

**EMERGENCY SERVICES EFFICIENCY COMMITTEE
TOWN OF WILLINGTON
TOWN OFFICE BUILDING
REGULAR MEETING
June 13, 2023**

Members present: Peter Tanaka; Chairman and Board of Finance, From Willington Fire Department #1 (WFD#1): Alex Moore; Chief, Ron Gantick; President, Stuart Cobb; Assistant Chief, From Willington Hill Fire Department (WHFD): Bobby Knight; Assistant Chief, Mike Makuch; Lieutenant/Selectman, James Knight, President.

1. Call to Order.

The meeting of the Emergency Services Efficiency Committee was called to order at 6:39 p.m. on June 13, 2023 by Chairman Peter Tanaka.

2. Seating of Alternates.

There were no alternates to seat.

3. Present to Speak.

No one was present to speak.

4. Approval of Minutes.

Chairman Tanaka moved to approve the minutes the from April 11, 2023 meeting, seconded by Selectman Makuch.

Vote: All yes.

Chairman Tanaka moved to approve the minutes from the May 9, 2023 meeting, seconded by President Gantick.

Vote: All yes.

5. Old Business.

a. Mold Update Station 13

Chairman Tanaka asked Chief Moore if there was an update on the mold issue at Station 13. Chief Moore stated that they met with the BOF and going off the first quote that WFD#1 submitted to the BOF, the BOF approved \$37,000.00 towards the mold problem. Another contractor is supposed to come out this week to give them a quote. Chief Moore stated that Ron Mike (Fire Chief of Andover Fire Department and owner of Economy Home Improvement) is going to stop by next Tuesday and look things over and give them some advice on what their next steps should be. He is a trusted person from the outside, who can let them know what their next steps should be. Further discussion was had on the building, equipment and apparatus storage, etc. Ambulance 613 has been on loan but will be back in town on Friday. Further discussion was had on neighboring town ambulances.

b. CIP Discussion

Chairman Tanaka asked if the two departments have been talking about CIP. Chief Moore stated that both departments talked about it after the last ESEC meeting, and they have had some correspondence back and forth with CIP Chairman Christina Mailhos about when CIP will start up again, which is probably some time in September. The two chiefs, two presidents and Assistant Chief Cobb sat down a few months ago and came up with a brief 20-year plan and have a general idea of when vehicles should be replaced. Discussion was had on getting another ambulance to replace Ambulance 513 and the unavailability of ambulances and fire trucks at this time and how much the prices on both have gone up. Selectman

Makuch stated that there have been several hiccups with acquiring Service 149 for WHFD which is in the current fiscal year CIP money. They are working on this. A discussion was had on buying and leasing vehicles and the process involved with the Town getting approval.

c. Town of Union Discussions

Chief Moore stated there was no update regarding the Town of Union.

d. Budget Alignment – Town Business Office on Board?

Assistant Chief Cobb gave an update on the budget alignment. He gave Town Business Manager Donna Latincsics what the final pages were and outlined what new line items need to be in the Town budget for both departments.

6. New Business.

a. Tax Abatement

Selectman Makuch gave a recap of what was discussed at the BOS meeting regarding tax abatement (although he did not speak at that meeting, conflict of interest). He stated that there are a couple of items that need changing or more debate, one item being if you were marked late on paying your taxes (even one day) you are not eligible for the tax abatement for 2 years. The other item is if you are currently delinquent at the time the abatement comes up, would you be eligible or not. He stated that there are theories on both sides of that one, and he feels that if you are delinquent, that you still should be eligible for it but the abatement would repay your delinquency first. He feels that if someone is volunteering for their community, they should continue to be encouraged to do so and just apply the abatement to their back taxes and not punish them. He feels that this committee can discuss this issue, make recommendations to the BOS and follow the process. This will be an ordinance change, so it will have to be decided at a Town Meeting. Chairman Tanaka asked if this is something that WFD#1 can support. Assistant Chief Cobb stated that it is another incentive to try to get volunteers to help. Chief Moore feels there should be something in this plan for Life Members who have done their time and aren't as active now, perhaps attending so many meetings a year to qualify. A discussion was had on the money involved in this, how much they have used so far, the impact on the taxpayers, taking care of the Life Members, etc. Chairman Tanaka stated that the Chiefs need to talk and see how they can go to a BOS meeting to get the ordinance voted on at a Town meeting.

b. Pre Plans

Chairman Tanaka asked about whether either department has pre plans. Assistant Chief Cobb stated that WFD#1 has some and he suspects WHFD does also, but they have never standardized them in any format. He stated that the opportunity right now between IAR (I am responding) and CrewForce applications is that pre plans could be stored on them along with a lot of other information. Further discussion was had on this. Assistant Chief Cobb suggested having a subcommittee between both departments work on this. Chairman Tanaka would like to see this subcommittee happen.

c. SOP's/SOG's/A&O's/Accreditation

Chief Moore stated that after the last ESEC meeting he and Chief Snyder discussed working on standard operating procedures/guidelines starting with their junior firefighters, so that both departments are following the same policy/guidelines. Chief Moore stated that they have talked in the past of having the same SOP's/SOG's and he said that they should have them, but the problem is that it is a lot of work to do. Chairman Tanaka stated that he understands that and is happy that they are discussing it and starting somewhere. Chairman Tanaka asked if accreditation was done in fire departments as it is done in police departments and Selectman Makuch and Assistant Chief Cobb both stated that usually that is just done in big city departments but not smaller ones other than maybe Coventry who is working on it. A discussion was had on insurance companies and their ratings of fire departments in relation to water hole locations of fire stations in relation to residences and fire hydrants as well as more discussion on SOP's, SOG's, A&O's and accreditation.

d. IT Integration

Chairman Tanaka asked if all their IT works together. Chief Moore stated that with IAR both departments work off the same platform (using cell phones or iPads). They also use CrewForce which does all their mapping. Discussion was had on both systems and how they work.

e. Next Steps/Agenda Items

Chairman Tanaka asked everyone to email him if they have any agenda items for the next meeting.

f. Any Concerns That Have Arisen Since Last Meeting

Chief Moore stated that he and Chief Snyder talk fairly regularly about what is going on at each department.

7. Correspondence.

None.

8. Good and Welfare.

Chief Moore stated that he wanted to discuss wages for the paid firefighters which is always a "hot topic" during budget season. He learned today that Hebron Fire Department (which is fairly similar to WFD#1 in calls and staffing) are now starting their part-time firefighters at \$24.00 an hour, with full-time firefighters starting at \$30.00. Chief Moore stated that it is hard to compete with that and WFD#1 wages are drastically lower than that. Chief Moore stated that there will be a discussion with the BOF regarding wages in the next couple of months, because one of their top firefighters that has been working a **ton** of shifts got hired at next town over as he makes a lot more money there than at WFD#1. A discussion was had on this, and Chairman Tanaka stated that this was something that needs to be discussed, and Chief Moore stated that he feels this is something that this committee needs to discuss.

9. Adjournment.

Selectman Makuch moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Chief Moore.

Vote: All yes.

This meeting was adjourned at 7:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Eileen Smith

Eileen Smith
Recording Secretary

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TOWN CLERK