

**Dunn's Corners Fire District**  
**Station 1**  
**Langworthy Road**  
**Westerly, Rhode Island**  
**Minutes**  
**Operating Committee Meeting**  
**January 14, 2020**

The Dunn's Corners Fire District Operating Committee (OC) convened on Tuesday, January 14, 2020 at 6:30 PM at Station 1.

Attendees were comprised of OC members Chief Chris DeGrave, Bob Delaney, Ken Martin, Rich Thomsen, Matthew Manni, and Matthew Thomsen. A quorum was present.

Other Attendees: Representative of the Friends of the Quonchontaug Grange (FOTQG).

Matthew Thomsen moderated 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.

Next Meeting – The next meeting of the Operating Committee will be scheduled for Tuesday, January 21, 2020 at 6:30 PM at Station 1.

Previous Meeting Minutes – *A motion was made, seconded and so voted to approve the minutes of the November 12, 2019 Operating Committee meeting.*

*A motion was made, seconded and so voted to approve the minutes of the December 17, 2019 Operating Committee Meeting.*

Friends of the Quonchontaug Grange (FOTQG) –

Work at the Grange includes Storage Room Status

Quonochontaug Historical Society Grant to complete wainscoting on East and West interior walls of the lower level meeting room

Chairs replaced in downstairs area

Butler/Caterer's Kitchen status – planning underway

Well Water testing – moving to quarterly testing

“Painting Party” underway Tuesday mornings through February 18th 8:30 AM – noon – All helpers welcome

Walkways – Town Grant

Champlin Grant application for North and East side shingling and insulation

Holiday Party – FOTQG sponsored holiday sing-a-long with the Chariho Vocal Select Chorus

Treasurer's Report – Bob Delaney requested a meeting with auditors several times, still has not heard from them. The Audit was approved by the State of Rhode Island and has been posted on the website.

Expenses are tracking well against budget.

Bob stated the outstanding balance on all loans is now below \$700,000.00.

*Motion made, seconded and so voted to accept Treasurer's Report.*

#### Chief's Report

District Operations - BDA Land Development- Contact made to Attorney Cozzolino and the Bradford developers to work on a draft contract for service. No details have been reviewed or agreed upon at this stage. Once drafted it will be reviewed and brought to open session DCFD Operating Committee meeting for board review. My continued recommendation to work with the new development company to draft and enact an agreeable contract to provide them district services. I have reviewed the initial development plan and consider this a fruitful effort for sincere development with interests of the community and taxpayers in mind. The developers seems to be agreeable to any and all options to increase safety, assist with recruitment and retention and other public safety initiatives moving forward; Cistern/ Rural Development regulations (including the current Grundy Case) is underway. DCFD met with a case mediator and the issue could not be resolved during mediation. All parties met on-site to discuss several options and it was clear that the town was unwilling to compromise. The presiding Court Justice will be making a judgement off of the provided feedback from the mediator; WWFM Manni has been selected for a pilot program (6-8hrs a week) for assistance with fire marshal duties, smoke detector inspections and plan reviews. Marshal Bobola will directly supervise all duties of the assistant. At this point the fire marshal duties have completely taken over his current FD position. I conducted an emergency local search and interviewed/ selected a DCFD taxpayer that was immediately willing to assist. The pilot program will see if the hiring of a part-time fire marshal (hourly, salary or other department support) would assist in the operational mission of the FD. Currently, Harold Stedman (active DCFD volunteer) is also assisting on a fire marshal special project assignment as needed;

Special thanks to Diane Nardone for her service as the District Tax Collector. She has been an amazing asset to the district. We truly appreciate your willingness to train Gretchen. She has been a great fit! She will be working Monday 3-5, Wednesday 3-5, Thursday 1-5 and Friday 8-5. We will be dedicating blocks of time and posting these times publicly for tax collection assistance.

Department Operations - During the last month, the Dunn's Corners Fire Department responded to 84 (60 Medical/24 Fire) fire and emergency medical calls. Our volunteers spent nearly 175 hours responding and working on the scene of incidents. We responded to a structure fire and severe car accident on New Year 's Eve 2019. Over 15 members responded to each incident. Although stressful both incidents showed the resilience of the department and strength of the volunteer force. At the MVA two of our department members (not on a fire truck) stopped to assist prior to FD arrival and worked to free a victim from a burning car. The members both received a challenge coin for their efforts! Excellent work to Lt Hannah Schilke and FF Josh Gabriel; Request from several FFs to look into a Station 2 residency program for our volunteers. We have run several duty shift and off night training programs in the last two months with LARGE turnouts of 10+ firefighters on weekend evenings. This project has been assigned to LT Shippee for further discussion. Station 2 has seen substantial movement lately due to the addition of an LT at the location. Gym project, storage expansion, duty room and other upgrades as in discussion; Fire Marshal activities: 10 plan reviews, 17 inspections while executing 100% of all day-time calls. Assistance from Marshal Manni has allowed FF Bobola to conduct 8hrs of FD and driver training over the last 2 weeks; DCFD officers are actively working on several projects- EMS program incentives, FD recruitment and retention, Station 2 development and driver training improvements. DCFD Officers have been meeting regularly with great forward progress. Changes have positively affected call responses and numbers; EMS Coordinator LT. Hannah Schilke has convened the DCFD EMS Committee to explore ems program incentive (including adjusting fire vs ems incentive program fund numbers), recruitment and long-term ems program goals. After several adjustments, new incentives are underway with good results. Department buy-in into the ems program is better than ever. She will be conducting a CPR/AED First Aid and Stop the Bleed Class tomorrow after the recent events locally; Boat Project is underway via committee. We are in possession three quotes for similar zodiac vessels. The committee has examined several options and had made the official recommendation to me for a 17' rescue RIB made by zodiac and sold locally. The final quote number with trailer package is well within budget (with the sale of the Marine 1 vessel). The lowest price quote is still un-negotiated without possible discounts applied; Due to several major failures on apparatus the district has seen a large repair bill in the last several weeks for the Tower Ladder. Dated electronics and lines were causing interference and feedback. This was causing the ladder to not operate properly or reliably. The repair bill was close to 8k due to the cost of the electronics, labor and wiring. Secondly, more recently, the tanker had a catastrophic pump impellor failure. This was NOT expected and appears to not be a maintenance issue. The estimated repair bill is currently 10k. The repair facility is recommending a VFIS insurance claim due to its catastrophic nature. At this time we are approximately 80% through the maintenance budget with more bills on the way. We may need to enact the truck/equipment fund to cover some of these losses depending on insurance outcome. I do not want these major repairs to affect other maintenance tasks/needs.

Training & Activities - Training- Active participation over 125hrs of documented training; Nearly 110 volunteer hours of non-incident activities including- station/ vehicle maintenance,

truck/equipment checks & PR activities. FFs are participating in a collection drive for the Fight for Air Climb this Saturday at Walmart; Ø 6 current driver trainees on the apparatus at various stages. Great work by many of those pushing through the DT program. Josh Gabriel has been cleared to drive Engine 4! Congrats Josh. Both Jared Gulluscio and Zach Perrin have started the DT program at various stages.

Project Updates - Station 1 project is nearing complete... Signage is next with lit logo. All new exterior electrical, new efficient LED timers and LED upgraded lighting is complete. Lachapelle Contracting has done an amazing job! Simultaneously Rich Thomsen/ Dwayne Allen have taken an interior LED lighting upgrade project by the horns. They have made HUGE lighting and efficiency improvements within the station for a quarter of the cost of an outside contractor. We should be seeing substantial electrical savings soon; DCFD is looking into new signage & logo options both for aesthetics and recruitment as a volunteer organization. Looking into several options for our prime real-estate. We have an add alternate to the current bid (within budget) that would allow for new signage and lighting as a part of the rehab project. Looking into a matching Station 2 sign as the new Station 1 sign ideas have gotten rave reviews. The sign is being constructed currently and the zoning permit submitted; SCBA pack committee will be formulated this winter and completion of several Station 2 projects are on the docket.

*A motion was made, seconded and so voted to accept Chief's Report.*

Moderator's Report – Matthew Thomsen reported there is a dilemma with the Operating Committee regarding a violation relative to a fire department member holding the position on the Committee. Attorney Cozzolino states that a paid employee cannot hold a position on the Operating Committee Board. However, there is an exception for an emergency, and is this situation an emergency, is the question. Attorney Cozzolino has asked for an advisory opinion from the Ethic Committee. Operating Committee is to continue as is until we hear from the Advisory Board.

*A motion was made, seconded and so voted to accept Moderator's Report.*

Other Business – Chief discussed the purchase of a 17.5 Zodiac with trailer, that he had gotten several bids, that he thought the District should go with the lowest bid which is still negotiable. The price is within the budget. The boat acquisition was approved at the July annual meeting by the taxpayers.

There was much discussion regarding the purchase and reasons why it was needed.

*A motion was made, seconded and so voted to approve said purchase.*

Public Comments –

Jim Angelo complained about not being welcomed at the meetings. He was upset about the purchase of Marine 1.

Andy Schilke complained about the Department becoming a paid Department and the loss of members. (See Memo from Andy Schilke regarding this matter).

Matthew Manni commented regarding there is a change in the District and that the Department needs to change with it.

Meeting tabled at 7:45 PM to go into Executive Session.

Meeting reconvened at 8:45 PM

Meeting adjourned at 8:46 PM

---

Linda F Garabedian, District Clerk

31 Fern Drive  
Westerly, RI 02891

May 7, 2020

Mr. Matthew Thomsen  
Moderator, DCFD  
1 Langworthy Road  
Westerly, RI 02891

Dear Matt,

In the Minutes of the Operating Committee Meeting from January 14, 2020 in the Public Comments section it states "Andy Schilke complained about the Department becoming a paid Department and the loss of members".

My comments during the Public Comments would be much better summarized as the following: "Andy Schilke commented on the loss of volunteers and expressed concern that this can lead to the Department becoming a paid Department".

I would appreciate that the Minutes be corrected to properly state what I said. I did not "complain" and find the choice of that word in the Minutes to be misleading.

Thank you for your attention to this and I look forward to hearing back from you or the Operating Committee.

Best Regards,



Andrew R. Schilke

---