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Fire Services Review Special Committee

Minutes—Special Meeting June 25, 2025

Members Present: Robert Tuneski (BoF); Susan Driscoll (RTM); Tim Condon (RTM Public Protection & Safety Comm.); Matthew Keatley (RTM) *by phone*; Richard Muckle (BoS); Ronnie Williams (WFD); Chris Haley (Director, Fire Services); Steven Sinagra (Director, Emergency Management)

Members Absent: Todd Patton (Chief, Goshen Fire Co.); Mark Greczkowski (WAS Director of Operations)

1. **Call to order:** Chair Tuneski called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.
2. **Public comment:** Member Condon summarized his written recommendations (*attached*) regarding staffing and fleet management. Ursula Moreshead (RTM) urged the committee to give serious consideration to the recommendations.
3. **Previous Minutes:** Motion by Condon, second by Keatley, to approve the June 18, 2025, minutes as amended by removal of the sentence beginning with "Committee consensus" in paragraph at the top of page 2. Voice Vote: Unanimous.
4. **Consideration of FSRSC's charge from the RTM (6/7/21):**
 - a. Review/discuss Director's comments: Haley reported that he has found the updated Volunteer Incentive Plan information that previous director was preparing for FSRSC, but he didn't have time to prepare it for this meeting. He did offer the summary of the last ISO evaluation (*attached*), noting that the town's water system scored high and that he anticipates improvements in other areas in the next ISO report since our service model has changed so much since 2016 because we now have three full-time firefighters responding to every call, with 18 certified volunteers as potential backup. He also predicted the dispatch scores would be higher due to Sinagra's efforts over the past few years.
....Haley described the documentation prep and wait-time for the next ISO report as a multi-year process and that currently his focus on immediate practical needs, such as the apparatus repairs causing a \$9900 deficit to date and which he predicts could reach a total of \$150k to \$200k for FY25. He reported that two apparatus are still on lifts in shops and out of commission and believes that the high volume of mechanical issues is because the vehicles purchased were chosen by manufacturer's stock offerings rather than ordered with a purpose-built design. He discussed his experience with this process, and explained that while it can take up to five years to design and build the apparatus this way, it results in a vehicle better suited for its actual use, with a longer lifespan that ultimately saves money.
Tuneski asked Haley to codify the purpose-built vehicle design process to that the town would have it as a reference in 20 years after he's gone.
Discussion then segued to the current fleet management plan. Condon expressed concerns that the replacement cycles used for fire apparatus are not realistic. He used brush trucks as an example, noting that in 10 years they would still have logged fewer than 15,000 miles and there is no need to spend or allocate half-a-million dollars on them. Haley agreed that the one-size-fits-all approach does not work for fire apparatus and noted that his plan would ultimately change the fire fleet to 5 engines, 2 ladders and 2 brush trucks. Condon estimated that if everything were funded properly in the fleet management plan, Haley could save about \$300,000 a year. But, he added, current funding is not proper and pointed out that W-25 is only funded for \$925,000 which is vastly under today's prices.

Haley noted that he expects that inspections/assessments of the entire Fire fleet will be completed by July 7. He offered a variety of ways we could or should use to improve our fleet management. For example, tagging certain vehicles as DNR (do not replace) could provide some budget relief; rotating or refurbishing stock to delay purchases; or utilizing financing options other than straight bonding, that could accumulate interest to help offset final cost. Given that a standard 5-year plan doesn't work for 30-yr apparatus, and the huge price tag on Fire's rolling stock compared to other departments within the plan, it was suggested that carving out fire-specific guidelines could improve overall budgeting for fleet management and help avoid catastrophic blips for emergency repairs/replacements.

Condon and Driscoll noted that the fleet management plan, created in 2009, is long overdue for review and revision for everything from adequacy of the long-standing \$1 million annual appropriation to replacement cycles. Questions followed about how the fleet management plan is implemented—e.g., who makes the final repair/replace decision, are there regular actuarial reviews to determine recommended annual appropriation? Driscoll offered to provide the fleet management ordinances with the next agenda. Condon explained that the RTM could adjust the plan through the ordinances, and that FSRSC discussions and recommendations would help drive the revisions and members could garner support on the BoS, BoF, and RTM. Haley noted that the department's immediate need is staffing, not fleet management.

Muckle stated that the FSRSC needs to move on the final report. Tuneski said he has incorporated Williams' comments and Sinagra's updated information. He noted that while some of the data is old, the upcoming version has more evaluation and he feels comfortable with the content.

Sinagra reported that he provided updated information on the communications upgrade directly to Tuneski to add to the draft report. Following a request from Haley on his behalf, committee granted Sinagra reprieve from attendance at next meeting, with proviso that questions or requests for clarification on his section could be relayed, as well as request for comments on the final version of the report before the committee vote.

Condon said the point of the committee was not to allow voicing opinions on big issues or big needs, but to have the experts and policy makers work together to provide documented recommendations, and we are not there yet.

Muckle said we are forced by circumstances to do this as soon as possible, since Haley has said a new OSW fire station is critical and the FSRSC report is needed so funding for the station can go forward. Lengthy debate followed on purpose of the report and its role in new station proposal.

Condon asked members to recognize that the process behind creation of the OSW Building Committee needs to be changed and that, based on the condition of all the stations, there should be a building committee charged with addressing/planning for repairs and renovations at all five. Tuneski said that members of building committees are not professionals, and we should consider recommending that engineers be contracted to handle that.

Haley suggested that a compromise solution would be for the committee to write a letter to the RTM recommending funding for the new OSW station and then we could get back to finalizing the report. Condon and Driscoll countered that the FSRSC already sent a letter of support in 2022. Driscoll noted that 8 months were spent talking about recommending an OSW building committee because the roof was in danger of caving in any minute—when the Director and First Selectman could have followed the standard procedure and gone directly to the RTM and gotten immediate approval. Condon added that the plethora of unaddressed facility issues shows a failure of the current capital plan and that the committee should be giving the same consideration and treatment to all five stations.

Tuneski said he would provide a new draft, with the first and second halves combined, in advance of the next meeting and that it would show tracked changes for the inclusion of Williams' comments and Sinagra's updates, and include a summary of committee recommendations.

5. Next meeting: Consensus to tentatively schedule next meeting for Wednesday, July 9, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. Location tbd.

6. Adjournment: Motion by Condon; second by Keatley to adjourn at 8:20 p.m. Voice vote: Unanimous.

Submitted by
Susan Driscoll, FSRSC Secretary

encl: Condon comments
2016 ISO Report summary

As one of our main recommendations we must come up with a method for staffing the Waterford Fire Service. This staffing model must be consistent with the current method of 3 personnel at Jordan and Cohanzie as the Town elected officials funded the required additional firefighters contingent to their placement in said locations, and as explained by Selectman Brule and then Director Howley. At the last meeting June 18th 2025 we had, in my opinion, very productive conversations about the fleet and the status of human capital. One of the main takeaways that I wish to stress is the Quaker Hill station and region of our Town. Per the travel time map given to committee members this region of Town is isolated in a manner no other section of our Town is and therefore must not be ignored or dismissed when designing a staffing model. When this topic was briefly discussed the Director elucidated ideas of using one of our mutual aid partners, The City of New London, in a manner which goes beyond mutual aid into that of automatic aid to assist in addressing the outlined issue. While this may be a component of the emergency response it does not completely alleviate our responsibility and statutory obligation to the residence of Quaker Hill. I would like to offer the following staffing model and recommendations for discussion.

- 1.) Draft, propose and execute automatic aid agreements with New London for the Goshen and Quaker Hill regions, East Lyme for the Jordan and Oswegatchie regions along with I-95 & 395 northbound lanes and Montville for the Quaker Hill region and 395 Southbound lanes.
- 2.) Adopt a policy that no paid firefighter work alone, full time or part time.
- 3.) Propose the creation and promotion of 3 Lieutenants to be quartered at the Cohanzie Station.
- 4.) Staff the Cohanzie station with 2 firefighters and the newly promoted Lieutenants for a total of 3 personnel.
- 5.) Staff the Jordan Station with 2 firefighters and the Captain- who shall have the ability to respond separately. Total of 3 personnel.
- 6.) Upon the completion of the Oswegatchie construction, staff this station with 2 full time firefighters with a future goal of 3 firefighters
- 7.) Staff the Quaker Hill station with 2 firefighters 24/7, part time employees.
- 8.) Town to fund the Deputy Chief position
- 9.) Director to explore the possible creation of a department mechanic/engineer to complete light service issues with the fleet to be funded by the offset in cost savings from sending apparatus to a third party.

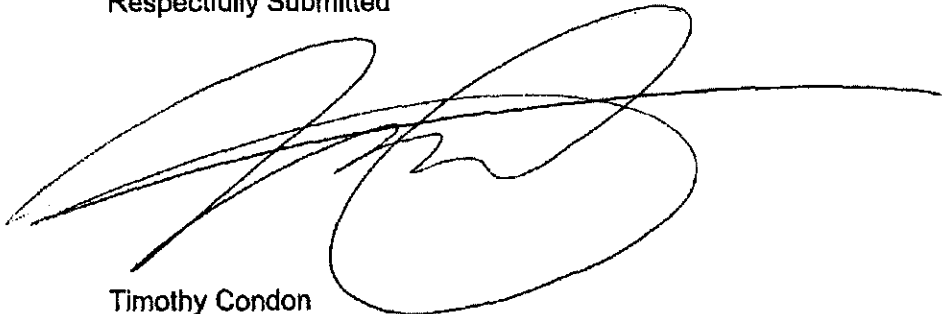
These proposals were all topics at the last meeting but need to be further fleshed out. The Director also proposed a fleet plan of 5 Engines and 2 100 foot Aerial Platforms. We as a committee must look deeper into the issues with the fleet as major adjustments are needed not only for the fire service but for the sustainability of the fleet plan as a whole. Waterford as a community does not want to find itself in a position where we may have to purchase multiple large apparatus in a single budget year. The following points are for discussion, consideration and or recommendation.

- 1.) Immediately move to replace W-55 as it is partial funded in this fiscal year, due to length of delivery and current usage of W-15
- 2.) Follow previous recommendations to eliminate and not replace W-32 a 1998 engine.
- 3.) By or In fiscal year 2028 do not replace W-21, instead relocate W-41 or W-42 to the Quaker Hill Station.
- 4.) Use the allocated replacement money in FY 28 to build a Squad style engine to be quartered at Oswegatchie.
- 5.) Upon delivery of the Squad, relocate the remaining Oswegatchie engine to Jordan and eliminate W-11, thus alleviating the need to purchase two engines in the same year.
- 6.) Eliminate the replacement of Brush Unit W-43 saving roughly \$226,206 and sell current vehicle
- 7.) Remove the brush skid mount unit from W-53 and place it on W-34.
- 8.) Eliminate the replacement of Brush Unit W-53 saving roughly \$315,000 and sell the current vehicle
- 9.) Recommend the replacement cycle for Brush unit W-23 be based on repair and maintenance rather than manufacture year thus greatly extending its lifespan.
- 10.) Brush units to be run out of Goshen and Quaker Hill stations.

Finally I would like to put a bit more emphasis on one particular recommendation and that is the funding of the Deputy Fire Chief. This position was created a few years ago and has been funded and cut throughout multiple budget cycles. This past year Selectman Brule added a vehicle to the fleet plan in FY 27 for the Deputy Chief, indicating to me his desire to see this position be funded and filled. Further the Director stated that he has been working almost every night until 1 am. This is unhealthy for our new Director and also must be resulting in large amounts of PTO which he may never be able to utilize..

These are a few of the notes and recommendations from our last meeting meant to further the discussion.

Respectfully Submitted

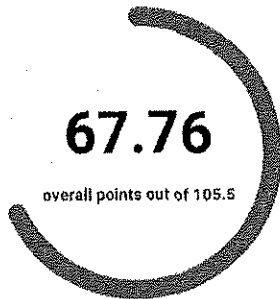
A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, featuring a prominent loop and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Timothy Condon
District 1 Representative Town Meeting

Summary of 2016 ISO Report on Wtfd Fire Services

presented by Dir. Haley 6/25/25

These points represent the summary of the major categories of the PPC evaluation.



Overall PPC Value: 04/4X

Effective Date: 6/1/2016

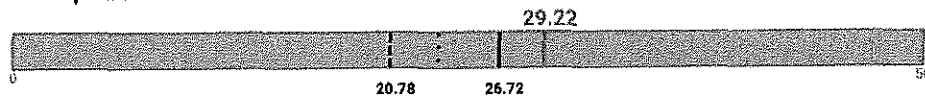
Community Risk Reduction Points (CRR)



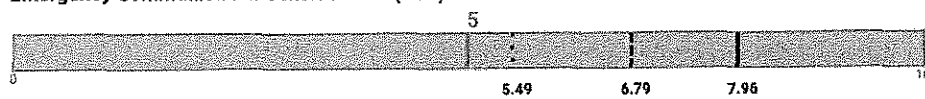
Water Points



Fire Department Points



Emergency Communication Center Points (ECC)



4.22	+	35.26	+	29.22	+	5	-	5.94	=	67.76
CRR		Water		Fire		ECC		Divergence ⓘ		Total
Points		Points		Points		Points				Points

Compare the following: ☒ Peer Group ⓘ ☒ State Group ☒ Nationwide

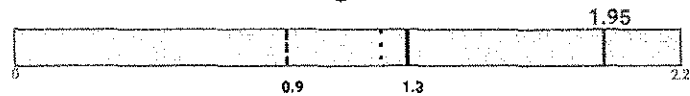
Waterford Fire Protection Area	10 Number of 3 Story Buildings	Communities: 1 View Communities
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ISO reviews the community's fire prevention code adoption and enforcement, public fire safety education, and fire investigation. This review can add an additional 5.5 points to a grading.

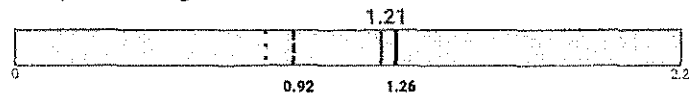
Points: 4.2 out of 5.5

To simulate a change in points for any sub-category, click on an individual chart.

Prevention Code and Enforcement ⓘ



Safety Education ⓘ



Investigation ⓘ



Compare the following: ☒ Peer Group ⓘ ☒ State Group ☒ Nationwide

Waterford Fire Protection Area	10 Number of 3 Story Buildings	Communities: 1 View Communities
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ISO evaluates the community's water supply system to determine the adequacy for fire suppression purposes. We also consider hydrant size, type, and installation, as well as the frequency and completeness of hydrant inspection and flow-testing programs.

Points: **35.3** out of 40

To simulate a change in points for any sub-category, click on an individual chart.

Water System Capability ⓘ



Hydrants ⓘ



Inspection ⓘ



Flow Testing ⓘ



Compare the following: ☒ Peer Group ⓘ ☒ State Group ☒ Nationwide

Waterford Fire Protection Area	▼	10 Number of 3 Story Buildings	Communities: 1 View Communities
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The review of the ECC focuses on the community's facilities and support for handling and dispatching alarms for structure fires.

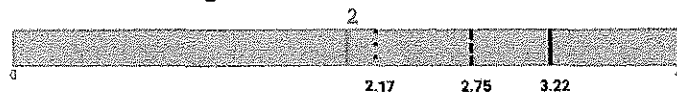
Points: **5** out of 10

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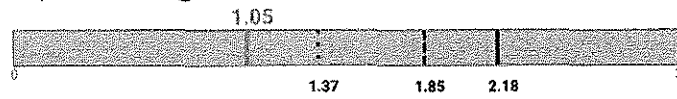
Emergency Reporting ⓘ



Telecommunicators ⓘ



Dispatch Circuits ⓘ



Compare the following: ☒ Peer Group ⓘ ☒ State Group ☒ Nationwide

Waterford Fire Protection Area	▼	10 Number of 3 Story Buildings	Communities: 1 View Communities
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ISO focuses on a community's fire suppression capabilities by measuring the fire department's first-alarm response and initial attack to minimize potential loss. ISO reviews such items as engine companies, ladder or service companies, reserve apparatus, pumping capacity, equipment carried on apparatus, deployment of fire companies, company personnel, training, and operational considerations.

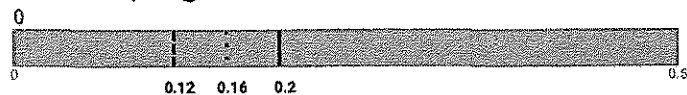
Points: **29.2** out of 50

To simulate a change in points for any sub-category, click on an individual chart.

Engine Companies ⓘ



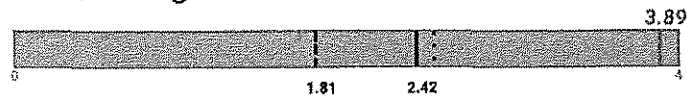
Reserve Pumpers ⓘ



Pump Capacity ⓘ



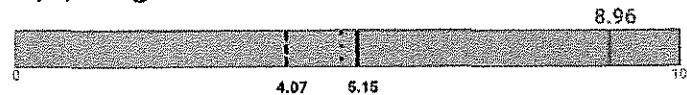
Ladder / Service ⓘ



Reserve Ladder / Service ⓘ



Deployment ⓘ



Personnel ⓘ



Training ⓘ



Operational Considerations ⓘ



Compare the following: ☒ Peer Group ⓘ ☒ State Group ☒ Nationwide

Waterford Fire Protection Area	10 Number of 3 Story Buildings	Communities: 1 View Communities
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