

FIFTEEN ROPE FERRY ROAD
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Fire Services Review Special Committee Minutes—Special Meeting May 24, 2022

Members Present: Richard Muckle (RTM), Susan Driscoll (RTM/PP&S); Robert Tuneski (BoF), Rob Brule (BoS, 5:46 p.m.); Mike Howley (Director, Fire Services, 5:46 p.m.); Steven Sinagra (Director, Emergency Management); Mark Greczkowski (WAS Director of Operations); Todd Patton (Chief, Goshen FD); Tom Martin (Captain, WFD)

Members Absent: Greg Attanasio (RTM)

Also Present: Neil Wiseman (Goshen Chief, WAS), John Mariano (Cohanzie Chief, WAS), Chris Bonanno (Cohanzie Fire Co.), Beth Sabilia (BoS, 5:46 p.m.), Paul Goldstein (RTM, 5:46 p.m.)

1. **Call to order:** Chair Tuneski called the meeting to order at 5:39 p.m. and briefly explained the make-up and purpose of the FSRSC to audience as we waited for members arriving late following BoS meeting.
2. **Public comment:** Chair Tuneski suggested that the volunteer firefighters present contribute comments or respond to questions during the committee's discussion on potential critical issues. Consensus by members of public and FSRSC.
3. **Approval of previous minutes:** Motion by Brule, second by Muckle, to approve April 18, 2022, minutes as presented. Voice vote: Unanimous; Abstain by Muckle.
4. **Consideration of FSRSC's charge from the RTM (6/7/21)/Critical issues:** Muckle and Tuneski: replace OSW fire house. Sinagra: need a townwide plan and determine where OSW fits in logistically, with consideration of apparatus and personnel needs. Patton: need two more paid firefighters to staff OSW to eliminate some trips for Jordan; need open communication across agencies and fire departments. Chief Wiseman: need a plan for staffing sooner rather than later, to prepare when there are no more volunteers. General discussion on diminishing volunteerism nationwide, training demands, recruitment/retention issues for paid fire and ambulance services. Chief Wiseman relayed concern of Quaker Hill Deputy Chief: need reliable communication tools for volunteers, who rely on 3rd-party apps and old pagers. Sinagra and Howley noted need for funding to improve communications on the receiving end and system to call staff back in to respond. Brule: replace OSW firehouse, reimburse volunteers for time training and on calls, increase paid staff, create plan for when debt service is down in the next 5-10 years.
5. **New business:** Director Howley distributed binders prepared by his staff that included the organizational chart requested at the last meeting, contracts, district maps, ordinances and general information. Howley noted that the Personnel Review Board recently increased the workweek limit for part-time firefighters to 25 hours (1300 hrs/yr total). He listed his four critical issues: replacement of Oswegatchie fire house; increased staffing; improved communications (working with Sinagra on need to replace 20-yr-old radios); tweaking volunteer incentive program in areas of 1st quarter point accumulation and adding specifics in areas left to director's discretion. Sinagra expressed concerns about the stressors on all first responders—police, dispatch, fire, EMS—and the lack of post-incident closure for dispatchers
6. **Adjournment:** Motion by Brule; second by Muckle to adjourn at 7:03 p.m. Voice vote: Unanimous.

Submitted by

Susan Driscoll, FSRSC Secretary

encl: FSRSC Binder May 24, 2022

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