

**Town of Ridgefield  
Fire Commission Meeting Minutes  
September 16, 2010 -- Emergency Operations Center**

**Commissioners Attending:** Rudy Marconi  
Andrew Bodner  
Barbara Manners

**Representing RFD:** Chief Heather Burford  
Assistant Chief Kevin Tappe  
Deputy Emergency Manager Dick Aarons

**Meeting Called to order by Commission Chair Rudy Marconi at 6:45 pm.**

**Fire Department Update Highlights**

Chief Burford provided an overview of the department's operations and a current status report. (See attached documents.)

**Staffing**

Two new career members are at the Fire Academy and due to graduate December 16. Three career members are out on workers comp or on light duty. One member previously on extended workers comp absence has returned to unrestricted duty.

Department leadership continues to look into injury risk reduction programs and training. Chief Tappe is examining battery-powered, self-lifting stretchers as one measure to reduce back injury risk. Peer Fitness Training is also made available to members.

The promotional process is underway to fill one captain and one lieutenant position. Assessment center type testing will be conducted October 5 and 6.

**Apparatus Update**

(See the attached report for details.) Commissioners and Chiefs Burford and Tappe discussed evolving metrics on equipment availability and response versus maintenance curves. The Department continues to seek innovative ways to measure variables in maintenance, mileage and response profiles to optimize the equipment replacement program. The discussion on a replacement plan for Tanker 10 and Engine 1 continued. Chief Burford pointed out that apparatus build-out lead time is about a year. Commissioner Bodner asked if it is possible to quantify a theory of fire response that would deal only with life safety while giving little or no priority to property protection. Chief Burford said that life safety and property protection are so interleaved that it would be impossible to do the former without attention to the latter.

The ATV will be operated by volunteers and stored in a ready-for-dispatch condition at the RVFD barn.

### **Department Statistics**

(See attached report for details.) In general discussion it was noted that the aging of Ridgefield's population plus plans for new senior care facilities will have impact on equipment use and staffing. Chief Burford is working on a system to quantify costs of these changes to the department. (The exercise is part of her master thesis.) Having cost data in hand would enable community planners to assess the impact of development and head off unintended consequences.

### **Emergency Management**

(See attachments.) Deputy EMD Aarons provided an update of the OEM's NIMS compliance program -- the first phase of a 24 month schedule of events that will exercise the town's emergency operations plan (EOP), operation of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), and the effectiveness of career and volunteer emergency response staffing. Most departments are now NIMS compliant. The focus in the fall will be on critical elected officials and town business and tax office personnel.

Commissioner Marconi brought up the importance of hardening the town business infrastructure including IT, utilities, and staffing during the response and recovery phases of an incident or disaster. DEMD Aarons and Chief Burford will look at town agency business continuity planning while a CERT team will move forward to help local business with continuity issues.

### **Capital Budget FY 2012**

A brief discussion of the FY 2012 capital budget returned to the Engine 1/Tanker 10 replacement concepts. Mr. Marconi continues to ask the FD to consider using current Engine 1 as the Town's fourth (4th) engine, and to purchase a new Engine 1. This would save the town approximately \$415,000. The current capital request from the FD is approximately \$1.2 million for the next budget cycle. Chief Burford said she continues to work on an equipment-sharing plan with mutual aid communities. That planning could help with decisions on future equipment acquisition. The matter will be revisited in detail at the next Fire Commission Meeting.

**Adjournment:** There being no further business before the committee, the meeting was adjourned by acclamation at 8:35 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Richard N. Aarons,  
Deputy Emergency Manager  
Fire Commission Secretary