

COVENTRY FIRE DISTRICT
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
IN PUBLIC SESSION
September 11, 2019

A meeting of the Board of Directors was held on Wednesday September 11, 2019 at 7:00 P.M. at the Anthony Fire Station, 571 Washington Street, Coventry, Rhode Island.

The Agenda having been properly posted in accordance with the provisions of the Open Meetings Act (a copy is attached hereto as EXHIBIT A), Chairman Bryan Testen called the meeting to order at 7:08 P.M.

The roll was called, and the following Directors were present: Vice Chairman Charles Calenda, Bryan Testen, Gilbert Larose, Albert Bettencourt, and Director Robert Gallo was absent. Also, in attendance were District Chief Robert Warren, District Solicitor Fred Tobin, District Treasurer David Krekorian, CPA and Tax Collector/Clerk Robert Catalfamo.

It was unanimously MSV to move to Executive Session pursuant to RIGL 42-46-5(a)(2) pertaining to Litigation (National Grid, Kent County Water Authority, Coventry Housing Authority, & Labbadia Pension Claim) – Discussion/Resulting Action

EXECUTIVE SESSION

- It was unanimously MSV to recess from Executive Session at 7:11 pm.
- The Board and attendees pledged their allegiance to the Flag of the United States.
- The Chief gave Emergency Evacuation instructions

Approval of Minutes – Chairman Bryan Testen

- It was unanimously MSV to approve the Public Session minutes as amended, noting that Solicitor Fred Tobin was in attendance for the meeting held on August 14, 2019.

Tax Collector's Report – Robert Catalfamo

Summary as of September 11, 2019.

- Taxes collected to date are \$1,984,461.00 (One million, nine hundred eighty-four thousand, four hundred and sixty-one dollars)
- Of which \$1,881,260.00 (one million, eight hundred eighty-one thousand, two hundred sixty dollars) are for fiscal 2019, and \$103,201.00 (one hundred three thousand, two hundred and one dollars) from previous years' collections.
- Balance of fiscal 2019 taxes due are 474,089.00 (four hundred seventy-four thousand, eighty-nine dollars).
- Balance of previous years' taxes are \$49,223.00 (forty-nine thousand, two hundred twenty-three dollars)
- So far for the 2019 levy, we have collected \$1,896,136.00 (one million eight hundred ninety-six thousand, one hundred thirty-six dollars) or eighty percent. (2% above LY)

End of Tax Collectors Report

Treasurer's Report – David Krekorian

- Auditors are getting close to wrapping up and have stated that they may have a draft before the next meeting.
- Cash Management Plan has been discussed. Currently, bank fees are \$4400.00 (Four thousand four hundred dollars) annually which gets netted down to approximately \$300.00 (three hundred dollars) monthly after earnings credits. Citizens Bank has proposed to change the nature of the accounts with an annual cost savings of approximately \$2600.00 (twenty-six hundred dollars), there is a cost to purchase a check scanner of \$720.00 (seven hundred and twenty dollars). Mr. David Krekorian is hopeful to link two larger accounts to the one currently earning credits for even greater credit earnings. There has been a discussion of a better interest rate for an account which is holding funds for National Grid currently earning .02% however it has not increased as of yet. Mr. Krekorian asked for vote to move forward with the new proposal so that the District can begin saving money.

Chairman Bryan Testen asked if the account at Coventry Credit Union (now Ocean State Credit Union) was only for the line of credit that the District holds. Mr. Krekorian explained that the checking account there is used to pay all its bills. Mr. Krekorian added that there is a small savings account there as well which does not get used much. Treasurer David Krekorian stated that while line of credit is open, the District is required to use Ocean State Credit Union as a depository. Chairman Bryan Testen stated that stipulation will end at the end of the year when the line of credit is paid off.

- Old holiday pay has been paid out.
- Firefighter Swanson final payout must be reviewed before dispersed
- This coming Sunday is a final workday for another firefighter who will need to be paid out.
- Budget planning for next year is in the works.

A brief discussion took place regarding the payout for firefighter Masciarotte. Treasurer David Krekorian suggested setting up a reserve fund to accommodate funds for separated employees who are eligible for payouts, Chairman Bryan Testen agreed.

Chairman Bryan Testen asked what the completion percentage was for the 2016 and 2017 audits. Treasurer David Krekorian stated although he did not know the exact percentage, the auditors did state that they would have draft results ready for the week prior to the meeting in October and he will follow up.

Vice chairman Charles Calenda asked Treasurer David Krekorian if the banking fees that the District is being charged are standard as he feels as though they are excessive. Treasurer Krekorian explained that business banking fees are much greater than those for personal banking. Streamlining accounts was also discussed.

End of Treasurers Report

- It was unanimously MSV to Approve the Treasurer's Report.

Chief's Report – Chief Robert Warren

- **Run Statistics** –August - 206 (two hundred and) runs in total
 - Difference of eight runs between mutual aid runs with Central Coventry Fire District
 - Hopkins Hill responded to the Coventry Fire District eleven times, CFD provided mutual aid to Hopkins Hill three times
 - CFD responded to West Warwick eleven times and did not received any mutual aid from West Warwick.
 - CFD responded to East Greenwich three times, and Western Coventry three times.
 - Three working fires for August that took in place in the Central Coventry Fire District and the Western Coventry Fire District.
 - There was a catastrophic radio failure during the fires, which originated at the central dispatch station for the Town.

➤ **Building Maintenance-**

- Electrician is continuing his work.
- Plumber is continuing to work on sewer tie-in

➤ **Equipment-**

- Three new Air packs have been ordered; some changes have been made to new models
- Additional radio supplies will be discussed with Lt. Ed Shannon.

Chief Warren stated that the Union will be having a lieutenant's exam for a promotional list coming up in November

➤ **Grants-**

- Still awaiting news on awards

Chairman Bryan Testen asked when the plumber will be completed with his projects. Chief Robert Warren stated that he did not have a date as he still has to tie drains into a separate galley. The Chair asked if he would have to stop at some point due to the winter, Chief Robert Warren was not sure, however the sewer tie in would require digging up the ground.

Chairman Bryan Testen asked about the electrician progress, Chief Warren responded that he is continuing to work on the radio box, has a panel to remove and finish work on the third floor.

Treasure David Krekorian expressed concern over the cost of the plumbers work as the year is coming to a close and would like a general idea of the cost of completing his projects.

End of Chief's Report

It was unanimously MSV to Accept the Chief's Report.

Old Business – Chairman Bryan Testen

Grants:

- Chairman Bryan Testen asked if grant money had a time frame in which it must be used after it is awarded. Chief Robert Warren stated that some grants require certain steps to be completed however he was not sure on time frames.

A brief discussion took place about other local fire departments receiving grant money. Also discussed was the topic of researching any and all grants that the Coventry Fire District may be eligible for and the idea of hiring a “grant writer”.

Building Improvements:

- Chairman Bryan Testen suggested starting the front bay project in the spring as it could potentially run longer than expected and would be too risky to start it at this point. He expressed concern however that any grant money awarded may expire if it had to wait till the front bay project to be completed. Chairman Bryan Testen asked for the opinion of Board members on the delay of the front bay project till next spring. Vice Chairman Charles Calenda agreed with the Chair, Director Al Bettencourt was also in agreement and asked if the District had gotten two other bids on the project. Chief Robert Warren stated that he had reached out to two other local vendors however one vendor has not returned the Chiefs phone call and the other declined the work at this time. Chairman Bryan Testen agreed with Director Al Bettencourt about getting two additional bids on the project and explained delaying the project till next spring would allow time for that.

Tax Freeze Enabling Legislation – Tabled

Financial Audits – Previously discussed

Equipment Committee:

- This topic will be worked into the budget discussion.

Budget Planning:

- Chairman Bryan Testen explained that he has some open items yet to finalize which would require information from Chief Robert Warren and Treasure David Krekorian.
- Chairman Bryan Testen proposed a special meeting be held between this meeting and the October meeting approximately two weeks out. This meeting would be a one topic budget meeting workshop only.

Document Retention – Tabled

New Business –

Banking – Treasurer David Krekorian

- Treasurer Krekorian gave a brief description of the existing accounts
- Chairman Bryan Testen suggested one checking account that all the collections go into also serving as the general fund to which bills be paid from.
- Separate accounts for restricted cash such as National Grid were recommended
- Chairman Bryan Testen asked Treasurer David Krekorian how many accounts he felt the District needed, Mr. Krekorian responded he would check with the auditor.
- Too many accounts, both the Chair and Treasurer agree that accounts need to be consolidated. Mr. Krekorian will seek the advice of the auditor for banking structure recommendations.
- Banking changes to be addressed again at next meeting.

Schedule next meeting:

- Budget meeting – Wednesday September 25, 2019 -7pm – Anthony Fire Station
- Regular meeting – Wednesday October 9, 2019 - 7-pm - Anthony Fire Station

Public Comment: Julie Ferreira – 26 Taft Street

- Ms. Ferreira expressed concerns on several topics including:
 - Overtime and the overtime budget
 - Hiring firefighters that need academy training will not be ready to work until the fall of 2020 as the current academy is full.
 - Increase in 2020 Fire District Tax to fund increased overtime budget.
 - Her husband (CFD firefighter) is working excessive overtime and she has a medical condition.
 - Firefighters working excessive overtime and not getting the proper rest have the potential to make mistakes
 - Why a hiring list wasn't created three months ago
 - How many firefighters will be hired and how many will work per shift

Chairman Bryan Testen explained that the District needed to create a hiring process that was “by the book”, including a hiring policy, application and job posting. The District is currently in a ten-day application acceptance period. He stated that hiring had been addressed at previous meeting, but the process had to go through the right channels to be done correctly. Originally the District was looking to add a ninth firefighter, however now that one employee has left, that position must be filled as well. Mr. Testen added that the District is still planning on keeping a two-man minimum, there is no immediate plan to increase the staff to sixteen men for a four-man

minimum. Although overtime it is up, the increase is not substantial, and Mr. Testen added that it is not his intention to increase taxes at the upcoming annual meeting.

Ms. Ferreira expressed concern over new firefighters having to go through a fifteen-week fire academy before being eligible to work. Mr. Testen explained that the posting was written to include candidates that already have the proper training and are fully qualified. Certification details were discussed. Chief Robert Warren and Vice Chairman Charles Calenda explained how the hiring process will be conducted. Ms. Ferreira expressed additional safety concerns relating to overworked firefighters. Mr. Bryan Testen acknowledged her concerns as valid and explained that the current platoon schedule was chosen over other models as it demonstrated a better balance between work and time off.

Jason Ferreira – 26 Taft Street

- Mr. Ferreira asked what the status was on PRISM

Chairman Bryan Testen responded that the District is awaiting results of a geographical audit currently being conducted.

- Ms. Ferreira stated that a streetlight in front of the station is not working properly.

A brief discussion was held on this topic and Treasurer David Krekorian suggested writing a letter to the Rhode Island Department of Transportation requesting that it be serviced.

Chairman Bryan Testen publicly acknowledged the date as being September 11 and thanked the firefighters for their service.

There being no further business, it was MSV to adjourn the meeting at 8:13 pm

Attest:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert Catalfamo". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The first name "Robert" is written with a large, prominent "R". The last name "Catalfamo" is written in a similar cursive style. The signature is centered on a light blue background.

Robert Catalfamo, Clerk / Tax Collector
October 16, 2019

Exhibit A
COVENTRY FIRE DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
AGENDA

DATE OF MEETING: Wednesday, September 11, 2019
TIME OF MEETING: 7:00 PM
LOCATION OF MEETING: Anthony Fire Station –
571 Washington St,
Coventry, RI 02816

- 1) Call to Order
- 2) Attendance
- 3) Move to Executive Session, Pursuant to:
 - a. RIGL 42-46-5(a)(2) pertaining to Litigation (National Grid, Kent County Water Authority, Coventry Housing Authority, & Labbadia Pension Claim) – Discussion/Resulting Action

Recess from Executive Session to Public Session, and announcement of any actions taken
(approximately 7:45 PM)

- 4) Pledge of Allegiance
- 5) Emergency Evacuation Instructions
- 6) Approval of Minutes of prior meeting(s)
- 7) Tax Collector's Report
- 8) Treasurer's Report
- 9) Chief's Report
- 10) Old Business
 - a. Grants – Discussion/Resulting Action
 - b. Building Improvements – Discussion/Resulting Action
 - c. Tax Freeze Enabling Legislation – Discussion/Resulting Action
 - d. Financial Audits – Discussion/Resulting Action
 - e. Equipment Committee – Discussion/Resulting Action
 - f. 2020 Budget Planning – Discussion/Resulting Action
 - g. Document Retention – Discussion/Resulting Action
- 11) New Business
 - a. Banking – Discussion/Resulting Action
- 12) Schedule Next Meeting
- 13) Public Comment
- 14) Adjournment

POSTING INFORMATION: Coventry Shell Station, Coventry Housing Authority, Anthony Fire Station, and Rhode Island Secretary of State's website.