

Dunn's Corners Fire District

1 Langworthy Road
Westerly, RI 02891

Minutes Special District Tax Payers Meeting January 30, 2008

1. Meeting called to order at 7:05 pm, Moderator John Merkel presiding.

Meeting was advertised in the Westerly Sun on Monday, January 21, 2008. Notice was posted at the Westerly Community Credit Union's Dunn's Corners Office; Dunn's Corners Market, Dunn's Corners Fire Station #1 on Langworthy Road, Dunn's Corners Mobile, Michael's Shell and Dunn's Corners Fire Station #2 on Post Road, Charlestown. The notice was posted on the district's website and the Rhode Island Secretary of State's eTown Crier site on January 19, 2008.

Pledge to the Flag of the United States of America was conducted.

There was a moment of silence observed for those who have passed on from families of members of the Dunn's Corners Fire Department.

The meeting Call was read by District Clerk Steve White. Sixty eight persons signed the attendance roster. A quorum was present.

2. Overview of the Operating Committee's activities

Moderator John Merkel presented to the attendees an overview of the Operating Committee's activities since its election by the taxpayers. The activities included the following:

The appointment of the following positions:

Treasurer:	Brona Haggerty
District Clerk:	Steve White
Tax Assessor:	Ken Swain
Grange Manager:	Matt Harris
Nominating Committee:	Ed Schilke Karl Kenyon Elaine Martin

The Committee has held discussions with the Coverage Fire Districts to address their concerns and develop a framework for the future administration of the relationships.

The appointment of a Chief Selection Committee composed of, John Merkel, Richard Hosp, Dan Schilke, Mike Perri, Jonathan Schreier, Ken Martin and Jeff Bewlay along with the appointment on January 1, 2008 of Ken Martin as Interim Chief.

Additionally the Operating Committee worked on improving district communications thru press releases, an open house, and the district website. The Committee also worked on the disposition of Engine 5, the ladder truck and improved financial reporting. There were 13 Operating Committee and 5 Chief Selection Committee meetings held during the period reviewed.

3. Full Time Chief Presentation

Moderator John Merkel presented a slide show at the meeting to review why the Operating Committee was requesting the voters to approve a full time chief. The presentation explained how the Chief's position has changed from primarily a fire fighters role to primarily that of an administrator. The responsibilities and fire code changes brought about by 9/11 and the Station Night Club fire along with more numerous and complex residential and commercial plan reviews and commercial inspections has made the job overly burdensome for a Part Time Chief. Especially since the typical Part Time Chief is working a full time job in the private sector.

The presentation reviewed the monetary impact which would cost the district approximately between \$85,000 and \$110,000 in salaries and benefits. This expense would be partially offset by the elimination of the part time chief's stipend of \$22,600 and potentially \$23,000 in additional tax revenue from a proposed increase in the fire tax imposed on businesses in the district.

The presentation went on to demonstrate that even with the additional expenses related to the position that the district still would have the lowest mil rate for all reporting fire districts in the state.

A motion was made seconded and after considerable discussion was so voted by a showing of hands with 60 in the affirmative and 6 opposed for the Dunn's Corners Fire District to hire a Full Time Chief.

4. Increasing the fire tax on district businesses

It was agreed after discussion that any increase in the tax charged to the district's businesses should be brought to the tax payers for review at the district's Annual Meeting and that any proposed changes be communicated to the districts businesses prior to the meeting.

5. Bylaws revisions

Moderator John Merkel reviewed four minor Bylaws changes to allow for the more efficient administration of the fire district.

A motion was made seconded and so voted by acclamation to modify Bylaws Item #7a: to *“Allow electronic distribution of job posting information.”*

A motion was made seconded and so voted by acclamation to modify Bylaws Item #7b: to substitute the term *“organized fire department”* for *“Fire District”*.

A motion was made seconded and so voted by acclamation to modify Bylaws Items #7c1, #7c2, #7c4, and #7c5: to eliminate the word *“demonstrated”* and in item #7c1 replace it with the word *“Working”*.

A motion was made seconded and so voted by acclamation to add Bylaws Item #9: *“Reallocation of Funds Between budget Accounts: The Operating Committee may, at its discretion, expend funds from an under spent account in order to supplement an account for which the budgeted amount has already been expended.”*

6. Minor appropriations

Moderator Merkel requested at the meeting that the tax payers approve minor appropriations for a new commercial grade dishwasher for Station #1 not to exceed \$4,000.00 dollars, \$2,100.00 for 50 additional meeting room chairs, and \$5,000.00 to advertise for the newly created position of Full Time Chief.

A motion was made seconded and so voted by acclamation to approve the purchase of a new commercial grade dishwasher for Station #1 not to exceed \$4000.

A motion was made seconded and so voted by acclamation to approve the purchase of an additional 50 meeting room chairs not to exceed \$2,100.

A motion was made seconded and so voted by acclamation to approve the expenditure of up to \$5000 for the advertisement of the position of Full Time Chief.

7. Adjournment

A motion was made seconded and so voted by acclamation to adjourn the Special Meeting of the Dunn’s Corners Fire District at 9:08 pm.

Respectfully Submitted

Steve White

District Clerk Dunn's Corners Fire District