

Dunn's Corners Fire District

1 Langworthy Rd
Westerly, RI 02891

Minutes Operating Committee Meeting February 9, 2016

The Dunn's Corners Fire District Operating Committee (OC) convened on Tuesday, February 9, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. at Station #1.

Attendees were comprised of the OC members Moderator Matt Thomsen, Chief Mike Frink, Ken Martin, Tom Algiere and Jon Schreier. Treasurer Bob Delaney was excused. A quorum was present.

Additional Attendees: District Clerk-Steve White; Friends of the Quonochontaug Grange Chair Ron Meneo and Quonochontaug Historical Society Treasurer Tom Doyle.

Actions of the OC (all votes unanimous unless otherwise noted):

Agenda Items:

Pledge of Allegiance - The meeting started at 6:00 PM with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Moment of Silence – Moderator Thomsen called for a moment of silence in memory of the passing of charter member Chief Richard “Cappy” Champlin.

Friends of the Quonochontaug Grange (FOTQG) – Ron Meneo provided an update of the group's activities to date which included the following;

- Obtaining quotes for upgrades to the facility's bathroom, 2 quotes have been received working on a third.
- Installing a new underground drainage pipe; materials and labor generously donated by Mike Dirobio.
- Arranging for an energy audit of the facility

Additionally, R. Meneo inquired if the propane tanks located at the facility were owned or leased and was informed they are leased from Buckley Heating and Cooling. R. Meneo also informed the committee that FOTQG and the Quonochontaug Historical Society (QHS) were with the Operating Committee's approval, looking to apply for grants to help with the capital improvements of the facility.

FOTQG plans to apply to the Champlain Foundation and QHS plans to apply to the Rhode Island Foundation.

Quonochontaug Historical Society (QHS) Grant Proposal – Tom Doyle Treasurer of the QHS informed the committee that the group is planning to apply for a \$15,000 grant from the Rhode Island Foundation to build out a 27.6 foot by 9.25 foot space in the basement of the Grange facility which it would sublet from the FOTQG to store its historical records.

Both R. Meneo and T. Doyle stated that having the proposed draft lease between the DCFD and FOTQG signed and approved would facilitate the grant process. Ideally the groups would like the lease to be in place by February 12, 2016. Moderator Thomsen stated that he believed that it would require a vote of tax payers for the Operating Committee to enter into a long term lease for the facility and a Special Tax Payer meeting would need to be called.

Committee member Tom Algieri inquired as to why the District is working with the QHS in regards to the use of the Grange. It was stated that HSQ is a nonprofit aligned with FOTQG and the rent for the space will help support the FOTQG organization maintain the facility. Member Algieri also inquired as to what would stop the group from entering in to sublet arrangements with other groups. It was stated in response that the Operating Committee would need to approve any such arrangements.

Member Jon Schreier asked for and received assurances that any lease would protect the District from any liability for damage to items and records stored in the facility.

T Doyle asked that the Committee sign a letter of support as part of the grant application process.

A motion was made seconded and so voted that the Committee authorize the Moderator to sign on its behalf a letter of support to aid the QHS with its grant application for \$15,000 to develop a historical records storage area within the Grange facility.

Previous Meeting Minutes – The minutes of the January 12, 2016 meeting were approved as presented.

Next OC Meeting – The next OC meeting will take place at Station #1 on Tuesday March 8, 2015 at 6:00 p.m.

Treasurer's Report - The Clerk in the absence of the Treasurer provide the following on his behalf; progress was made on past due tax collections with the current year uncollected balance down to \$35,500 and the previous year figure was at \$13,100; the next set of collection notices will go out in April; audit copies in accordance with state regulations have been sent to both the Westerly and Charlestown town councils; the District made an additional payment against the Station 2 loan bringing the balance down to roughly \$355,000. He stated that the District is in very good shape. He also noted that the Special Legal Services line should be closer to \$1500 and that the entry should be corrected on the next report.

Chief's Report – The Chief provided the committee with the following update; all of the capitol items approved in the budget are moving forward; he signed an agreement with Cox for the replacement of the department's telephone system. The Chief informed the committee that the

initial cost was going to be a little higher than first reported but the system should be more cost effective for the district over the long haul; the SCBA grant has been finished and submitted.

The Chief then reviewed the following legislation and whether or not it was supported by the Rhode Island Fire Chief's Association.

- H7328 – Volunteer Fire Fighter Protection Act – Support
- H7214 & S2135 Remove Fire Districts from Budget Commission Oversight – Oppose
- H7279 & S2213 Bars adjusters and contractors from premises under investigation by the fire marshal until premises are released, and provides penalties for violation - Support
- H7331 Exempts fire companies with no tax and/or policy making authority from certain posting requirements of the open meetings act – Under review

The Chief noted he was selected to go to Maryland to be a reviewer of AFG grants.

The Chief discussed the funeral of retired Chief Cappy Champlin. He commended the many members who put in hours drilling to give Chief Champlin a proper send off and that he could not be more proud to lead this department under these circumstances. He noted costs to the department for the service primarily in uniforms of approximately \$3,500.00.

The Chief discussed attending the FDIC training program in April from the 18th to the 23rd. He noted that firefighter Chris Wells would also be there and wanted to get the committee's approval before committing to the program. Member T. Algieri supported sending both the Chief and firefighter Wells to the program. He stated the volunteers would be able to adequately cover the department over that time. The committee was supportive of the Chief's request.

Additionally, the Chief stated that he would be going to CFSI on May 4th – 6th and that the department's annual banquet is March 26th and the operating committee members are invited.

The department responded to 71 calls in January, 33 medical, 38 fire; the fire marshals conducted 18 inspections and plan reviews for the month, 4 plan reviews, and 9 residential and 5 commercial inspections.

A motion was made, seconded and so voted to accept the Treasurer's and Chief's reports.

Contracting District Contracts – The Moderator provided the committee with the draft contracts for the Shady Harbor, Shelter Harbor and Bradford Districts and expects to have them sent out for signatures prior to the March meeting.

He also noted that as part of the contract with Bradford a bill of sale for the leased vehicle and all other fire fighting assets of the Bradford Fire District will need to be executed.

Charter Review Committee – The Moderator stated that the Charter Review Committee has not met yet but would start scheduling meetings in the near term.

Bradford Industrial Park – The Moderator informed the committee that attorney Patrick McKinney filed the complaint on behalf of Dunn’s Corners Fire District which is looking for relief from being the first department on call to respond to BIP fire alarm situations other than for life threatening or confirmed fire related incidents. He stated there are tentative court dates scheduled for March 11th and March 18. He noted there would be a meeting with Westerly Dispatch.

Chief’s Contract Status – The matter was tabled and is pending additional information to be provided by the Chief.

Last Team – The Chief requested that the committee make either a clothing (foul weather gear) or monetary donation to the Last Team, a nonprofit organization that works with fire departments making arrangements and coordinating funeral ceremonies for their firefighters and members. He noted the group’s efforts in helping to coordinate charter member and former retired Chief Champlin’s funeral service contributed greatly in making it a special event.

A motion was made seconded and so voted to make a donation of \$2000.00 to the Last Team.

Other Business – Committee member Algieri complimented the Chief for his efforts as President of the Fire Chief’s Association in developing a public relations campaign to raise awareness for the fire protection services. The Chief was involved in public appearances on such programs as the Road Show discussing public safety and the development of public service commercials which are designed to raise awareness and to get people interested in membership or getting involved in the fire protection services.

Public Comments – No public comments.

Meeting adjourned at 7:50 P.M.

Steve White District Clerk