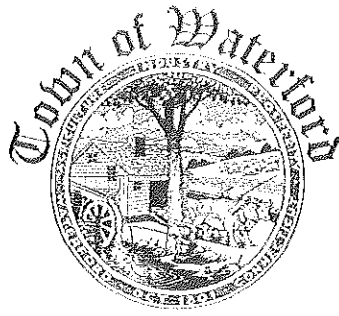


FIFTEEN ROPE FERRY ROAD
WATERFORD, CT 06385-2886



PHONE: 860-442-0553
www.waterfordct.org

AGENDA
PUBLIC PROTECTION & SAFETY
SPECIAL MEETING
Monday August 31, 2020/5:30 P.M. - Waterford Town Hall
ZOOM Remote Access Only

1. Call to Order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Roll Call
4. To consider and act upon the July 21, 2020 Meeting Minutes.
5. Consideration and possible action on item referred to committee:
 - A. Review/Enactment of a Stipend Program for Volunteer Firefighters (RTC 10/07/19)
 - B. Review the creation of an Ad Hoc Committee in regard to attached letter (RTC 08/03/20)
6. Adjournment

2020 AUG 25 PM 2:17

FIFTEEN ROPE FERRY ROAD
WATERFORD, CT 06385-2886



PHONE: 860-442-0553
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2020 JUL 27 PM 3:53

MINUTES
PUBLIC PROTECTION & SAFETY STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE RTM
Public Hearing & Special Meeting
Tuesday July 21, 2020
5:30 P.M. - Waterford Town Hall/Zoom Remote Access Only

PUBLIC HEARING

The July 21, 2020 public hearing of the Public Protection & Safety Standing Committee of the RTM was called to order by Chairperson Timothy Condon at 5:34 P.M.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: April Cairns, Timothy Condon, Susan Driscoll, Richard Muckle.

ABSENT: Baird Welch-Collins

ALSO PRESENT: Town Attorney Robert Avena, First Selectman Robert Brule, Town Clerk David L. Campo, Labor Attorney Eileen Duggan, Director of Fire Services Bruce Miller, Human Resources Director Joyce Sauchuk.

MOTION by Driscoll, seconded by Muckle to open the public hearing in regard to a proposed addition to the Waterford Code of Ordinances, Chapter 2.36 – VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS INCENTIVE PROGRAM at 5:35 P.M.

VOTING IN FAVOR: Unanimous

PUBLIC COMMENT was submitted by the following: Board of Finance Member John "Bill" Sheehan, 19 Laurel Crest, Waterford, CT; Quaker Hill Fire Chief Vincent Ukleja, 81 Old Colchester Rd, Quaker Hill, CT; RTM Member Thomas Dembek, 56 Goshen Rd, Waterford, CT; John Mariano, 126 Dayton Rd, Waterford, CT.

MOTION by Driscoll, seconded by Muckle, to close the public hearing at 5:43 P.M.

VOTING IN FAVOR: Unanimous

SPECIAL MEETING

The July 21, 2020 special meeting of the Public Protection & Safety Standing Committee of the RTM was called to order by Chairperson Timothy Condon at 5:44 P.M.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: April Cairns, Timothy Condon, Susan Driscoll, Richard Muckle.

ABSENT: Baird Welch-Collins

ALSO PRESENT: Town Attorney Robert Avena, First Selectman Robert Brule, Town Clerk David L. Campo, Labor Attorney Eileen Duggan, Director of Fire Services Bruce Miller, Human Resources Director Joyce Sauchuk.

AGENDA ITEM 3: July 7, 2020 Minutes

MOTION by Driscoll, seconded by Muckle, to approve the minutes from the July 7, 2020 meeting.

VOTING IN FAVOR: Unanimous

AGENDA ITEM 4: Review/Enactment of a Stipend Program for Volunteer Firefighters (RTC 10/07/2019)

DISCUSSION ensued in regards to comments made during the public hearing as well as additional concerns by members.

MOTION by Muckle, seconded by Condon, to recommend an addition to the Waterford Code of Ordinances, Chapter 2.36 – VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS INCENTIVE PROGRAM.

VOTING IN FAVOR: Condon, Muckle

VOTING AGAINST: Cairns, Driscoll

MOTION FAILED

Town Attorney and staff agreed to address the changes in the next draft.

MOTION by Driscoll, seconded by Cairns, to adjourn at 6:34 P.M.

VOTING IN FAVOR: Unanimous

**Statement of J. W. "Bill" Sheehan at Public Hearing 07212020
Regarding Volunteer Firefighter and Fire Police Incentive Program**

I want to thank the Committee for their hard work thus far in developing this proposed ordinance. Through the efforts of the Town Attorney, the Town Labor Attorney and the Human Resources Director, I am sure this ordinance meets the criteria of the Federal Fair Labor Standard Act (FLSA).

However, I believe that the ordinance has some weaknesses regarding information necessary to permit the key elected boards (Board of Selectman, Board of Finance, and Representative Town Meeting) to properly monitor this program.

The only reports mentioned in the Draft Ordinance are an Incident Report for every dispatched incident addressed to the Director of Fire Services and a quarterly report by the Director of Fire Services that provides information regarding who gets paid the stipend. I assume the quarterly report goes to the HR Director although there is no mention as to who receives the report.

I recommend that the Committee include a requirement that the Fire Services Director report to the Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance, and Representative Town Meeting on the number of recipients of the stipend and the total amount expended each quarter along with a statement regarding the effectiveness of the program in incentivizing volunteer firefighters and fire police. The elected boards do not need to know any names, just numbers and dollars expended and success or failure of the incentive program.

I don't know if the recent agreement with the Waterford Ambulance Service (WAS) and the change in who responds to EMS Calls impacts this comment. Basically, the question is – Are any volunteer firefighters also employees of the WAS? If so, there needs to be a mechanism to ensure that a Volunteer does not get incentive credit as well as payment from the WAS. I do not see any such safeguard in the proposed ordinance.

In summary, I recommend outlining a safeguard procedure to prevent any incentive credit for a call that was also paid for by the Waterford Ambulance Service and providing a summary report to the elected boards on the status and success or not of the incentive program at a specifically defined interval (either quarterly or semiannually).

Thank you for your attention.

2020 JUL 21 PM 1:51

RECEIVED TOWN OF WATERFORD
JUL 30 2020

2020 JUL 30 PM 3:02

Handwritten signature
TOWN OF WATERFORD

Christopher Venditti
443 Sipple St.
Oceanside, CA 92058
(860) 287-4644

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.