



**Public Protection & Safety Standing Committee of the Waterford RTM
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, September 16, 2020
6:00PM Virtual Meeting**

Meeting Called to order at 6:00 PM by Chairperson Timothy Condon

Roll Call

Present: Timothy Condon, Baird Welch-Collins, Susan Driscoll, Richard Muckle, April Cairns

Absent: None

Others Present: Joyce Sauchuk, Robert Brule, Elieen Duggan, Robert Avena

Public Comment

John Mariano, Vincent Ukleja

Agenda Item 5- To Consider and act upon the meeting minutes of the August 31, 2020 meeting.

Motion made by Welch Collins, Second by Driscoll to accept the minutes.

Vote: Unanimous

Motion passed.

Agenda Item 6- Consideration of and possible action on items referred to committee:

A. Review/ enactment of a stipend program for Volunteer Firefighters.

Chairperson Condon spoke briefly about members' questions that he gathered from last meeting. Chairperson Condon went over the findings from the questions asked. Discussion was held on the process thus far and what actions would be necessary should the committee make any changes at this stage.

Motion by Driscoll Second by Welch-Collins to report out draft #4 of the proposed Volunteer Firefighter stipend program ordinance and recommend to the RTM.

Vote: Unanimous

- B. Review the creation of an Ad Hoc Committee in regard to attached letter. Discussion held on the process moving forward. Committee generally agreed to break consideration into two pieces; the first membership and the second topics of consideration. Discussion held on whom should make up the committee members. Attorney Avena gave a brief overview of the types of membership and the use of town employees.

Motion made by Driscoll second by Welch-Collins to record consensus of Ad Hoc committee membership consisting of 3 members of the RTM, 1 must be from the Public Protection and Safety standing committee, 1 member of the Board of Finance, 1 member of the Board of Selectman, advisory non-voting members consisting of the Waterford Ambulance Service Manager, the Emergency Management Director, 1 Volunteer Fire Chief, 1 Career full time paid Firefighter.

Vote: Unanimous.

Motion to adjourn by Welch-Collins, second by Muckle.

Vote: Unanimous

Meeting adjourned at 7:12 PM

Respectfully submitted

Timothy Condon

Title 2 – ADMINISTRATION AND PERSONNEL

Chapter 2.36 – FIRE SERVICE

2.36.080 – Volunteer Firefighters and Fire Police Incentive Program

A. Purpose

Pursuant to § 7-148(c)(4)(B) of the Connecticut General Statutes, the Town of Waterford may enact an ordinance to organize, maintain and regulate the persons providing fire protection. This Volunteer Firefighters and Fire Police Incentive Program is designed to provide monetary compensation to active, volunteer firefighters and fire police members in the Town of Waterford Fire Department, in an effort to assist in covering volunteers' expenses during the execution of their duties, while complying with the federal Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 as amended, 29 U.S.C. §201 et seq. ("FLSA"). The FLSA permits payments for reimbursement of expenses, reasonable benefits and nominal fees to volunteers without impairing their status as volunteers. These benefits are in addition to the existing property tax abatement program for volunteer firefighters in Title 3, Chapter 3.12 of this Code of Ordinances. Town of Waterford Fire Department personnel employed by the Town of Waterford are not eligible for this Volunteer Firefighters and Fire Police Incentive Program.

B. Definitions

1. **Program:**
The term "Program" means the Volunteer Firefighters and Fire Police Incentive Program.
2. **Program Year:**
Program Year is the fiscal year, i.e., July 1-June 30.
3. **Implementation Date:**
The Implementation Date of the Program is July 1, 2020¹.
4. **Volunteer Member in Good Standing in the Waterford Fire Department:**
A Volunteer Member in Good Standing is defined as:
 - a. A certified firefighter (i.e., State of Connecticut Firefighter I or higher) who has participated in the minimum training sessions designated by the Director of Fire Services and including, but not limited to Required Training (as set forth in paragraph B8), by June 30 of the year preceding the year of eligibility (e.g., complete training by June 30, 2020 to be eligible for the Program for the fiscal year July 1, 2020-June 30, 2021, absent a

¹ Depending on the date of enactment of this Ordinance, the Implementation Date may be retroactive to July 1, 2020.

modification of the June 30 date by the Director of Fire Services on an individual basis pursuant to paragraph B8); and/or

- b. A member of the Fire Police who has participated in the minimum training sessions designated by the Director of Fire Services and, including but not limited to, Required Training (as set forth in Paragraph B8 d), by June 30 of the year preceding the year of eligibility (e.g., complete training by June 30, 2020 to be eligible for the Program for the fiscal year July 1, 2020-June 30, 2021, absent a modification of the June 30 date by the Director of Fire Services on an individual basis pursuant to paragraph B8); and who has been sworn in by the Town Clerk.

A Volunteer Member in Good Standing does not include any member terminated from volunteer service by the Town of Waterford or otherwise separating from volunteer service for any reason, voluntary or involuntary.

5. Active Volunteer Firefighter in the Waterford Fire Department:

An Active Volunteer Firefighter is a certified firefighter and Member in Good Standing who, during the year of eligibility, has participated in a minimum number of approved training drills and maintains the minimum training requirements as set forth by the Director of Fire Services.

6. Active Volunteer Fire Police Member in the Waterford Fire Department:

An Active Volunteer Fire Police member is a Member in Good Standing who has been sworn in by the Town Clerk and who maintains the minimum training requirements as set forth by the Director of Fire Services.

7. Approved Training Drill:

An Approved Training Drill is a Waterford Fire Department level drill that is approved in advance by the Director of Fire Services and will result in credit towards the Town's Insurance Service Organization, Fire Protection Classification Rating.

8. Required Training:

Required Training is State and Federal minimum requirements to function at emergency scenes. These requirements shall include, but are not limited to, the yearly certifications and re-certifications along with the approved training drills. The Director of Fire Services maintains the discretion, upon a showing of good cause by the volunteer, to excuse temporarily and/or until a date certain, the absence of any such certifications, re-certifications and/or approved training drills.

Training shall include, but is not limited to, the following titles and substantive content (training titles and reference numbers may change from time to time):

a. Minimum Certifications:

State of Connecticut Firefighter I
Hazardous Materials – Operational Level
IS-700: National Incident Management System
ICS-100: Introduction to the Incident Command System
ICS-200: ICS for Single Resources and Initial Action Incidents

- b. **Mandatory Training:**
Attend routine training drills (Monthly)
OSHA Mandates
 - Haz-Mat Operational Refresher
 - Incident Command System Refresher
 - Live Fire Training (Annual)
 - Blood-borne Pathogens
 - SCBA refresher
 - Routine Fit Testing
 - CPR Certification
- c. **Certified Fire Officer Requirements (Additional):**
State of Connecticut Fire Officer I
IS-800: National Response Framework
ICS-300: Intermediate ICS for Expanding Incidents
ICS-400: Advanced ICS for Command and General Staff
- d. **Fire Police Requirements:**
Hazardous Materials – Awareness Level
IS-700: National Incident Management System
ICS-100: Introduction to the Incident Command System

9. **Stipend:**

A Stipend is an amount of money awarded to any Active Volunteer Firefighter or Active Fire Police member who meets the criteria set forth below and as may be modified, from time to time, by the Director of Fire Services.

10. **Point:**

A Point represents participation by an Active Volunteer Firefighter or Active Fire Police member in an emergency fire response or Approved Training Drills as described in paragraph B7. To receive a Point, an Active Volunteer Firefighter or Active Fire Police member must actually attend an incident and/or respond to and arrive at an activated station before the Incident Commander dismisses the assignment and/or attend and complete Approved Training Drills. Individuals serving as volunteers or employees of the Waterford Ambulance Service when attending and/or responding to a particular incident will not receive Points related to that incident.

11. **Incident Commander:**

The Incident Commander sets priorities and defines the Incident Command System organization for the particular response and is responsible for the safety, accountability, and welfare of personnel through an incident.

C. **Program Components**

1. **Stipend Schedule:**

Active Volunteer Firefighters and Fire Police members who meet the criteria set forth below are eligible for Stipends issued on a quarterly basis as follows:

First Quarter	=	July through September (Issued in October)
Second Quarter	=	October through December (Issued in January)
Third Quarter	=	January through March (Issued in April)
Fourth Quarter	=	April through June (Issued in July)

2. Reporting Requirements:

- a. An incident report shall be generated and completed for every dispatched incident.
- b. All Active Volunteer Firefighters and Active Volunteer Fire Police members must sign the report within 15 minutes of the last vehicle returning to the station at the termination of the event.
- c. If an Active Volunteer Firefighter or Active Volunteer Fire Police member is not able to sign the report within the allotted time set forth in subparagraph b, he or she must file a report with 24 hours of the incident.
- d. Anyone documenting another member's name on the report shall initial next to that entry for validation purposes.
- e. Attendance records shall be recorded and maintained on the Town's approved records management software.
- f. The Director of Fire Services or his/her designee shall prepare the quarterly reports for payment.
- g. All quarterly reports will be reviewed and approved by the Director of Fire Services prior to the approval of issuance of quarterly Stipend.
- h. The Director of Fire Services shall also submit quarterly reports to the RTM on the status of the program.

3. Stipend Eligibility and Amount:

An Active Volunteer Firefighter or Active Volunteer Fire Police member shall not receive any Stipend until receiving a minimum of fifty (50) Points during that fiscal year. The Active Volunteer Firefighter or Active Volunteer Fire Police member will then be provided a Stipend at the rate of \$7 for each prior and subsequent Point earned during that fiscal year (e.g., an Active Volunteer Firefighter who has 55 Points will receive \$385; an Active Volunteer Firefighter with 20 Points will receive \$0). The Director of Fire Services may propose changes to the mandatory/minimum eligibility criteria, Point value (increase or decrease), Stipend rate or amount (increase or decrease) to the RTM, which may act on such proposed changes by majority vote. As part of its determination, the RTM must evaluate continued compliance with the federal Fair Labor Standards Act.

4. Discretionary Decisions on Awarding of Points:

The Director of Fire Services, in the exercise of his/her discretion, will decide any disputes regarding the awarding of Points under paragraph B 10. The Director of Fire Services, in the exercise of his/her discretion, also may award Points for reasons other than those expressly set forth in paragraph B 10. These decisions shall be documented in the quarterly report.

5. Higher Level of Training Stipend:

An Active Volunteer Firefighter who receives at least 50 Points during a fiscal year and who is also a Certified Fire Officer and meets all the additional requirements outlined above (i.e., State of Connecticut Fire Officer I; IS-800: National Response Framework; ICS-300: Intermediate ICS for Expanding Incidents; ICS-400: Advanced ICS for Command and General Staff), will receive an additional \$150 on an annual basis in recognition of his/her high level of training. This \$150 stipend will be issued at the same time as the stipend for the initial 50 Points. The Director of Fire Services may propose changes to the Higher Level of Training Stipend amount (increase or decrease) to the RTM, which may act on such proposed changes by majority vote.

6. Ineligibility Due to Misconduct or Separation from Waterford Fire Department:

This ordinance incorporates by reference the Waterford Fire Department Policy 103 - Disciplinary Procedures, as may be renumbered and/or amended from time to time.

In the event that the Director of Fire Services decides to impose disciplinary action short of termination against any Active Volunteer Firefighter or Active Volunteer Fire Police member is necessary, the Director of Fire Services retains the discretion to suspend any Active Volunteer Firefighter or Active Volunteer Fire Police member from the Program, as either the discipline or as a component of the discipline. The Director of Fire Services retains the discretion to determine the status of any existing Points (e.g., forfeited, retained) at the time of suspension.

Any Active Volunteer Firefighter or Active Volunteer Fire Police member who is terminated from volunteer service by the Town of Waterford immediately forfeits all Points and is not eligible for any Stipend. The Director of Fire Services and the Human Resources Director shall evaluate and determine, in their discretion, the eligibility for a Stipend of an Active Volunteer Firefighter or Active Volunteer Fire Police member who voluntarily separated from volunteer service as of the end of a quarter.

D. Funding and Administration

1. Funding:

Through its normal, annual budget process, the Town shall determine whether or not to fund the Program and, if so, in what amount.

Any portion of the annual appropriation not expended during a fiscal year does not carry over to the next fiscal year.

Should the total expenses for the Program exceed the annual appropriation, then the quarterly Stipends for the then-current quarter will be prorated to reflect the total amount available for distribution for that quarter. If the Program exceeds the annual appropriation in a quarter other than the last quarter of the fiscal year, the Program may be unfunded for quarters following the pro-rated quarter.

2. Modifications:

Any modifications allowed under this Ordinance without an Ordinance amendment (e.g., change in the Stipend rate) will be recorded in an annual Program update each July and maintained on file in the office of the Director of Fire Services.

3. Termination:

The Town shall have the right through the Representative Town Meeting to terminate the Program at any time through the ordinance process.

DRAFT

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2020 JUL 30 PM 3:02

Handwritten signature
TOWN OF WATERFORD

Christopher Venditti
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07/27/2020

Rob Brule
First Selectman
Town of Waterford
15 Rope Ferry Rd.
Waterford, CT 06385

I'm writing you today with a few concerns that I have regarding public safety within the Town of Waterford. As of now, I have not resided in town for about 7 years due to Active Duty Military orders, but I do still pay property taxes, and I keep a special interest in local issues because many of my family members are residents (mother, sister, nieces, and nephews).

The first topic I would like to bring up is the overall lack of fire protection within the Town. I have a unique perspective on this issue because I've been a member of Waterford Fire Engine Co.1 since 2009 but have not lived in town since 2013. I don't believe anyone can deny that the number of incidents the town fire services respond to is decreasing, but we can all agree that volunteer participation is at an all-time low. It's my understanding that more fulltime professional firefighters have been added to the payroll in recent years, and the stations and hours they work has been restructured. With that in mind, I find it very interesting that the town thought it was acceptable to have no fire coverage from 0200-0600 daily. If there's anything that being an Infantryman in the United States Marine Corps has taught me, it's that you cannot predict when you'll need to be ready to fight and work you schedule around that, but rather you need to maintain the highest state of readiness possible. I feel we as a Town are lacking here.

Just last year on October 22, 2019 at 0445 a town resident had his life cut short due to this lack of fire protection. The incident took place less than 1 mile from Waterford Fire Engine Co.1. The first piece of fire apparatus was driven by the bunkman, and he could not adequately perform the initial functions of being the first due piece by himself.

These functions include:

- Scene size up – Confirm or deny initial reports of fire, confirm location of fire, confirm location of water supply, position the vehicle in an advantageous location for its function, confirm or deny if anyone is present in the structure, identify entry and exit points, identify locations of possible victims, *ensure adequate resources are on the way*, direct those resources until an INCIDENT COMMANDER assumes the role.
- Initial entry and search – search for fire and victims
- Initial fire attacks – advance the first hose line and attack the fire.

All of these functions should be taking place nearly simultaneously, but you tell me how long it would take you, BY YOURSELF. Now put yourself in the shoes of the homeowner who's being overcome by smoke and heat. We cannot afford to put that much stress on our firefighters and our residents due to a lack of manpower. We are making an already bad situation worse.

I bring this up because even though we are staffing 2 firefighters in town from 0200-0600 currently, it's not enough. These hours are also not part of their contract so theoretically they could be cut at any time. I challenge you as the First Selectman to answer this question- Is the reason for not having better fire protection money, or a lack of understanding? The Waterford Police Department has been advertising a string of car break-ins on their Facebook page for what feels like months now, which is a great way to remind residents to lock their doors. But does a large amount of car break-ins mean we add 2 additional officers to an overnight shift on overtime? Is the cost worth the benefit? Are you familiar with the Kansas City Preventative Patrol Experiment? This was a year-long study conducted by the Kansas City, Missouri Police Department to see if they could make a correlation between visible police presence and crime, and fear of crime. The conclusion was that whether the city was having police proactively patrolling an area or staying out until called in (reactive patrolling) had significant effect on burglaries, auto thefts, larcenies, robberies, and vandalism – crimes traditionally thought to be deterrable.

I say all of that to say this, if we as a town are willing to ADD 2 officers to a shift due to car break ins (property damage and stolen goods) which is proven to not stop the crime, how many more CITIZENS need to DIE for us to add adequate fire protection for the overnight hours?

The concerning thing for me is that this lack of regard for residents when it comes to fire protection isn't a one-time thing in Town. In fact, it's starting to become normal, which is not acceptable.

Next I would like to talk about what it means to have leadership present. The Police department is staffed to have a Sergeant on every shift. Why is that? I'm sure your answer will have something to do with having a high level of accountability at all times and degree of tactical expertise ready to respond to any situation at a moments notice. Is the fire service any different? Not only do they never have leadership present (Waterford Fire Engine Co.1 hasn't had a fire officer (leader) respond to an emergency call since **October 2019**), but now the firefighters are forced to make up for this by using manpower needed elsewhere on the fireground. Referencing back to my initial functions on the fireground, the following should be handled by the incident commander - Confirm or deny initial reports of fire, confirm location of fire, confirm location of water supply, confirm or deny if anyone is present in the structure, identify entry and exit points, identify locations of possible victims, *ensure adequate resources are on the way*, direct those resources in, send necessary notifications to dispatch.

- Why does the Police Department get leadership and the Fire Department gets Volunteers who don't have to have the same level of training as the firemen they "lead" (we use that term loosely)?
- Why do you think it's ok to let a failing system continue to fail?
- Have you ever coached a team without captains?

In closing, I have many issues with the way tax dollars are being spent, particularly when it comes to public safety. My mother, sister, brother-in-law, three nieces and nephews live in town, and I fear if something were to happen in their home that at least one of them is liable to not make it out. I've already instructed them to give the address for our neighbors up road who live in the City of New London if something happens because they'll respond with an 16 man crew within minutes (made up of 12 firefighters, 3 lieutenants*, and a battalion chief*). The same crew that has bailed Waterford out recently for their lack of manpower. Offering \$7 per call will not make these "volunteers" just appear, and if it does, they won't be better trained than the professional firefighters. I look forward to hearing from you, Mr. Selectman, as well as a representative from the Towns Public Protection and Safety Committee. I can send a hard copy of this email if needed.