

Board of Firewards – Town of New London
Draft Meeting Minutes – December 19, 2022

The meeting was called to order at 4:32pm with the following board members in attendance: Pete Lauridsen, John Ryan, Karen Hogle and Steve Ensign. Also in attendance were Fire Chief Jason Lyon, guest Bill Degnan and Clerk Kyla Pillsbury. Upon recommendation made, a motion was passed to accept the minutes of the October 17th meeting as posted.

Agenda items:

- Recognition was given for Doug Lyon for his contributions and participation with the board. He was an active member within the town with other organizations, in addition to his time with this board. The board sincerely appreciates having had him as a part of our board and he will be sorely missed.
- General Updates and Activities-
 - 742 calls YTD. There were several incidents over the weekend with the weather event. The on-call officer, Lt. Miller, worked to keep the station cleaned out from snowfall, plowing water supplies throughout the town, and tending to calls.
 - Incoming rain this coming weekend could be a contributing factor to more calls for service.
- Recent Inspection Results-
 - Captain Matthy completed 104 inspections in 2021 and in 2022 he will have completed 140+ by EOY.
 - Update on the continuing situation with an inspection that was completed in the past. A certified letter was submitted, but was not signed for and then was hand delivered.
 - The goal of inspections is code compliance and life safety and compliance is always the goal. In an effort to assist the business owner meet minimum code, some options included adding a sprinkler system to the building, hiring a fire protection engineer, requesting a variance from the state Fire Marshal, or don't occupy the space.
 - Concern was then expressed regarding general liability when compliance is not met.
 - Captain Matthy is looking at short term rentals and AirBNBs to ensure that protection is in place. The town could come up with a town ordinance. The towns would need to be consistent with their ordinances. The hope is that legislation will be taking care of some state-wide guidelines.
- Discussion of Current Budget Process
 - The Budget Committee review was 12/14-
 - The town is looking to cut the contributions to capital reserve accounts by 50%, but there is still pressure to ensure that budgets are fully necessary.
 - The Chief suggested to eliminate 2 sets of PPE from the budget decreasing our budget by \$6,400. This was an acceptable item to eliminate based on grant funding available this year. It is important to note that we have a rotating schedule for gear replacement so that we stay compliant and ensure that members are appropriately outfitted.

- There was discussion about building maintenance and that is something that is now going into the building maintenance fund through the DPW that is town-wide and not specific to the department.
 - The next step is that the revenue will be reconciled in early January. The public Budget hearing(s) will take place in early February.
- Current Issues with Engine 2
 - Generator switch had to be rebuilt in order to fix it and have things fully functioning again.
 - There is a power steering leak at this time with Engine 2.
 - We are just over a year out on our new piece of apparatus. It is nice to have the 2 engines available in the house for when one has an issue or going mutual aid.
- Upcoming Annual Review for Captain Matthy
 - This will take place end of January. There has been a notable improvement in the fire inspections throughout town since he was hired. He was fantastic with the kids during Fire Prevention including classroom and hands on learning including looking at the truck, spraying water, extrication with a door, ladder operations with a stokes basket.
- Recruitment and retention of full time members is something that is important. There are many local departments that are struggling with this issue.
- Amendment to 'Organizational' document
 - Alternate members are not acceptable per the RSAs. The language would be to change from no more than 2 alternate members to 2 recurring guests and these individuals would be invited by the Board of Firewards rather than appointed by the Board of Selectmen. The board feels that this would be beneficial to the board and the department moving forward. A motion was made and passed unanimously to make this change.
- Selectboard report
 - Unfortunately, Selectmen Rollins was not able to attend.
- Other Business
 - Karen asked if the minutes could be provided before the next meeting. Chief Lyon will cc the board when he sends the proofed minutes to Emily to have them posted on the town website.
 - A safety note will go out with heating items for the Municipal matters. There is also a handout available that our welfare officer in town, Celeste Cook, will be providing to individuals to hopefully keep awareness of alternate heat sources and dangers.
- Following a brief executive committee session, a decision was made to recommend the appointment of Bill Degnan to fulfill the unexpired term left by the passing of Doug Lyon.

Next meeting:

- The next meeting of the Board will be February 27, 2023 at 4:30pm. This meeting will have the option of zoom attendance.
- The regular meeting was adjourned at 5:28pm

Initial minutes Recorded by Kyla Pillsbury, Clerk