

Dunn's Corners Fire District

1 Langworthy Rd
Westerly, RI 02891

Minutes Operating Committee Meeting June 9, 2014

The Dunn's Corners Fire District Operating Committee (OC) convened on Monday June 9, 2014 at 6:00 PM, in Fire Station #1.

Attendees were comprised of OC members Matt Thomsen, Tom Algieri, Ken Martin, Chief Mike Frink, Bob Delaney, and Jon Schreier.

Additional attendees: Ted See representing the Shady Harbor Fire District and District Clerk Steve White.

Actions of the OC (all votes unanimous unless otherwise noted):

Agenda Items

Pledge of Allegiance – The Operating Committee opened the meeting with the “*Pledge of Allegiance*”.

Previous Meeting Minutes – *A motion was made seconded and so voted to approve the minutes of the May 27, 2014 meeting.*

Next Operating Committee Meeting - The next regular meeting of the Operating Committee is scheduled for July 7, 2014 at 6:00 PM at Station 1.

Contracting Districts – Ted See of the Shady Harbor Fire District voiced his concerns that the current contract has the Shady Harbor Fire District potentially paying more for fire protection services than the Charlestown tax payers of the Dunn's Corners Fire District (DCFD) and that the apportionment of taxes based on a split of 55% for Westerly tax payers of the DCFD and 45% for Charlestown tax payers of the DCFD no longer accurately reflects the true split of property values between the portions of the two towns covered by the DCFD. The split had been incorporated many years prior as a remedy for the two towns being on different property valuation cycles.

The Committee agreed to review the split percentage for relevancy and look at alternative methods to fairly balance the tax burden between the taxpayers of both towns.

Additionally, the Committee stated it would continue to work with the Shady Harbor Fire District on a potential contract that would have the Shady Harbor Fire District paying a contracted fee that would be equivalent to what the Charlestown DCFD tax payers pay as a mil rate less the costs of tax collection and audit services.

Financial Statements - The Balance Sheet showed that as of fiscal year end the District had \$542,727 in cash or cash equivalents on hand. The Income Statement showed a positive variance of \$160,066 primarily a result of unexpended but committed new Engine 4 purchase funds and unbudgeted Bradford Fire District contract income. Overall operating expenses came in under budget.

The Treasurer discussed holding excess funds in reserve until new agreements with the Contracting Districts are in place. Normally the funds would have been used to prepay district debt to reduce interest expense in future budgets.

Chief's Report – The Chief reported that there had been no news on outstanding grant requests. He informed the committee that the department had responded to 69 calls for the period; 32 were fire calls which included motor vehicle accidents, fire alarms, carbon monoxide alarms, etc and 37 had been for BLS services of which several lives may have been saved by the department's support of this service.

The Chief updated the committee on the potential sale of Engine 2 and that Captain Dan Schilke has taken a lead role on the project. Additionally, Tower 5 had been out of service for several days and needed repairs of approximately \$8,700.00, which will create an approximate \$6,000.00 negative variance in the District's Equipment Maintenance Budget. The Chief is investigating why the parts replaced were not still under warranty.

The Chief provided the committee with his up coming vacation schedule.

He had informed the Committee of Board of Engineers concerns about the cost of maintaining and running the Grange Building for use by the public and that annually the District is incurring \$5000,00 more in expenses than it is receiving in usage fees. The Committee agreed to look into the matter over the next fiscal year.

Proposed 2014-2015 Draft Budget – The Chief presented a draft budget that was developed with input from the Board of Engineers. The Budget provided showed two different scenarios one with expenses totaling \$897,000.00 and the other \$882,000. The budget incorporated a modest increase for Tax Collection expenses and the Treasurer's stipend do to increased regulatory responsibilities. The Chief reviewed in detail the Board of Engineers Expenses and the duty requirements for deputy chiefs' and captains' incentives and how they compare with surrounding districts.

The biggest increase in the budget was generated by the proposed addition of a full time staff facilities person who would also respond to fire calls. Reduced expenses for lawn care, cleaning, and fire marshal inspections of approximately \$14,000 would help offset some of the position's costs.

The Committee had questions about a staff position expected to go on calls, which included the following; disability insurance and potential District liability, health insurance, and would part time staff be better.

The Chief reviewed the job description and the need to have someone onsite given the current economic environment is making it more difficult for volunteers especially during the day to leave work to respond to calls. Committee Member and Department Representative Tom Algieri noted that the Board of Engineers was in unanimous support of adding this position.

A poll of the Committee on hiring a full time person showed unanimous support though many concerns were voiced which included potential long term disability liabilities and whether or not quality of the equipment would suffer if funds were allocate to staff.

A motion was made, seconded and so voted to allow the funds to hire a staff member to be incorporated into the budget subject to further review, analysis and final approval to authorize use of the funds be made by the Operating Committee.

Bradford Fire District (BFD) Contract – The Moderator provided a draft agreement from the District’s solicitor for a two-year contract with options to move forward based on future negotiations. The contract is similar to the current short-term agreement that expired on May 31, 2014. The committee requested that the contract include language that would clearly state that BFD would be billed for false alarms by businesses within the that District that go above 3 responses for the same incident within the usual and customary cycle. BFD would be responsible for obtaining reimbursement from the businesses for the bills it would pay to DCFD.

A motion was made, seconded and so voted to approve the contract and move it forward to the District Voters subject to the additional language regarding false alarm billing being included.

New Business – No new business.

Public Comments – No public comments.

Meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Steve White
District Clerk