

THESE ARE DRAFT UNOFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE MEETING. THESE MINUTES HAVE NOT BEEN APPROVED BY THE OPERATING COMMITTEE AND ARE INFORMATIONAL ONLY.

Dunn's Corners Fire District
Operating Committee Meeting
November 8, 2022

The Dunn's Corners Fire District Operating Committee (OC) convened on Tuesday, November 8, 2022 at 6:30 PM at 5662 Post Road, Charlestown, RI;

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

Other Attendees: Friends of the Quonochontaug Grange and Attorney Michael Cozzolino.

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 October 11, 2022 Operating Committee were filed with no changes.

Election of Moderator – There were no nominations. 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 – was handed out, no report given.

Chief stated he will be in touch with Ann regarding the product to be used for the shingle project. A member of the grange spoke indicating the importance of getting the shingle project done. He feels it has been too long and should be done immediately.

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

The auditor's report was clean.

The tower loan was paid off early, and the balance of loans are below \$250,000.00.

The expenses are tracking well against the budget.

The interest rate is rising, and this may have impact on payments due from taxpayers.

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

For the month of October, the office resent tax bills that had been returned due to residents moving or incorrect address.

The collections resulted in a collection rate of 93.09%

The office will be closed November 13th through the 21st as the Assessor's will be away.

Bob Delaney asked if the \$3.00 rebilling fee is included and Assessor indicated that it is.

Chief's Report – Chief Kenyon reported as follows:

Fire Calls 24; EMS 16 for a total of 30. Fire Marshall for the months of September and October are 22 residential, 11 p.r., 18 b. licenses and 8 residential.

Three fire safety events were held and were successful.

DOT and the Town of Westerly investigated the rain water and pothole issues and are in agreement that it needs to be fixed before winter.

Documents for ARPA grants have been completed.

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

Moderator's Comments –

Bob Delaney asked about the MVA payments. Mary Rathbun stated that the payments are coming in and they will be logged sometime this week.

Paul Gencarella will look into ISO ratings for the Operating Committee and report back next month.

The website needs picture updates, and Chief is looking into photographs for the website.

The decision to stay running as we are until next meeting.

Sub-Committee reviewing Department Officer Resignation:

Jack Shippee asked for a portion of the June, 2022 Operating Committee Meeting Minutes be read relative to what the Moderator at that time had stated. Clerk read the part of the minutes that were requested.

Bill Balcezak states he has a report, but feels it should go to the Executive Session first before it is heard by the public. He feels the entire Operating Committee should weigh in on the matter before it goes to the public.

Bill feels the Chief needs to recuse himself from the Executive Session, and Chief indicates that he will do so.

Member of Public Presentation:

Jim Angelo states there is a conflict of interest for the Chief to sit on the Operating Committee. Jim states he has spoken with Ethic Committee and they agree with him, however the Charter was approved by the General Assembly so the Ethic Committee cannot override the General Assembly.

Jim Angelo spoke about ISO Rating for DCFD is a 3. Bob Delaney stated the lower the number the better the rating.

Jim left documents with Mary Rathbun regarding the relationship between the District and Homeowners and the ISO rating.

Bill responded that the Operating Committee feels that the structure including the Chief being on the committee is working fine.

The Fire Marshall stated that he can explain ISO ratings. He indicates that the DCFD has good insurance rates because of the low ISO rating.

Chief states how mutual aid works and how it is relative to ISO rating. In 2009 DCFD was a 4 and upon reevaluation in 2019 we are now a 3. This is good. Jim Angelo believes mutual aid is not mutual because some give more time than others.

Chief states we want to know that someone is responding not about the mutual aid.

Bill Balcezak asked Jim what he would like to see done regarding this matter. Jim does not know what to do.

Bill believes the Fire Department is willing to help, its serving the community, mutual aid.

Ken Martin stated we all give what we can.

Bob stated we try to do what is right. We care about the community and are trying to make any situation safe.

Auditor's Report:

Bob Delaney asked if the letter was ready to be executed and sent to the Auditors. Mary Rathbun stated that the letter is ready.

Motion was made, discussed and seconded to approve the Auditor's Report.

Retirement Plan Status:

Attorney Cozzolino has forwarded a letter to ERSA attorney and is waiting back from them. Will report next month.

Resolutions:

Fencing: Bob Delaney is working with Dunn's Corners Market regarding the clean up. All work is to begin tomorrow. The District will pay 50% of the total billing which is \$1,800.00. Mary Rathbun will deliver check upon completion.

No other updates on resolutions

Next Meeting – The next meeting of the Operating Committee will be Tuesday, December 13, 2022 at 6:30 PM at Station One.

Old Business –

BDA PROPERTY – Ms. Aurora Leigh, Chief and John Merkel had a video conference months ago regarding this project. She was told that she should attend another Operating Committee Meeting. Attorney Cozzolino feels this is a completed matter. Ms. Leigh indicates that they are looking to proceed however no longer a residential project but will be commercial. The Chief referred them to the State.

Public Comments – completed earlier in the Meeting.

A Motion was made, seconded and approved to convene to Executive Session to discuss the investigation of the resignations at 7:44 PM

A Motion was made, seconded and approved to re-convene to Open Session at 8:34 PM

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

Public Session –

Bob Delaney indicated that this month's report minutes would be ready on the Dunn's Corners Fire District website at noon next Wednesday, November 16, 2022 and the Subcommittee's Report from Bill Balcezak could be available tomorrow November 9th, 2022.

Bob Delaney indicated that the Operating Committee will support the Chief with funding for additional administrative staff and a five-year plan regarding retiring staff; funding for additional SOG training.

Bob stated that the safety of the Department is job one. All members need to feel safe and never disrespected.

A Motion was made, seconded and approved to adjourn at 8:39 PM

Meeting adjourned at approximately 7:45 PM

Linda F Garabedian, District Clerk

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