

Central Coventry Fire District

Board of Directors

March 18, 2008 - 7:00 pm

Central Coventry Fire Station 4

Minutes

1. Call to Order – 7:03 pm

2. Roll Call

President: Girard Bouchard – VP: Joe Bonn

Anna Mae Lapinski - Linda Giguere - Ron Gizzarelli - Elaine Hunt

Treasurer: Tom LaColle

Tax Collector – Jeanne Graemiger

Chief Seltzer (late) – Asst Chief Tucker

Additional People present: Lt. Dave Gorman, Lt. Matt Medieros

Not Present - Robert Crowe - Clerk: Tracy Hall

**3. Approval of Minutes of the previous Board of Directors Meeting –
2/19/08**

Mr. Gizzarelli asked for a clarification of his comments that were summarized. The minutes say “Mr. Gizzarelli commented that in RI everybody knows somebody so you really need to look at qualifications.” He feels this sounds political and he didn’t mean it

that way. He meant because this state is so small everybody is related or works with someone or knows someone. It is very difficult to escape some form of nepotism.

Motion: Linda Giguere Seconded: Ron Gizzarelli

All Vote Aye

4. Old Business

Property Appraisal – Mr. Bouchard spoke to Chief Seltzer last week and he expects to have this info soon. Chief should have more info on this in his report.

5. President's Report

Mr. Bouchard met with Chief Seltzer couple times this month. One meeting was to see his new vehicle. All of his equipment fits in it well. Three radio systems have been installed. He is pleased with the vehicle. Mr. Bouchard also met briefly with Lt. Gorman just to shoot the breeze and a few minutes with Capt. Cady tonight just checking in. They both commented on how busy they are. Mr. Bouchard also visited the Tax Collector's office, a very pleasant atmosphere. It is a little more crowded than expected with 3 desks. Mrs. Graemiger commented that it is still better than the other office as all three of them have their own desks.

Motion: Anna Mae Lapinski Seconded: Linda Giguere

All Vote Aye

6. Treasurer's Report

Mr. LaColle presented his report. Under the medical expense line

item, we have not had any bills from the injured call firefighter. Chief Seltzer added that Blue Cross has agreed to cover his medical expenses since he has exhausted the coverage allowed under our insurance.

Motion: Linda Giguere Seconded: Elaine Hunt

All Vote Aye

Lt. Gorman asked for an explanation of the medical expense line item.

Chief Seltzer explained that the \$50,000 of VFIS coverage had been exhausted and at the time we made the budget we were not sure if the call firefighter's Blue Cross was going to cover the additional expenses. Mr. LaColle commented that the money was budgeted in abundance of caution.

7. Chief's Report

Chief Seltzer presented his report. Under Administration #8, Kent County Water Authority is requesting an increase of 25.1% over the current rate. Chief Seltzer suggests that the Board send a letter to protest such a large increase. Less than two years ago there was a 20% increase. Mr. Gizzarelli asked how this rate compares to other towns. Chief Seltzer replied that it's difficult to compare as many towns run their own water departments. KCWA covers Warwick, West Warwick, Coventry, East Greenwich and West Greenwich. KCWA does not provide services such as painting the hydrants so they are easily located at night. Also they won't allow us to paint the hydrants as they feel we may corrupt the water supply. Mr. Bonn

asked who oversees KCWA. Chief Seltzer replied that the Public Utilities Commission has to approve rate changes requested by the Board of Directors for the KCWA. Mrs. Hunt asked if this increase was for Coventry or all the towns. Chief Seltzer referred to the letter sent by KCWA which gives the rates as 35.2% for residential 25.1% for fire departments and 16.9% for private. Mr. Gizzarelli asked about having someone from KCWA come to a meeting so we can talk with them about this. Lt Gorman suggested having them come before all the fire departments. Chief Seltzer said we have done that in the past and it has gotten us nowhere. But we could certainly ask to meet with the KCWA Board. Mr. Bonn asked if anything could be done thru our Senators & Representatives. Chief Seltzer suggested sending a letter to KCWA and forwarding copies to the legislators. There was some additional discussion on this topic.

On the job advertisement Ms. Lapinski asked to change “25 words per minute” to “good typing skills”.

Mr. Gizzarelli asked if we were having a problem with the district boundary lines. Chief Seltzer replied that Mrs. Graemiger was all set. We had worked with the Assessors in the other districts to resolve her questions. The District Map is not something we need to have right away but we should have one map of the new district for the future. The issue we had was about who collects taxes on certain properties. There was not an issue with who responds to emergencies.

Mr. Bonn asked how much will our bill from KCWA go up if this increase goes thru? Chief Seltzer replied about \$30,000 to \$40,000. Mr. LaColle said it may impact this year but more likely it will impact next year.

Motion: Joe Bonn Seconded: Ronald Gizzarelli

All Vote Aye

The advertisement for Administrative Assistant has been discussed unless there is anything further Mr. Bouchard makes a motion to direct the Chief to place the advertisement.

Motion: Girard Bouchard Seconded: Anna Mae Lapinski

All Vote Aye

On the issue of the KCWA rate increase, Mr. Bouchard proposes to meet with Chief Seltzer to draft a letter of protest to be sent to the KCWA and to our legislators. Mrs. Hunt asked if we should send a copy to the other towns involved. Mr. Bonn asked if we should speak to the other fire departments involved. Chief Seltzer added that it will be brought up at the next Fire Chief's Association meeting and that he has spoken with some of the other Chiefs about this issue before. Mr. Bonn also suggested an editorial in the Providence Journal to make more people aware of the issue. Chief Seltzer said the PUC usually has a public hearing in addition to the hearing they have with KCWA. He has not heard any information about these hearings yet, but will keep his eyes open for any information about them. The

Board agrees that Mr. Bouchard and Chief Seltzer should draft a letter to KCWA and forward it out to all of the people discussed.

8. Tax Collector's Report

The Tax Collectors office is caught up with the February payment so their next project is to put together a list of properties for legal action. There are about 30 people who have not responded. They will be combined with the people who did not respond last year to make a list for legal action. With moving the office and getting the bills out there was not enough time to follow up on the list last year. Everything is going smoothly now. Mr. LaColle said we have 3.4 million in taxes to collect and with the most recent deposit we have collected 2.4 million and there are two more payment dates to go May & August. With 1/2 the year gone and 2/3 of taxes collected what can we expect for the rest of the year? Mrs. Graemiger responded that she feels we are right on schedule. Lt. Gorman asked if all the foreclosures have affected tax collections. Mrs. Graemiger responded that it has brought in some payments because the bank can't sell the property until the taxes are paid off.

Motion: Ronald Gizzarelli Seconded: Elaine Hunt

All Vote Aye

9. New Business

Presentation of Strategic Plan – per Chief's Report will be available next month

10. Introduction of new business to be considered at the next Board Meeting

11. Good & Welfare

The District received a letter from the Department of Veteran's Affairs protesting the fact that we denied a veteran's exemption to Mrs. Golembeski of Myra Rd. The District Clerk responded by phone and mail explaining that the Washington District allowed the exemption but that the merged Central Coventry Fire District does not allow the exemption. Mrs. Hall also suggested that she can apply under the low income section of the law. Mrs. Graemiger added that Mrs. Golembeski had been to the Tax Collector's office and did not qualify for the low income credit.

Mr. Bouchard has received notification from Local 3372 that they would like to start negotiations for the next contract. We have 10 days to reply. We will be replying within the 10 days.

Also a reminder, Chief Seltzer is our Public Information Officer. Mr. Bouchard, as president, is the official spokesperson for the Board and will sign official documents with the prior approval of the Board.

Mr. Gizzarelli had a question regarding medical expenses for on the job injuries. Does our insurance cover everything? Do our employees ever have to pay anything out of their own pocket? Chief Seltzer replied that for an on the job injury by law the employee does not have any out of pocket expenses. The employer is responsible

for all expenses. There was also some discussion about our current insurance and some research Chief Seltzer is doing into some new options. Mr. Gizzarelli also asked about any new technologies that would help with reducing injuries. There is some new equipment; Chief Seltzer is passing the information on to our EMS Coordinator. There is always new technology coming out, we try to keep up with it.

12. Adjournment - 8:08 pm

Motion: Linda Giguere Seconded: Anna Mae Lapinski

All Vote Aye