

Dunn's Corners Fire District
Operating Committee Meeting
January 10, 2023

The Dunn's Corners Fire District Operating Committee (OC) convened on Tuesday, January 10, 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 Bill Balcezak. A quorum was present.

Other Attendees: Attorney Michael Cozzolino, Deputy Chief Jeff Thomas, Members of the Friends of the Quonochontaug Grange; Brian O'Rourke, Bradford Moderator.

Robert Delaney coordinated the meeting until Paul Gencarella was appointed Moderator and he then coordinated the rest of 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 – a Motion was made and seconded to approve and file the Minutes of December 13, 2022 Operating Committee Meeting with a minor change being made.

Election of Moderator –

A motion was made, seconded and approved to appoint Paul Gencarella as Moderator of the Dunn's Corners Fire District.

FOTQG Report – Ann Bettinger read the report that has been emailed to all members.

Chief stated that DOT is trying to address draining issue. Roy has looked at it issue as well.

Discussion regarding events at the grange serving alcohol. Chief indicates that our current insurance covers alcohol being served at the Grange as long as the District is not making money on the alcohol sales. Whatever vendor is hired to serve alcohol would have to have its own insurance. Attorney Cozzolino states that we should be an additional insured on the policy.

Ann asked about the ARPA items – Chief states he is waiting on vendors for items that were ordered.

Rich Thomsen asked about siding – Ann said it is on the agenda for their next meeting.

Bob Delaney states that Deb McManus is working on a landscaping plan for the Grange and Station 2. Bob asked the Chief to ask the Department members if there is any interest to have a work party and help with this project.

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

The expenses are tracking well against the budget.

Personal equipment is \$1,000.00 over budget. Looking for equipment that should be returned and then reassigned to volunteers.

Bob states there are a couple of accounts are going to be moved around, items were booked in wrong accounts. Chief thinks its just line items that were logged under wrong numbers.

The electric cost for the Grange and Station are high, maybe a separate meter could be installed for the power use. Chief states more use at Station 2 may be the cause for the electric increase. Chief will ask an outside electrician about a separate meter.

A Motion was made and seconded to approve the Treasurer's report.

A Motion was made and seconded to approve the small write off requests of the Tax Assessor.

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

For the Month of December, the office reimbursed \$1,248.70 in overpayments to taxpayers due to mortgage companies and property owners both paying taxes. The office also had a returned payment through the credit card service.

The office provided the Operating Committee with a list of underpayment and overpayments under \$2.00 with a request to write off in the QDS system

The collection rate currently stands at 94.97%.

Chief's Report – Chief Kenyon reported as follows:

Fire Calls 28; EMS 14 for a total of 42. Fire Marshall will report next month's meeting. 131 training hours.

The light was finally installed on gable of the Station.

Verizon cost is way to high, but the big concern is the need for internet access during a power outage. They are going to come back again with another price.

Station 2 floors were stripped and waxed. The members helped to move all of the stuff that needed to be moved.

Westerly Dispatch contract has been executed and was sent back to them.

Bob Delaney asked if there were any reports from the Town regarding hydrants. Chiefs there are no reports. Bob indicated the hydrants have been in the ground 20-25 years. We have paid for all hydrants but we are not getting flow rates and still the price continues to increase. The expense should maintain not keep increasing.

Chief states municipalities take care of hydrants. We are responsible for hydrants in the Dunn's Corners Fire District. Chief will ask Town Administration if there is any plan to release flow charts.

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

Safe Road Status:

Bill Balcezak states that the new Moderator can now sign the letter and it can be forward to contracting districts. East Beach District has done the work.

Rich Thomsen indicated that he is working with Central Beach. Central Beach has already received an unsigned copy.

Chief states that this can wait until August but it can be put on the website once the Moderator has signed it.

Bill indicates it comes down to private roads. He will update letter and Tax Assessor will include with all tax bills.

Next Meeting – The next meeting of the Operating Committee will be Tuesday, February 14, 2022 at 6:30 PM at Station One.

Bradford Moderator – Equipment Sale:

Brian O'Rourke, Moderator was in attendance. He would like to know the status of the grant regarding purchasing Bradford Engine.

Chief states he met with Westerly Town Council regarding the fund status for this, and at the time they were waiting for the new Council to be appointed. He is still not sure what funds are coming from Westerly as they have until 2024 to release funds.

Bradford has retained a new solicitor, Peter Ruggiero. Moderator indicated he did not have a copy of the contract. Bob Delaney states it is on line. They reiterated that they do want to sell the Engine by May 31, 2023 and no longer wish to lease it. It is there intention to sell it to the highest bidder. The taxpayers would like it to remain with Dunn's Corners Fire Department.

Five Year Capital Acquisition:

Engine Six Committee is working on specs that have been sent out to vendors. Chief states we are on track. Deputy Chief Thomas states we are on track for annual meeting. We are making good progress quickly.

Stove and refrigerator are to be shipped next week, and will be installed upon receipt.

Resolutions:

The fence project has been completed.

Station Two and Grange Landscaping – Bob Delaney is working on that.

Old Business –

The audit needs to be uploaded to the website.

Public Comments -

Jack Shippee asked why Ken Martin's letter regarding the subcommittee investigation was not signed. He wanted to know why there were changes on Ken's report. Ken's changes/cross outs were on the original from the beginning.

It was asked by Mr. Shippee if Dan Schilke's departure had anything to do with the investigation. Bill Balczak stated that Dan Schilke's departure did not have anything to do with the investigation. Chief stated that Dan did not resign, that he retired from his position and the department. Mr. Shippee then asked if Dan was a life member. Chief stated that Dan is not a life member and he would need to applied for life membership through the department.

Attorney Cozzolino stated that any taxpayer can talk to any member of the Operating Committee to have a conversation. Deputy Chief Thomas wants to know how long this is going to go on.

Mr. Shippee wants to know if the Operating Committee voted on this. Attorney Cozzolino states no further action is to be taken on this matter. Mr. Shippee just wants clarification, he is not trying to be confrontational or aggressive in any manner. Bill Balczak stated he is happy to speak with anyone about his recommendations.

Deputy Chief Thomas states training is done by the State of Rhode Island for sexual harassment, discrimination and diversity. This training is set for next Wednesday, January 18, 2023 at 6:00 PM.

Ernie Rathbun wants to know about the shingles on the grange. Bill states not fiscally responsible or a good investment. Chief Kenyon states we need a contractor to complete the project.

Motion was made, seconded and approved to adjourn at 8:00 PM

Meeting adjourned at approximately 8:00 PM

Linda F Garabedian, District Clerk