

Dunn's Corners Fire District
Operating Committee Meeting
December 13, 2022

The Dunn's Corners Fire District Operating Committee (OC) convened on Tuesday, December 13, 2022 at 6:30 PM at Station One, Langworthy Road, Westerly, Rhode Island.

Attendees were comprised of OC members - Richard Thomsen, Bob Delaney, Chief Keith Kenyon, Paul Gencarella and Ken Martin. A quorum was present.

Other Attendees: Attorney Michael Cozzolino, Deputy Chief Jeff Thomas

Robert Delaney coordinated the meeting.

Actions of OC (all votes unanimous unless otherwise noted).

Agenda Items:

Pledge of Allegiance – The meeting started at 6:30 pm with the Pledge of Allegiance and a Moment of Silence.

Previous Meeting Minutes – Minutes of November 8, 2022 Operating Committee were filed with no changes.

Election of Moderator – Jeff Thomas said we should send a letter to the State regarding the status of our situation. Bob Delaney indicated that had already been done. Michael Cozzolino stated that we really need to appoint a Moderator.

Bob Delaney explained how the Treasurer's job began years ago. He stated that he was a member of the Operating Committee before he became the Treasurer. Attorney Cozzolino will speak to the Attorney General's office again.

Bob Delaney feels that there is more responsibility in the duties of the Treasurer than the responsibilities of the Moderator.

Rosalind Choquette discussed what the by-laws of the District state regarding the Treasurer being a part of the Operating Committee. Attorney Cozzolino stated that if there was a previous letter from the Attorney General's Office stating this procedure is ok then we are good.

Jeff Thomas stated that we should post again for an Interim Moderator. Attorney Cozzolino indicates we should appoint a Moderator.

Operating Committee will continue as is and review again next month.

A motion was made, seconded and approved to continue for another month with Robert Delaney as acting Moderator.

FOTQG Report – Rich Thomsen read the report that had been emailed to all members.

Rich indicated that Lachapelle will have quotes this Friday regarding the shingling and he will give any information to Ann Bettinger.

Henderson Builders and Longolucco are also to give quotes regarding the shingling job.

The report indicated they will catch up on other items at the January Meeting.

FOTQG holiday party was cancelled so it was not necessary to approve \$200.00 contribution to support the event.

Treasurer's Report – Bob Delaney gave the following report:

The expenses are tracking well against the budget.

Fencing work has been completed.

Obtaining an estimate now for landscaping in the spring to include a message sign on the property. Ken Martin will talk with the Department regarding this.

Building reserves for the Grange, Car 1 and Engine 6 are also on track.

Tax Assessors/Collector's Report – Rosalind Choquette, Tax Assessor reported the following:

For the month of November, the office started processing overpayments to send out notice to taxpayers for reimbursements.

The collections resulted in a collection rate of 94.80%

During the month of December, the office will continue to send out refund notices.

Rosalind wants to write off small amounts, and Bob said to prepare a list of write-offs for the January Meeting for review by the Operating Committee.

Chief's Report – Chief Kenyon reported as follows:

Fire Calls 26; EMS 10 for a total of 36. Fire Marshall for the month of November 5 residential and 14 business inspections. 260 hours of volunteer hours.

From the Charlestown ARPA grant \$93,000.00 total was received.

We are still waiting on Westerly ARPA grant. We will send another letter to Westerly Town Clerk to be on their next agenda regarding the ARPA Funds.

Paul Gencarella will talk to Town Council members regarding our request. Jim Angelo suggested that Paul follow up with a letter to Attorney Connelly, Town Solicitor regarding their conversation they previously had regarding this matter.

The Engine 6 Committee has been doing research on different apparatuses.

With regard to the Bradford Engine, committee members will meet with us in January to discuss the same.

A committee is not yet needed for tanker specifications with regard to the Five-Year Plan.

Mary Rathbun will set up a folder for the Charlestown ARPA funds including copies of invoices and an Excel worksheet for reporting of related expenses to Charlestown's Town Council at the end of January, February, March and April unless completed earlier.

A motion was made and seconded to approve all reports that were given.

Safe Road Status:

Bill Balczak was not in attendance.

Rich Thomsen states the speed bumps have been painted. Richard is going to do a ride along with Central Beach in the future to further assess the road status.

Next Meeting – The next meeting of the Operating Committee will be Tuesday, January 10, 2022 at 6:30 PM at Station One.

Old Business –

Paul Gencarella indicates there are ISO regulations for cities and towns, a number one rating being the best and a number ten rating not so good. These ratings are based on availability to water systems and is the department full time staffed. DCFD is rated a number three.

A Motion was made, seconded and approved to convene to Executive Session to discuss the Chief's annual review and to approve any earned year end bonuses at 7:34 PM

A Motion was made, seconded and approved to re-convene to Open Session at 8:45 PM

A Motion was made, seconded and approved to seal the Executive Session Minutes.

Public Session

Sub-Committee reviewing Department Officer Resignation:

It was brought to the Committee's attention that the last paragraph of the first page of Bill Balczak's report should reflect that the Chief did seek guidance from the District Moderator and

the Solicitor. The report stated the Chief did not seek guidance. The Chief asked to have that change made.

Jeff Thomas wanted clarification regarding these reports as to if there were any safety concerns listed. Ken Martin indicated there were no safety concerns regarding Jeff Thomas at all. Jeff also wanted to know specifically if his name was mentioned in either of the reports. Ken Martin stated that Jeff Thomas was not mentioned at all.

Jeff Thomas stated that since no safety concerns were found by the committee after seven months than the submitted letter referencing safety concerns were falsely made. Jeff stated that given his professional career he considers false claims slander and an attempt at defamation of his character. Any further discussion or future accusations that are falsely made, Jeff will be treating as such legally

Jeff also felt that it was unbelievable that this investigation took as long as it did. Ken stated that the committee came to a halt because of members being sick with COVID. It was difficult to get everyone together. Jeff feels the end result of this investigation was disappointing.

Jim Angelo wanted to know why then did three members resign. Ken stated that all three members were interviewed regarding safety and all three quit on their own. Chief provided copies of the three resignations to the Operating Committee for review and asked the Operating Committee to investigate the allegations made in the resignation letters.

Ken also stated it should be noted that there were no safety concerns regarding Chief Kenyon either.

A Motion was made, seconded and approved to award year end bonuses in accordance with the consensus of the Operating Committee.

Motion was made, seconded and approved to adjourn at 8:48 PM

Meeting adjourned at approximately 8:48 PM

Linda F Garabedian, District Clerk