

TOWN of RIDGEFIELD
FIRE COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING
JANUARY 20, 2016 – 5:30 PM

RIDGEFIELD TOWN HALL LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM
400 MAIN STREET, RIDGEFIELD, CONNECTICUT

APPROVED MINUTES

These minutes are a general summary of the meeting and are not intended to be a verbatim transcription.

In attendance: R. Marconi, R. Hebert, M. Kozlark, B. Manners, S. Zemo
Guests: Fire Chief Kevin Tappe, Assistant Chief Jerry Myers, Human Resources Director Laurie Fernandez, Controller Kevin Redmond

Agenda

1. Purchase of Rescue Equipment Utilizing Drenzek Account Funds
2. Staffing Discussion – Eight-man Minimum Proposal

R. Marconi called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

Fire Chief Kevin Tappe, Assistant Fire Chief Jerry Myers, Finance Director Kevin Redmond and Human Resources Director Laurie Fernandez were present.

1. Purchase of Rescue Equipment Utilizing Drenzek Account Funds

Chief Tappe explained that the EMS and rescue equipment was originally placed in next year's capital budget but that the amounts were considered too small for the Capital budget and therefore he was requesting the use of the Drenzek funds to purchase them.

Chief Tappe requested approximately \$11,000 for the purchase of four (4) video laryngoscopes; \$10,600 for the replacement of the rescue air bags system currently in use; and approximately \$16,000 for the purchase of four (4) Res-Q-Jacks, including appropriate mounting hardware and labor. There was some discussion about what the various tools were used for. Mr. Marconi mentioned that this purchase is exactly what the Drenzek fund was meant for.

B. Manners moved and B. Hebert seconded the motion to approve using the Drenzek fund for the purchases as proposed. Motion carried 5-0.

2. Staffing Discussion – Eight-man Minimum Proposal

The second item on the agenda was a continuation of the discussion from the Fire Commission meeting of December 9, 2015 regarding increasing staffing to eight personnel. The Commission had requested Chief Tappe examine costs for an eight-person minimum while also filling two vacancies. Chief Tappe presented a spreadsheet as well as a simplified comparative spreadsheet delineating the extra costs in year one and year two of two different scenarios – increasing minimum to eight and leaving the two current openings vacant vs. increasing minimum to eight and also filling the two current vacancies.

Chief Tappe explained that increasing the minimum staffing to eight would streamline operations, allow greater EMS coverage, reduce dispatcher confusion, spreads out EMS calls between two crews, decrease response times and standardize response policies.

There was some discussion about the extra burden on the existing pool of manpower, paramedics and officers. L. Fernandez mentioned her concern about a couple of contractual items such as firefighters swapping shifts and the possibility of staff working more than 72 hours straight. She stated that some discussion with Firefighters Local 1739 may be needed. M. Kozlark questioned why the staffing was six personnel on some days and seven or eight on other days. The Commissioners felt that they did not have a handle as yet on the overall Town budget and would like to further consider this proposal at the regular Fire Commission meeting on February 17, 2016. At that time, L. Fernandez would have discussed her concerns with the Union and the Selectmen would have a better knowledge of the entire Town budget.

R. Marconi asked if there was any comment from the audience. Mr. Richard Brown of Gilbert Street explained how the different staffing affected the work of the dispatcher.

B. Manners moved and R. Marconi seconded the motion to adjourn the Special Meeting at 6:35 pm. Motion carried 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Wendy Gannon Lionetti