

Dunn's Corners Fire District
Tele-Remote Minutes
Operating Committee Meeting
April 28, 2020

The Dunn's Corners Fire District Operating Committee (OC) convened on Tuesday, April 28, 2020 at 6:30 PM tele-remotely.

Attendees were comprised of OC members Chief Chris DeGrave, Bob Delaney, Rich Thomsen, Keith Kenyon, Interim Chief, and Matthew Thomsen. A quorum was present.

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

Chief DeGrave coordinated the meeting through the Zoom application.

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, May 12, 2020 at 6:30 PM tele-remotely.

Previous Meeting Minutes – *A motion was made, seconded and so voted to approve the minutes of the March 10, 2020 Operating Committee meeting.*

Friends of the Quonchontaug Grange (FOTQG) –

1. Thank you to the DCFD for community support during COVID19
2. Impact of COVID19 on rentals - Reduction in rentals and plan for resumption of rentals underway based on Rhode Island government mandates and guidelines
3. Work at the Grange - Fire Suppression surround completed; Sound panels installed in lower level; Repairs to interior stairs to lower level underway this week. Butler/Caterer's Kitchen status planning underway; ADA Walkways – Charlestown Town Grant requested, upcoming Budget Hearing May 4th
4. Long Term Capital Plan highlights with focus on ADA accessibility, Caterer's kitchen; and Building maintenance

Matt Thomsen approved and applauded all of their hard work.

Treasurer's Report – Bob Delaney reported that expense tracking against budget is going extremely well. The District is in a good financial state. Bob indicated that there is more information to follow regarding the 20/21 Budget.

Matt Thomsen requested scheduling a meeting to approve the upcoming budget, particularly when we have to anticipate additional costs regarding the pandemic. He indicates we are treading in new territory and need to have the funds necessary. We need to protect the department.

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

Chief's Report

District Operations - Special thanks to ALL of the officers, members, employees, associates and community members for the continued support during this VERY trying time. From support to complete tasks to the many food & gift donations we have received, we thank you. BDA Land Development- No update at this time. No communication or contact with the developers since February 27th. Attorney Cozzolino may have knowledge of news. Work on the district budget has been ongoing over the last several weeks. All areas have been discussed and reviewed with the FD Officers. I will present some of those preliminary numbers tonight. The 2020/21 budget is reflective of additional recruitment/ retention strategies, station duty program, PPE replacement program and the addition of a full-time firefighter/ EMT. Cistern/ Rural Development regulations (including the current Grundy Case) is still underway. DCFD met with a case mediator and the issue could not be resolved during mediation. I am guessing due to COVID-19 these case is held up. I have heard no updates at this point. Attorney Cozzolino may be able to provide us additional information. The time has come that the COVID19 virus situation is beginning to stabilize and with that I must depart as the full-time Chief. My last day as the full-time Chief will be this Friday, May 1 at which time I will be assisting part-time (approx. 20hrs a week) with daily administrative duties and fire operations as the Assistant Chief for the next few months. SOG 1 Chain of Command document will be properly edited to incorporate the interim roles. Special thank you to Chief Kenyon for assisting me during the difficult transition. I wanted to take a moment to thank Mary and Interim Deputy Bobola as employees of the District. I thank you for standing behind me during some very difficult days and always recognizing that being in my role wasn't always easy or easy decisions. It is with hope that you felt cared for and supported as an employee and asset to this district. I appreciated you both VERY much.

Department Operations - During the last month, the Dunn's Corners Fire Department responded to 69 (37 Medical/32 Fire) fire and emergency medical calls. Our volunteers spent nearly 200 hours responding and working on the scene of incidents. A recent uptick in service for fire call response is due to many people residing at home and cooking more regularly, activating unintentional alarms. Currently due to COVID-19 a joint decision between the department officers, RIDOH and the two transporting rescue agencies was made to limit our department exposure by reducing our medical responses to only calls that were deemed life peril or emergent in nature. Additionally we provide service if any delay of service of the rescue or if additional support is requested. This

action was approved by the RIDOH. Special thanks to all of our department officers.... Between coordinating our ems program to ensuring vehicle maintenance is ongoing, from verifying equipment/ppe orders to creating programs for our volunteers to still participate in training remotely... I applaud all of you. To our members... I appreciate you. You have shown that when the public are asked to stay home for risk of serious illness, you continue the mission unwaveringly to help others with a smile. It is NOT an easy chose for a Chief to ask members to stay home for safety however I applaud your support, care and continued perseverance during this pandemic. Request from several FFs to look into a Sta 2 residency program for our volunteers. Officers have started to look at budget, contract requirements and rules/regulations surrounding this endeavor. A preliminary resident program and contract is drafted. I am highly supportive of this program that will provide additional day/night firefighter coverage for fire and ems calls. A preliminary plan and docs will be brought to OC for approval in the coming months. Thanks to our new LTs and members, the gym project is completed with several new pieces of equipment, storage expansion in several closets is underway, duty room and other upgrades are in discussion. Lt Shippee has completed several projects including a recent boiler service, upgrading LED lighting and cleaning out several of the older office rooms including donating several outdated packs and bottles to Old Mystic FD for further donation (with a fire apparatus) to a department in the Midwest desperately in need. Lt Thomas has coordinated the purchase of a new forcible entry prop. Low bid has been awarded to East Coast Rescue Solutions. Expected delivery is in a few weeks. This exciting new piece of equipment will be housed at Sta 2 and will kick off the process of our FF training prop rehab that I have requested capital funds for in the 20/21 budget. This rehab will provide our members with an enhanced place to train while expanding the use of Station 2. Fire Marshal Office activities: 17 plan reviews, 30 inspections completed over the last month. Many home buildings projects, preliminary plan submittals and home sales are still underway during this time. Under the direction of the State Fire Marshal's office we have regulations in-place to continue to execute community duties while ensuring that our staff are safe including limiting visitor's onsite during inspections, utilizing PPE and conducting a COVID 19 screening survey. Due to several major failures on apparatus the district has seen some large repair bill in the last several months for the Tower Ladder (Electronics/Wiring), Tanker (Pump Repair-Reimbursed 85% by VFIS insurance), Engine 4 (Electronics/Pump, Engine 5/6 (Throttle Issues). We may need to enact the truck/equipment fund to cover some of these losses depending on year end expenses. At this time, ALL apparatus besides Tower 5 have been serviced, repaired and pump tested. Tower 5 is scheduled for mid to late May for service. Thanks to Captain Schilke for coordinating these extensive maintenance and repair projects. From new safety cameras to mirrors to new tires on the brush truck you have knocked out a substantial amount of needed projects over the last few months.

Training & Activities - Training- Active participation over 210hrs of documented training. A great testament to our current members and officers. This number is incredible even with tight restrictions on department training and limiting groups. Nearly 70 volunteer hours of non-incident activities including- station/ vehicle maintenance, truck/equipment checks & PR activities. All of these tasks have been officer assigned to limit personnel exposure. 7 current driver trainees on the apparatus at various stages. Great work by many of those pushing through the DT program. Many department officers have made time on weekends for additional training opportunities for our members. Congrats to Lt Hannah Schilke and FF Josh Gabriel for completing the driver training program on ALL of the department engines. Excellent work!

Project Updates Marine 1 project is completed. Asset has been lettered and relocated to Station 2. Final piece is the 800-radio programming which needs to be executed by the RIEMA. Thanks to ALL of the players in completing the delivery and installation processes especially Lt . Rachel Schilke whom coordinated the build. Training for the vessel and department on-boarding for the equipment to follow. At this time, the marine fast-boat operator course is postponed till Summer. Station 1 project is nearing completion. Some sign delays have occurred due to the virus. Install is scheduled for this coming week depending on the weather. Sign and ventilation project are approved through building and zoning department. The final project pieces will be completed this month... touchup painting, tree trimming, front tree removal, all new crack fill/ seal coat and striping @ Sta 1 is underway. SCBA pack committee will be formulated this month lead by Lt. Rachel Schilke and myself. This needs to be a high priority item to make a final selection for new packs in the next 4-6 months for a fall delivery.

Bob Delaney asked that repair of tower be partly paid in June so that it goes against next year's budget.

Matthew Thomsen thanked the Chief for his years of service, his dedication and wish him well in the future. Further, that the Operating Commission will provide him with any letters of recommendation he may need in the future.

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

Moderator's Report – Matthew Thomsen reports that his primary concern is the future. We need to establish a Committee to rewrite the District charter and bylaws that provide the Chief with the necessary authority to manage.

We also need to ask the Department to change its By-laws to allow the Chief to have personnel authority over the members of the Department. One change needed is the establishment of an OC Administrator position who will be to handle District issues and allow the Chief to focus on operational and department matters. The input from the Chief, interim Chief, past Chiefs and department members are paramount.

Matt indicates need to nail down what is going on with Bradford Industrial Park Property.

Matt thinks we will have to meet utilizing Zoom for the foreseeable future. We will need to put out new OC meeting procedures on our website. Attorney Cozzolino's input on this new procedure and how it works with the Opening Meeting laws, is required.

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

Other Business – Discussion regarding Interim Leadership Roles & Responsibilities. Matt Thomsen indicates the Chief has this laid out well and we should follow his plan.

Chief presented the 20/21 draft budget and reviewed all items.

Discussion regarding Annual Meeting the Chief indicates we should wait until June to see what the Governor is doing. Matt Thomsen thinks we should hold the meeting as usual however we need Attorney Cozzolino to help us to make sure we meet all opening meeting law requirements.

Discussion regarding Washington Trust Company note Bob Delaney indicated it was just about finished. He indicated balance could be paid off in May and then it can be removed from next year's fiscal budget.

A motion was made to payoff Washington Trust Company \$35,000.00 note and interest at the end of May, seconded and so voted to payoff Note.

Discussion regarding Operating Committee Nominating Committee Matthew Thomsen feels we need to get more people involved. Chief indicates we need more advertising regarding members of the committee. Attorney Cozzolino indicates taking an ad in the local newspaper is not a bad idea.

Public Comments –

None

Correspondence from Jim Angelo it was tabled as he was not available.

Meeting adjourned at 8:17 PM

Linda F Garabedian, District Clerk