

Dunn's Corners Fire District

1 Langworthy Rd
Westerly, RI 02891

Minutes Operating Committee Meeting June 28, 2016

The Dunn's Corners Fire District Operating Committee (OC) convened on Tuesday, June 28, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. at Station #1.

Attendees were comprised of the OC members Chief Mike Frink, Ken Martin, Tom Algiere, Treasurer Bob Delaney, Moderator Matt Thomsen and Jon Schreier. A quorum was present.

Additional Attendees: District Clerk-Steve White, Quonochontaug Central Beach Fire District representatives Bill Heep and Randy Thornton.

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

Agenda Items:

Pledge of Allegiance - The meeting started at 6:00 PM with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Previous Meeting Minutes – *A motion was made, seconded and so voted to approve the minutes of June 14, 2016 meeting.*

Next OC Meeting – The next OC meeting will take place at Station #1 on Tuesday July 12, 2016 at 6:00 p.m.

Contracting Districts: Quonochontaug Central Beach Fire District (QCBFD) – Representatives of the QCBFD addressed the committee with their concerns regarding a communication breakdown with the DCFD. QCBFD was expecting some movement from the DCFD Operating Committee on the negotiation of a new contract to provide fire protection services prior to the expiration of the six month extension and prior to the QCBFD's annual meeting on September 17, 2016.

Treasurer Delaney addressed the group and stated that contracts with the Shady Harbor Fire District and Shelter Harbor Fire District were in the final phases and that the desire of the DCFD Operating Committee is that all the contracting districts would be on a standard contract and that all the contracting district's would be paying an amount that equates to the tax rate paid by DCFD taxpayers. He went on to reiterate that DCFD has the lowest tax rate of any fire district in the state and emphasized what a great value the contracting districts were getting.

The QCBFD representatives were appreciative of the way DCFD handles its budget and finances and that their concern was primarily in regards to large and unanticipated increases in billings brought about by the use of the "grand tax list" used to calculate mil rates for DCFD tax payers and the billing amount charged to the contracting districts.

The Operating Committee agreed to send a copy of the draft contract currently in the works with the Shady and Shelter Harbor Fire Districts and to commence negotiations shortly.

Draft Budget 2016-2017 – The Committee reviewed a revised itemized draft budget developed by the Chief with the Board of Engineers for the 2016-2017 fiscal year of \$958,333 an increase of \$14,361 or 1.5% over the previous year’s budget. The revised budget included changes recommended by the operating Committee at the June 14th meeting to the following line items, Chief’s Salary & Benefits \$4,000 for flexibility in the upcoming negotiations on a contract for the Chief, Replacement Equipment \$4,000 for specialized equipment requested for EMS support, and a Tax Collector Salary increase of \$500. Additionally, the Chief added \$2,500 to the District Tax Contribution line item.

A motion was made, seconded and so voted to accept the 2016-2017 fiscal year Draft Budget as adjusted and to recommend it at the Annual Meeting to the tax payers for approval.

Chief’s Annual Meeting Report – The Committee reviewed and made some minor recommendations to the Chief in regards to his Annual report. The Committee expressed positive sentiments as to the quality of the document.

Draft Annual Meeting Resolutions – The following draft resolutions were reviewed and/or discussed and approved to be presented to the tax payers;

***Chief’s Vehicle** - Resolved to allow the District to spend up to \$65,000 to replace Car 1(vehicle) and to allow the Operating Committee the discretion to purchase the vehicle with funds from the Restricted Truck Fund or a combination of Restricted Truck Funds and financing not to exceed a period of 60 months. It is further resolved that if any portion of the vehicle is financed at a lower rate than the Station 2 loan rate, that the Operating Committee is authorized to use funds from the Restricted Truck Fund up to the amount financed for the vehicle to reduce the outstanding principal balance on the Station 2 loan. And it is further resolved that financing expenses including principal and interest if any for the vehicle be paid from the unrestricted General Fund for fiscal year 2016-2017.*

***Upgrades to Security and Information Systems for Stations 1 & 2** - Resolved to use up to \$10,000 from the unrestricted General Fund to add additional cameras to improve security and new cat 6 cables to upgrade information system processing at both Stations 1 & 2.*

***Painting Station 1** - Resolved to use up to \$9,000 from the Buildings and Grounds Restricted Fund to paint the main entrance, meeting room and stairwells at Station 1.*

***Hot Water System Station 2-** Resolved to use up to \$6,000 from the unrestricted General Fund to purchase and install a new hot water system at Station 2.*

***LED Security Lighting Stations 1 &2** - Resolved to use up to \$5,000 from the unrestricted General Fund to purchases and install exterior LED lighting at both Stations 1 & 2 for security and general safety purposes.*

***Funeral Fund** – Resolved to establish a \$5,000 Restricted Funeral Fund, the monies to come from unexpended Leadership Dollars in the 2015-2016 budget, to be used by the Department for expenses related to future commemoration ceremonies of current and past members of the Dunn’s Corners Fire Department.*

***Pay down on Station 2 Loan** - Resolved to leave it to the OC’s discretion to pay down up to \$25,000 on the principal owed on the Station 2 loan from the unrestricted General Fund.*

Authority To Access Restricted Funds for Unanticipated Repairs - Resolved that the Operating Committee be given the authority to access the Restricted Truck Fund for up to \$10,000.00 to mitigate unanticipated truck repairs and the Restricted Equipment Fund for up to \$5,000.00 to mitigate unanticipated equipment repairs that may occur between Annual Meetings.

Authority to Contract with the Chief – Resolved that the Operating Committee is authorized to negotiate and execute on behalf of the District up to a three year contract with the Chief.

Ratification and Approval of Acts of Officers - Resolved that each and all of the resolutions, acts and proceedings of the District Officers, as shown by the records of the respective officers in carrying out and promoting the purposes, objects and interests of the Dunn's Corners Fire District, be and the same approved, ratified and hereby made the acts and deeds of the Dunn's Corners Fire District.

Authorization of Representation - Resolved that the Moderator, or such person or persons as the Operating Committee or the Moderator shall designate, be and hereby are fully authorized and empowered to enter objections or legal actions on behalf of the Dunn's Corners Fire District in reference to any zoning matters, liquor licenses, legislative matters, or any other subject affecting the Dunn's Corners Fire District.

Tax Resolution - Resolved that the taxable inhabitants of said District qualified to vote on any proposition to impose tax, in District meeting legally assembled on the 20th day of July, A.D., 2016, hereby order the assessment and collection of a tax on the taxable inhabitants and property in the sum of not less than \$XXX,XXX nor more than \$XXX,XXX credited to. Said tax is for ordinary expenses of interest and charges, for the payment of interest and indebtedness in whole or in part of said District and for other purposes authorized by law. The Board of Assessors shall assess and apportion said tax on the inhabitants and ratable property of said District of the 31st day of December, 2015, at 12:00 o'clock Noon, according to law, and shall, on completion of said assessment, date, certify, and sign the same and deliver to and deposit the same in the office of the District Clerk on or before the 15th day of August, A.D. 2016. The District Clerk, on receipt of said assessment, shall forthwith make a copy of the same and deliver it to the District Treasurer, who shall forthwith issue and affix to said copy a warrant under his/her hand, directed to the Collector of Taxes of said District commanding him/her to proceed and collect said tax on the persons and estates liable therefore. Said tax shall be due and payable on and between the first day of September next and the 30th day of September, 2016, and all taxes remaining unpaid on said 30th day of September, A.D. 2016, shall carry, until collected, a penalty at the rate of twelve per centum (12%) per annum upon such unpaid tax. A \$2.00 handling fee will be imposed on reissued tax bills sent for collection purposes. No tax bill sent out shall be less than five and 00/100 (5.00) dollars.

Special Appropriation - Resolved that the Treasurer be directed to deposit in the Unrestricted General Fund Surplus the total of the unexpended appropriations as shown by the records of the Treasurer for the fiscal year 2015-2016, and all other monies collected during said fiscal year, but not otherwise appropriated. Provided, however, that prior to January 1, 2017, the Treasurer is authorized to use such portion of said sum of unexpended appropriations and other monies not otherwise appropriated as he or she deems necessary in anticipation of receipt of taxes assessed December 31, 2015.

Tax Anticipation Note - Resolved that the District Treasurer be and hereby is authorized and empowered during the current fiscal year of the District, commencing June 1, 2016, and ending May 31, 2017, to borrow such sum or sums of money as shall be necessary for the payment of the current liabilities and expenses of the District, but not to exceed in the whole the sum of Fifty thousand AND NO/100 (\$50,000) DOLLARS and to issue negotiable promissory note or notes of the District therefore, which shall be made payable not later than one (1) year from the respective date or dates thereof. Negotiable notes issued pursuant to the authority hereof shall be signed by the District Treasurer and countersigned by the District Clerk, and such countersignatures shall be conclusive evidence to all holders of such note or notes of the approval and consent of the District and the District Officers to the loan or loans evidenced thereby. All terms and conditions of said note or notes and the method of sale thereof not fixed herein or by the provisions of law or the charter of the District may be fixed by the District Treasurer. The District Treasurer is hereby authorized and empowered to renew any of said notes from time to time, but any such renewal note shall be due not later than one (1) year of the original note so renewed.

It was noted that the Tax Resolution was incomplete pending receipt of the taxable property values for the District and Contracting Districts.

Tax payer J. Angelo informed the committee that he believes that the property tax assessment process in Westerly is flawed and pointed to a recent RI Supreme Court case which supports his assertion.

Treasurer Delaney put forth a resolution for discussion that would not allow the Dunn's Corners Fire Department to respond to any nonlife threatening or nonvisible fire call to a property which did not reside in any fire district. This was in an effort to help resolve the ongoing matter regarding the Department being dispatched to Bradford Industrial Park which is not part of any fire district for nuisance alarm calls. The Committee at this time was not in favor of the resolution and will continue to work through the legal process to resolve the matter.

The committee stated that it wanted the Resolutions, Expense Budget and Chief's Report posted to the District site by the first week in July to allow the tax payers an opportunity to review the materials prior to the Annual Meeting.

Contracting District Contracts – The Moderator provided draft contracts to the Committee for review:

The Committee recommended removing language in Article II Section C paragraph 4 capping annual increases to 5%. The Committee will not agree to any annual cap. Additionally, the Committee wants Article III Section C sentence one language "*or existing contract extended*" deleted from the agreement since the Central Beach Fire District is on a 6 month extension while their contract is being negotiated.

Other Business – Member T. Algieri asked the Chief to clarify the section of his proposed draft contract relating to what certificates would be eligible for incentive pay. The Chief noted they were the same as the members.

Public Comments – J. Angelo asked as to the status of the Charter Review Committee. He was informed that the Committee has been put on hold until the contracting districts' contracts are completed and the Chief's contract has been resolved.

Correspondence – None

Executive Session – The regular meeting was temporarily adjourned and the Committee went into executive session at 7:30 PM to review and discuss a draft employment contract proposed by the Chief.

Executive session ended at 8:45 PM and the meeting was reconvened.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM.

Steve White District Clerk