

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MINUTES

Wednesday January 9th, 2019
Yantic Volunteer Fire Department
151 Yantic Road, Yantic
7:00 PM

Committee Members Present: Alderman William Nash, Alderman Joseph A. DeLucia and Alderwoman Joanne Philbrick.

Committee Members Absent: None.

Administration and Staff Present: Mayor Peter Nystrom; Alderwoman Stacy Gould; John Salomone, City Manager, City of Norwich; Captain Jim Veiga, Norwich Police Department; and Chris LaRose, Operations Manager, Norwich Public Utilities.

Volunteer/Central Fire Departments and Others: Taftville Chief Timothy Jencks and Steve Caisse Norwich Chief Tracy Montoya and Lieutenant Jake Manke; East Great Plain Chief Keith Milton; Occum Chief Carroll Spaulding; Laurel Hill Chief Aaron Westervelt; and Yantic Chief Frank Blanchard and Ronald Stolz.

Citizens Present: None.

I. Call to Order and Quorum:

Alderman Nash called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM. There was a quorum present.

II. Approval of Minutes: Minutes of Wednesday November 14, 2018

Alderman Nash motioned, seconded by Alderman DeLucia, to approve the Wednesday November 14, 2018 meeting minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

III. Correspondence: None.

IV. Citizen Comment: None.

V. Old Business:

- a) **Apparatus/ Equipment Financing:** – City Manager John Salomone stated he received all bids last month which have been analyzed with recommendations made. Mr. Salomone explained three of the accepted bids were the most inexpensive options while two of the recommended bids, one from Taftville Fire Department and one from Yantic, are for the second lowest bid option. Mr. Salomone said he requested each chief to itemize where their discrepancies are and present to the committee why the lowest bid option does not meet their specifications.

Alderman Nash stated he already received letters from Chief Jencks and Chief Blanchard on this issue and opened the floor to any other council person with questions.

Discussion ensued on why these two bids were being analyzed out of the five-truck package and where things stood in regards to the 3.2 million dollar bond and the \$500,000 State Bond Commission Grant for the police radios found by Cathy Osten.

City Manager John Salomone stated that because of the Grant the entire 3.2 million dollar bond would be available for the fire apparatuses.

Alderman DeLucia questioned if the initial bond specified where funds could be allocated and Mr. Salomone responded it did not.

Chief Frank Blanchard explained that while the bid they passed on may be lower in cost it is missing crucial items such as cord rails that they do not carry standard and would increase the cost of the apparatus. Chief Blanchard added that the vendor they did not chose provided a bid for a truck that would be too large to fit in their garage. Chief Blanchard stated they picked the lowest qualified bidder.

Chief Timothy Jencks stated that while their firehouse does not have height and length restrictions they are attempting to downsize the fleet and some of the plumbing in the bid they passed was going to impeded compartmentation storage and usage which could be redesigned but would come with additional costs. Chief Jencks stated the lowest bid did not meet the Department's specifications and gave the example that one bidder offered ladders on the top of the truck that come down the side which would cause them issues on Shetucket and Terrace Avenue, along with other locations in their district, which have stone walls. Chief Jencks stated he is concerned that the bids are due to expire on January 31st and would be subject to a 5% increase.

Alderman DeLucia stated the goal for the evening would be to come to a resolution to vote on at the January 22nd City Council meeting prior to the bid deadline.

Discussion ensued on if a vote or resolution were required if the accepted bids are not higher than the allocated bond amond due to the acquisition of the State Bond Commission Grant.

Former Taftville Chief Steve Caisse stated in his experience the bond never went back to the council for a vote rather the departments dealt directly with the City Manager and purchasing department.

Ronald Stolz agreed that he doesn't recall the issue ever returning back for a vote.

Alderwoman Gould questioned if the Committee could move the issue forward that evening and if it turns out the Council does need to vote on a resolution a special meeting can be held.

Alderwoman Philbrick stated she felt it was unfair to the volunteers of various departments bid committees who have put so much work in to leave the meeting with uncertainty.

Alderwoman Philbrick made a motion for the trucks to be ordered by John Salomone as recommended by the departments as the voters already approved the 3.2 Million Bond. Alderman DeLucia seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

VI. New Business:

a) Norwich Public Utilities Update – None.

b) Emergency Management: Lieutenant Jake Manke reported Emergency Management has been working with the Fire Department for this year's budget and they received the initial report back from FEMA on the Host Community Drill where they positively stated there are currently no findings. Lieutenant Manke stated there is a new Emergency Manager at Backus whom he has been working with to strengthen their relationship and he has also been working with Uncas Health on swearing in their new Medical Reserve Corp. members. Lieutenant Manke asked any departments affected by the December 25-26 flooding to please submit reports to him as the President ruled the occurrence as a national emergency which opens up funding for repairs.

c) American Ambulance: None.

d) Norwich Police Department: Captain Jim Veiga stated the Department responded to 2750 calls last month, they have one member in training currently and another planned to start in April. Captain Veiga said their dispatcher position is still open but they just began advertising the position.

Alderwoman Philbrick asked Captain Veiga how the Police Department came into possession of the MRAP military vehicle that is currently at the city garage as to her recollection former Chief Fusaro had requested on in the 2013-14 budget and it was defeated by Council. Captain Veiga responded that the MRAP came from the military as decommissioned equipment. Alderwoman Philbrick stated she would still like more information on what the department will be sacrificing or how it will get funding to maintain and power the vehicle.

e) Firehouse Status Updates:

Taftville: Chief Timothy Jencks reported Taftville had 73 calls last month and already have 25 calls so far with only 9 days into the year. Chief Jencks stated they lost 3 members to career changes they got 2 new ones in. Chief Jencks said they have three members starting firefighter training in the Spring, their trucks have been down to maintenance for motor mounts and other repairs along with their 86 Pierce which went to fleet that morning for its brakes. Chief Jencks reported the addition is still ongoing and they are dealing with the building departments. Chief Jencks

said some a recent expense was the repair of their ice machine which was not guaranteed to last by the service person.

East Great Plain: Chief Keith Milton stated EGP had a slow month with only 70 calls, they have two new members, three members who have completed Fire 1 training and two who completed Fire 2. Chief Milton reported their new staircase is up with the next step to be pouring concrete and other than that they have new office election coming up that Sunday.

Occum: Chief Carroll Spaulding introduced himself and stated that moving forward Occum is looking to train with other departments and build their relationships. Chief Spaulding reported they current have one member in Fire 2 training and two members that got EMR certified.

Yantic: Chief Frank Blanchard reported membership is at 58 with members currently enrolled in EMT training, Fire 1, vehicle education, etc. Chief Blanchard stated their current apparatus issues including the generator for Engine 32 which is an estimated \$12-14,000 to get back in service and Squad 36 which will be out of service for two weeks with significant rot being it was the first squad unit in the city. Chief Blanchard reported they had 32 calls in December with 672 for the calendar year. Chief Blanchard stated they have submitted the budget and are looking to fund HVAC install for main floor, replace the underground fuel system, an annex building extension for their trucks, the replacement of Squad 36 and parking lot refurbishments. Chief Blanchard reported the Fire Marshal abatement project for the station is ongoing and he would be speaking to the City Manager regarding funding to award the project.

Laurel Hill: Chief Aaron Westervelt said they received two new applicants and had two members complete Fire 2 training. Chief Westervelt reported their new hood is up, tested, and is operational. Chief Westervelt in regards to the water leak they are taking things step-by-step; their affected gear is being cleaned with the costs covered by insurance and they are using spare gear from the vendor in the meantime. Chief Westervelt reported their budget has been submitted and they are still experiencing issues with Truck 61.

Norwich: Chief Tracy Montoya reported they had a busy month in December and provided mutual aid in three incidents. Chief Montoya stated the office is back at full staff with newly graduated Firefighter Davis being sworn in on the 11th and the remaining vacancies to be filled with new hires coming out of the academy in February. Chief Montoya reported the new boat is on schedule to be completed in the next five weeks and would then go through acceptance testing and be stored until Spring. Chief Montoya stated Marine 1 and 2 are currently decommissioned with Marine 1 having been sold but they have not gotten any bids on Marine 1. Chief Montoya stated there were no critical needs other than the ongoing mechanical issues with Squad A.

VI. Other:

a) IMC Bridge Update: None.

b) Fleet Maintenance: Chief Aaron Westervelt reported the firehouse has been cleaned and the air quality test results showed they were fairly close to ambient air quality so they believe most of the mold has been eradicated.

c) Former Yantic Chief Bill Eyberse stated that while it had been alluded to during the meeting he wished to reiterate that it may be time to create a committee with representatives from all firehouses and city employees that can try to develop a system to replace apparatuses on a timely fashion. Mr. Eyberse stated while the departments will get the trucks they need now it would be better to develop a proactive approach. Chief Blanchard agreed and suggested discusses the matter at the next Chiefs' Meeting.

VII. Future Agenda Items:

a) IMC Bridge Update

b) Police Department MRAP

VIII. Adjournment:

Upon a motion by Alderman DeLucia, seconded by Alderwoman Philbrick, the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 8:04 pm

*Respectfully Submitted,
Katherine Rose*