meeting were approved as previously posted by the 3 board members present at the fire house with Doug Lyon and Steve Ensign abstaining as they were virtual.

Discussion items:

- Tonight's meeting was held as a hybrid of a Zoom meeting and in-person.
- Recent Activity and Training-
 - There were 806 calls in 2021
 - 106 calls were general alarm activations, which means that the majority of these were handled by the fulltime duty crew or on call officers.
 - The department has assisted with multiple COVID vaccination clinics.
 - The department has used the Sterns rescue suits for the ice rescue suits historically, we have since transitioned to a drysuit-like material by first-in and the suits were very similar to the dive suits. The majority of those newer suits had leaks in them when recently tested during a training with NHFG. The company has been reached out to, they want to make it right despite the suits only having a 1 year warranty. They have provided a loaner suit at this point. They will be giving us 2 suits less 60% of the cost and one free suit-the only issue is that those won't be in until March. That leaves us with 5 suits at this point until the new ones come. Normal cost of these is \$800-\$1100 and the lifespan of these should be 20 years. The hope is that we can repair the leaky suits, use those for training, and then keep the new ones for calls.
 - Recent calls have been sporadic. There was a 2nd alarm working building fire in Wilmot recently that New London responded to during some of the extremely cold weather. Building fires are some of the biggest concerns during these types of temperatures because the risk of things freezing up so quickly is so high.
- Budget Process and Public Hearing-The public hearing is Wednesday night. The budget committee and the selectmen have agreed on a budget at this time. Going forward hopefully everything will move ahead as we hope because there are exponential increases in apparatus costs currently with every month that passes. Part of these increases are due to much higher rate of ordering of fire apparatus as well as decreased supply of items.
- Mike Matthey hit his 1 year mark. Jay prepared his 1 year review and Jay and Steve have reviewed that. Mike completed the CPAT in the spring, he is also re-completed his EMT class as his EMT certification from Florida did not have reciprocity in NH. He has done many different areas of inspections throughout town, improved the knowledge of the department and safety of rentals in town, as well as met with individuals who have needs to meet outstanding code issues. He has acclimated well to the duty crew and the department as a whole. Overall Mike is a great asset to the department and the town.

- Discussion ensued again about how important the safety of rentals as well as airBNBs are. Some towns have banned airBNBs, this is not something that we want to do because we want to have the help to the economy. We will have to wait and see how things go through the legislature.
- Jay noted how the department is doing rapid COVID testing for members as there has been more COVID recently than in the beginning of the outbreak 2 years ago. Continuity of operations is the main concern and that is something that is being taken very seriously with sanitation, appropriate PPE, and staying away from the department when someone isn't feeling well.
- New Command Vehicle-the radios and the lights were installed in December. Quinn Miller, one of our members, was able to go through the installation process with Kurt when he did it so he is familiar and will be able to diagnose issues. This vehicle still will need to go to Newport to be lettered. At this point the old command vehicle needs to have a new purpose or home found. Something to think about is that it could be used as the Fire Inspector vehicle or something that we can hold onto for use for another reason. Steve asked that Jay come up with a compelling case to present next meeting including what it would be valued at auction, what it would cost the town, and what the benefits would be.
- The proposed organizational document that outlines and codifies the work and responsibilities of the Board of Firewards as provided in accordance with RSA 154:1 € of the NH Statutes was distributed via email. This document will assist when it comes time for a new board member to join us-it will explain the roles, responsibilities, etc. The board is a resource to the department - this helps define that and it is the hope that this will serve as a guiding principle. Doug thought that this was comprehensive and would also be helpful to the selectboard as to what the position entails-perhaps a bit further discussion between management and board oversight should be included in it if that is a big priority of this document. There will be further review on this document at the next meeting once everyone has had a chance to look it over.
- Thanks were given to the selectboard that the cost of living raise was increased to better meet the needs of today.
- There are 2 residents running for the selectboard and numerous people running for the budget committee meeting. There will be some changes after the town meeting this year.

Other Business:

- An executive or non-public session (RSA 91-A:3) was not held tonight.

Next meeting:

- The next meeting of the Board will be Monday, March 7th at 4:30pm.
- The meeting was adjourned at 5:25pm

Minutes Recorded By Kyla Pillsbury, Clerk.