

FIFTEEN ROPE FERRY ROAD
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**Fire Services Review Special Committee
Minutes—Special Meeting November 15, 2022**

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2022 DEC 12 A 8:00
ATTEST: [Signature]
TOWN CLERK

Members Present: Robert Tuneski (BoF), Richard Muckle (RTM), Greg Attanasio (RTM), Susan Driscoll (RTM/PP&S), Rob Brule (BoS), Michael Howley (Fire Services), Steven Sinagra (Emergency Management), Todd Patton (Chief, Goshen FC), Tom Martin (Captain, WFS)

Members Absent: Mark Greczkowski (WAS)

Also Present: Nick Kepple (Town Attorney)

- 1. Call to order:** Chair Tuneski called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
- 2. Public comment:** Bob Swansen stated that there is no reason to rush to build a new Oswegatchie firehouse at this time; with no supporting data and a lack of volunteer membership, such a huge immediate expense and commitment cannot be justified. If the roof needs immediate repairs, the Town should fix that problem or, he added, the OSW volunteers have more than \$100,000 that they could use to fix it. The committee needs to focus on a 3-5 year plan that considers service and staffing needs and priorities and the most effective number and location of stations. Spending millions of dollars on a single firehouse now with no plan, he concluded, is a mistake.
- 3. Approval of previous minutes:** Motion by Muckle, second by Attanasio, to approve October 11, 2022, minutes as presented. Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.
- 4. Consideration of FSRSC's charge from the RTM (6/7/21):** Discussion focused on the areas noted in agenda:
 - A. Staffing plan:** Discussion covered several areas, spurred on by Chair Tuneski's questions on FY24 hiring of three firefighters, organizational structure of combined department, coordination of on-scene authority, and interaction of companies' bylaws, fire services policies, and service agreements currently being revised.Director Howley explained that call volumes appear to have decreased in the past two years, but that is a combination of long-running Covid impact and WAS stepping up as primary responder on rescue calls, so that firefighters are now called out only for Priority 1 calls, as backup. Increasing residential and business developments will add to volume. Current staffing is Jordan: 2 full-time 24/7 with 2 volunteers; Quaker Hill: 1 part-time 8am-4pm T/Th/F with 15 volunteers; Oswegatchie: 1 part-time 8am-4pm Sat (and on Sun in summer) with 15 volunteers; Goshen: 2 part-time 8am-4pm M-F, Sat/Sun 2 part time 6am-2pm and 2 part-time 2pm-10pm, with 10 volunteers; Cohanzie: 2 careers 24/7 with 8 volunteers. Howley noted that volunteers' hours are not scheduled; they serve as available. He added that there is no ideal ratio of careers to volunteers, but that we rely on both and face the nationwide struggles of recruiting and retaining both. And, since we no longer have the depth of training in our volunteer "bench," he's proposed gearing the volunteer stipend program toward training and education, which is a huge time demand for volunteers.
- Howley explained that WFS policies do not differentiate between career firefighters and volunteers, but that the five companies manage advancement through the ranks internally, through their separate bylaws. The town does require a certain level of training for various duties and certification and asks the companies for updates on changes in their members' ranks. Attanasio asked about the impact on chain of command; Howley said the focus is not on rank, but on safety of the structure and the responders. In the absence of a volunteer company Chief, said Howley, the shift captain on scene is the incident commander, or a chief may opt to defer command. Chief Patton explained that if Captain Martin was in command at an incident and he rolled up, he would ask Tom if he needed to be relieved. If the answer was No, Patton would then ask "where do you need me?" He added that while that's the procedure, he can't say if it happens that way in the other companies.

Chair Tuneski expressed interest in getting copies of the companies' bylaws and asked Attorney Kepple if the service agreements being revised now will address accountability and chain of command. Kepple said the agreements will memorialize the functioning relationship the town and companies have had for decades, and expects they will be longer than the half-page documents done in the 1970s. Howley and Kepple both stated that accountability and command structures are addressed in the WFS policies. But there will be more detail than in the current agreements, Kepple added, and they are working on 5-year terms for the agreements, to allow the companies and the town to review, revise, and renew as situations change. Howley pointed out that we are blending six organizations and experience the same conflicts and personalities as every other combined department does—and that everyone agrees we need more people. We're struggling with an "insufficient bench" that aren't all certified or haven't shown up at incidents for the previous two years, but safety and training qualifications are essential. Martin suggested we get both sides to look at how Southington, Guilford, and Branford have handled the accountability and command structures in their combined departments. He also noted that when there was a Board of Fire Commissioners, volunteer and career leadership would meet regularly. But after the creation of the Board of Fire Chiefs in 2011, the Chiefs met only with the Director. He suggested that regular careers-and-Chiefs meetings be reinstituted.

B. Communications: Howley has been working on replacing about half of the radios (at about \$45,000), because of big programming issues with the equipment that is too old to be fixed with upgrades. Volunteer Chief are used to having mobile radios in their personal vehicles and, while defective equipment is a safety and communications risk, it does become a costly proposition for the town, since the Chiefs change almost yearly. Howley noted that the volunteers and paid staff can now use smartphone apps hooked into the CAD system, as well as Everbridge. Patton pointed out that not everyone keeps their phones on all night so they would miss calls and that occasionally there are late notifications. Director Sinagra explained that the app is a third-party system that gets the call and then routes to everyone—and that results can differ depending on an individual's cell service provider. The app is nice to have, he said, but it is not and should not be the primary form for dispatch. Pagers and radio are primary and reliable tools for dispatch Sinagra added, and pagers are less expensive. Howley stated he would move forward with radios for staff and Chiefs and then, if possible, get some to other volunteers.

C. OSW update: Howley distributed engineer's structural inspection report (attached). He stated that the engineer found "nothing critical," and said that we can still operate out of the building for now. Attanasio reiterated his request for response data showing response times, with districts noted for both the incident location and the responders.

5. New business: Chair Tuneski noted that the committee rose out of a need to find out how the town boards can help the fire services succeed and that our process so far has been to gather information and gain an understanding of the various aspects of fire and emergency services. He stated that at our next meeting, he would like the committee to agree on how we will ultimately present our recommendations and expressed his desire to have all the advisory members—whose expertise has been an asset—be a part of the presentation team when we get to that point.

6. Next meeting: Dec. 13 at 6:00 p.m. confirmed as next meeting date and time.

7. Adjournment: Motion by Muckle; second by Attanasio to adjourn at 8:11 p.m. Voice vote: Unanimous.

Submitted by
Susan Driscoll, FSRSC Secretary

encl: OSW Engineering Report

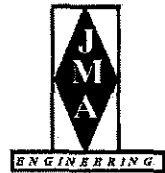
Nov 15, 2022

J.M. ALBAINE ENGINEERING, LLC

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Oswegatchie Fire Station
441 Boston Post Road, Waterford CT

Temporary Framing Inspection
REPORT #1 --- October 31, 2022



Att. Michael Howley
Director of Fire Services
Public Safety Building
204 Boston Post Road
Waterford, CT 06385

Subject: Oswegatchie Fire Station
Inspection /Assessment: Building Structural Safety
Project # JMA22-327-062

The following report objective is to provide an update of the current structural condition of the overall building shoring as designed and constructed per our recommendations. I met with Rocco Bracciale at the premises for an inspection / walk through conducted on October 1st, 2022.

Reference Documents

- 1) Report / Letter dated March 6th, 2011 by JM Albaine Engineering - Project # JMA10-327-06.
- 2) Report / Letter dated February 5, 2011 by JM Albaine Engineering - Project # JMA10-327-06
- 3) Design /As-Built Drawings By JM Albaine Engineering S-1 to S-7, Revision 2, dated March 05, 2011.

Executive Summary:

The installed temporary shoring on the original building under scope, built in 1928, is in good condition and no significant sign of distress or deficiency was observed nor detected that may indicate a concern regarding the safety of the building in the current condition as supported by the shoring. The shoring is holding up the damaged main roof over the Apparatus Room, Day Room, Hall Room, and Kitchen, all located in the older building, the subject of the shoring.

Moreover, the intersecting roof framing between the 1928 structure and the flat roof from the 1985 structure is a critical area where lots of damage on the roof rafters have been observed due to the flat roof bearing on the older 1928 roof.

However, it is also our opinion that the temporary shoring is not a substitute for the overall building stability as stated in Reference 1 above and quoted below:

"Please note that the installed temporary shoring served the function of stabilizing the roof to prevent a sudden roof collapse. The shoring are designed to provide a safe working area/platform during the projected work to repair or replace the roof; this framework has been designed for temporary application as other elements such as the exterior walls are subject to local or global failure (such as from high wind pressure or suction induced by hurricane forces)."

It is factual that since the installation of the shoring, the building has been subject to two major hurricane forces, Irene in August 2011 and Sandy in October 2012. These hurricanes had wind velocity of 66 mph & 80 mph respectively, and the building withstood these forces with no major consequences.

The deficient roof framing is being supported by the shoring, however it is subject to deterioration if water intrusion is present which will further weaken such framing. It is imperative to keep the existing roof framing in a dry condition.

Furthermore, the current Connecticut Building Code (2022) requires building to be designed for a wind velocity of 108 mph in Waterford, which translates to building forces increment of 82% above those from Hurricane Sandy, therefore presenting a high risk of building damage and stability in the case that such storm may come through our area.

Conclusion:

The shoring installed in 2011 are providing the required support as originally intended, mainly reinforced the weakened roof framing over the Apparatus Room, Dispatcher Room, Day Room, Hall Room, and the kitchen. These shoring were installed principally because of the dismal condition of the roof framing (see Ref. #2).

The shoring was found in good conditions with negligible movement changes since they were installed, thus ensuring the safe function of those areas under potential heavy snowstorms.

However, the existing roof framing was stabilized by providing vertical supports at the peak (ridge) down to solid structure and reinforcing the existing rafter tie connections to the existing rafters (refer to Reference 3, Section "A", Dwg S-2 and Section "B" Dwg. S-3). The existing rafters (2 x 6 @ 24" on-center) were not reinforced at the time due to the nature of the work (temporary), and they remain the weakest link in the chain as water intrusion from the roof will further deterioration on such elements of the roof framing.

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Regarding the building lateral stability caused by hurricane induced lateral forces and to a lesser degree seismic forces, the area of the building under consideration is vulnerable as reported previously due to the weakened state of the exterior walls specially in the Apparatus Room as previously reported.

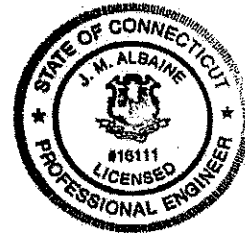
Although the building has withstood two significant hurricane events in the last 12 years, there still exist a significant risk of building overall stability if a significant hurricane passes through the areas because of the condition of the exterior bearing wall (shear walls) and the existing roof rafters that were not reinforced at the time of the installation of the shoring.

I trust this information is adequate for your needs. If you have any questions or desire further information regarding this report, please contact me at your convenience.

Respectfully submitted,



Jose-Miguel Albaine, M.S., P.E.
Consulting Design-Structural Engineer



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