

**Central Coventry Fire District
Board Meeting
November 13, 2013 – 7:00 p.m.
1670 Flat River Rd.**

Minutes

1. Call to Order – 7:15 p.m.

2. Roll Call

President: Fred P. Gralinski

Vice President: Marie Baker

**Directors: – Cynthia A. Fagan-Perry, Robert G. Hadley- Excused,
Maureen K. Jendzejec, Daniel K. Lantz Jr., Helen G. Quinn**

Treasurer:

Tax Collector:

Clerk: Christine Moniz

Chief: Andrew J. Baynes

President of the Union Dave Gorman

Legal Counsel Dave Dagostino

Also in attendance - members of the public, and Fire Department

**Approval of the meeting minutes from the Special Meeting held on
October 21, 2013.**

**Motion made by Director Fagan-Perry to approve the minutes and
Seconded by Director Quinn.**

All Voted Aye

**Truck and equipment committee. – The Chief reported on a list that
was made of all available equipment that is no longer in service and
could be declared as surplus and auctioned off.**

**Tax Collectors report – given by Director Jendzejec she went over the
amounts collected to date and they are as follows \$748,900.09 in
payments via collections and \$27,658.79 in credit cards and also
stated that the first quarter is due on the 15th of November.**

**Update on overtime use – The chief went over the amounts in
overtime that were needed in the time frame of 9/1/2013-10/31/2013
the chief read aloud the hours that were covered and the amounts per
rank.**

**Chief's report - Staffing: Remains in accordance with the 29 March
2013 directive and is deployed as I reported on 21 October 2013.**

**Run Volume: The Department responded to an additional 205
incidents since my last report of 17 October.**

**Automatic aid was given 25 times since my last report, while
automatic aid was received 2 times during this time.**

Categorized print out attached.

Fire Prevention & Public Relations: Licensed establishments and

places of assembly inspections are almost completed, in concurrence with the RISFM's office.

The District has assisting the School Department with the completion of items ordered by the Fire Code Board of Appeals, as well getting an extension of time granted to finalize these improvements. A tentative hearing date on this issue is set for the 19th of November. The Fire Marshal successfully completed the 36 Hour battery test of the High School over the Veteran's Day weekend to avoid disruption at the school.

This Department, as well as CFD, participated in a banner raising ceremony at the Ocean State Job Lot on 8 November in honor of Veteran's Day and that company's support of the Honor Flight program.

Vehicle Maintenance: All in-service units are in operational condition, with E-7 down for PM being covered by the reserve unit.

Training: EMS report electronic filing training has been completed on all Platoons and since we went online as of 7 October we continue to experience some connectivity issues on the State bridge site which is being addressed, by State EMS. License recertification is well underway and continues at this time.

Hydrant flow testing has been suspended due to weather.

Reports:

Attached is the Preliminary report regarding Surplus Equipment and a separate report on Overtime costs and Leave Usages for the months of September and October, requested by the Board.

Conclusion: The Department stays available and able to respond at

the 29 March strength at this time.

Motion to approve the Chiefs report- motion made by Director Fagan-Perry and Seconded by V.P. Baker.

All Voted Aye

Discussion and Action

Abatement of delinquent taxes – policy going forward to give administrative authority to the Tax Collector to abate de minimis sums. Director Fagan-Perry read aloud the property and amounts that needed approval from the Board to refund the taxes for overpayment. A motion was made by Director Fagan-Perry to refund the amounts seconded by Director Hadley.

All voted Aye

Discussion and action on auction of surplus equipment petition the Court and the Special Master for approval and timeline. Director Fagan-Perry made a motion to petition the court for approval on the auction of surplus equipment seconded by Director Lantz and Director Jendzejec

All voted Aye

Update by the Solicitor of pending legal actions in Receivership- Mr. Dagostino reviewed a brief summary of where the District was as far

as a possible liquidation. The Judge did not order the District to Liquidate and the Board asked for a 6 month window to come up with a plan to provide services to the residents with the possibility of liquidation should it occur.

Update on Alternate plan requested by the Court- below is the presentation made by V.P. Baker explaining the progress of the alternate plan.

CENTRAL COVENTRY FIRE DISTRICT

The Alternate Plan And Restructuring

WHAT THE COURT ASKED ON NOVEMBER 1ST

- The Court did NOT decide to “liquidate and close” the District on November 1, 2013.**
- The Court has given the Board some time to address an “alternate plan”,
which would be presented to the Court and Special Master for approval
prior to implementation.**
- The Court will consider arguments (on a schedule that is yet to be issued)
in support of “liquidation and closure” and in opposition to that, as well as
what “liquidation and closure” means in the context of this**

Receivership.

- **No matter what happens in the Receivership, the Board must consider what that “alternative plan” would consist of and pledges to do so in as open a manner as possible.**
- **The Board understands that these discussions involve issues that are contrary to the language of the Collective Bargaining Agreement (“CBA”), but the Court has asked that the Board consider alternatives. All the parties know what the CBA says.**

RESTRUCTURING

- **The Board, in its business judgment, believes that there are alternative models throughout the State of providing fire suppression and EMS services at a much lower cost than what the CCFD spends.**
- **Not all other models “fit” the geography and demographics of the CCFD, so the Board needs to look at what will best fit the needs of the District.**
- **The mission of the District will remain the focus of the Board’s exploration of alternatives. The Board is also focused on providing these services with a balanced budget and repayment of debt obligations.**

- **What are the Options?**
- **A Municipal Fire/Rescue Service.**
- **In Court as well as at recent Coventry Town Meetings, the Council (and the public) have indicated there is no support for municipalized service;**
- **The Council (on behalf of the citizens of Coventry) has said they do not have the equipment or staff to do so;**
- **The taxpayers of Coventry do not want to assume the debt obligations of the CCFD; and,**
- **The Board lacks the ability (legally, politically) to “force” the Town to municipalize.**

•**Other Options:**

1. Contracted EMS service. (A contractor would provide their own vehicles, equipment and staff to provide EMS services to the CCFD. The contractor would be paid from Rescue Recovery funds and insurance.)

This could be temporary or permanent. This would be a very economical way to provide EMS services to the taxpayers of the District. This paradigm could provide taxpayers of the District. This paradigm could provide as much EMS coverage as is currently available to the

District as well as allow for expanded EMS coverage (to possibly include staffing all stations with EMS personnel.) Excess funds from taxation would be

diverted to repayment of debt obligations; overtime cost(s) would be eliminated.

A Combination of Pay On Call Fire Fighters with a contracted EMS Service and Volunteers.

- This system offers taxpayers an economical solution to maintain fire suppression and EMS services at current or better levels as well as address the debt obligations of the District.**

- Contracted EMS service could be setup and available anytime that “liquidation” occurs and/or is ordered by the Court.**

How the Board will Evaluate Contracted EMS Services:

- The Board will develop and issue Request for Proposals (“RFP”) to prospective contractors. There are examples of RFPs available to the Board that have been used by other towns that the Board will tailor to meet the specific needs of the District.**

- The Board is reviewing one such RFP and expects to issue it in the next several days. Once issued, it will be y available to the public.**

- The bid responses will be vetted by the Board as of the response deadline (which has not been set yet).**

- The Board will then determine if it has enough information to make a recommendation to the Special**

Master and the Court.

How the Board will Develop Pay On Call Personnel and Volunteers:

- The Board has developed a Pay On Call Application for use in building a database of available personnel that have Fire Fighter 1 and 2 Certifications.
- The Board will also develop a list of individuals who would be willing to volunteer for the District in fire fighting or EMS capacities. Depending on the turn-out, further consideration will be given to this option.

How the Board will Develop Pay On Call Personnel and Volunteers:

In addition, the Board will be looking at exercising its management prerogatives, which include improving the Tax Accounts Receivable collection process; scheduling Tax Sales as needed (in conjunction with or in lieu of those by the Special Master); and, explore alternative revenue sources, understanding the taxpayers have said emphatically they want less taxes. The Board will also update the lists of taxpayers including commercial and residential accounts. (Update the Tax Assessment list.)

Overtime (“OT”) Expenses Must Be Minimized.

A review of OT records shows the following trends:

- 1. Mark Blanding earned \$43,692 in Overtime YTD;**
- 2. Russell Giles earned \$32,064 in Overtime YTD;**
- 3. David Gorman \$26,182 in Overtime YTD;**

Whether and to what extent these numbers can be driven downward, is something that the Board is working on with the Chief who is the Board's Administrative and Operational director.

The Board is researching all alternatives as we form an Alternate Plan as requested by Judge Stern.

We want to assure the Tax Payers of Central Coventry there will be always be Fire and Rescue services available to them services available to them.

Constructive ideas, or Volunteers can email mbakerccfd@gmail.com

SUCCESS IS THE ONLY OPTION !

Old unfinished business – none

New business – The Board President made a comment on paying \$100,000 to the Town and also \$100,000 to pension there was some discussion but no vote due to the fact it was not on the agenda.

The Board President then opened up the floor for discussion.

Mr. Gizzarelli 50 Harrington Rd questioned the Board about – There are a few concerns that he feels the District is going in a direction that the residents will not be happy with nor are aware of. Mr. Gizzarelli does not want it to seem that the Firefighters that are making the overtime to be personal issue. Also that the Board is opposed about the direction we are going and are in favor of go private. He then asked the Chief to explain the overtime and how it works. The President commented on the overtime and that most of the audience are firefighters and they know how it works and it is all contracted. The Chief then provided an explanation for the record. (NOTE reminder that all meetings are recorded and can be requested at any time)

He also wanted to know why the Special Master is not requested to attend the Meetings. The President did state that he never requested that the Special Master not attend. Mr. David Dagostino stated that the meetings are public meetings and he is able to attend. Mr Dagostino does not feel that he or anyone from his office needs to attend the meetings and it is a suggestion that it is unnecessary.

The third comment was made stating the pro's and con's and work on repairing our district and moving forward. Without having the Town take over, and also merging with the other districts.

Mr. Steven Fay 38 Mumford Street wanted to know out of the eight people sitting up on the stage how many of them have any experience

in emergency services. None stating they have Mr. Fey explained how volunteerism works. It's called when I can if I can. The amount of time needed and he also wanted to know who is going to train the volunteers. No answer. He also inquired about the rescue issue. Did anyone look into how are you going to incorporate the private rescue with the Firefighters when they are not even issued fire gear. Mr. Fey is also frustrated due to the fact the Board President tries to discredit him every time he gets up to comment. He also stated that the person that started this whole issue does not even live in this district or Town. The Board then requested that he end his comments and sit down. Mr. Fey stated he will sit when he is done and Director Quinn stated would you like us to call the police. The President then explained to Mr. Fey the agreement and that they did not present one to the Judge due to the fact they also had to discuss it before voting on it like the Union did.

The Board took a short recess at 8:31 p.m.

The Board came back from Executive Session by roll call vote Director Fagan- Perry, V.P Baker, Director Hadley, Director Jendzejec, Director Lantz and Director Quinn all voted aye.

A motion was made by Director Fagan-Perry to adjourn the meeting.

Mr. Conrad Burns stated point of order and that the Board open back up to open session. President Gralinski made the motion and

Director Fagan-Perry seconded the motion to reconvene back into open session.

Mr. Conrad Burns wanted to know why the apparatus that is located outside station #3 is still outside and that it is going to heck out there.

He is concerned it will get over run by field mice. The President asked the Chief to look into getting the equipment moved . That we try to get what we can inside and what is moveable. The Chief explained that what we could move we did. The President thanked him.

Mr. Keith DeCesare asked if the 200,000 that the President wanted to discuss under new business was in addition to the 400,000 that was budgeted to pay down the debt. The President stated that was a good question. The President stated that he will be meeting with the Special Master next week to discuss the payment. Also try to put a debt schedule back.

Mr. DeCesare wanted to know how the Board comes up with the slide presentation. Does she meet with the committee and if so are there minutes. The President stated that Marie is in charge of the alternative plan and the Board has the choice to agree or disagree. That the plan that was presented is very general and as they progress it will get more defined.

Mr. Paul wanted to follow up with what Mr. Fey was asking that the

Lawyer and the Accountant both agreed and told the Judge that the budget is workable. Our President stated that the budget is not workable. The President stated that the budget presented is not theirs it was the Accountants.

Mr. Dagostino also commented he has been very careful not to give out any information on the concessions made by the union and any information that was released was by the union. With that said he stated that the budget included the concessions. The court also make it clear to the Board that in a usual circumstance the public approves a budget. He also stated that this last special meeting was not to approve a budget but to approve a levy. Also how the Board spends the money is not what the voters really voted on. Due to the fact the Board is in receivership they need to ask the Judge or Special Master.

Mr. Gorman addressed the Board his question is for Marie and he wants to make sure it goes on record that Marie stated in her presentation that 94% of the population is covered by volunteers. 83% is total population is covered by paid fire fighters also who is putting together the RFP. The President stated as of now it is still a work in progress and that Marie is talking with professionals and gathering information they are not able to . Mr. Gorman asked where the Board gained experience to come up with the RFP. The President stated the same place you get all your experience you ask questions, you talk with people who have experience and what they presented

tonight is a rough idea. They will present more. Mr. Gorman wanted to know how to formulate a RFP when they have not idea what they even need. Did you contact any industry professionals. The President stated that they are in contact with professionals and also he himself is on contact with someone who writes just RFP's. Mr. Gorman wanted to know from the Board who they have met with. It is clear that they have come up with some type of plan but Mr. Gorman wants to know why they have not had any public meeting to even go over or present the RFP. Mr. Gorman said the Board stated they have not met behind closed doors and that they have not had a committee meeting so how did they get this information. The President stated that Marie can talk to different people and that anybody can talk to different people she can call people, she can talk to the people in Marlboro. Mr. Gorman last and final comment is the current Board mission statement. CCFD fire District adopted a mission statement ten years ago. We have it on our web site and we use it today. When did this Board vote on a new mission statement. That Marie made up this mission statement how can she present it to the public when it was not even voted on. The President stated that it will be discussed in the future and they will come up with one that will be more formal and adopted. The Board is a work in progress. Mr. Gorman stated that 95% of what she presented tonight is incorrect and inaccurate. He does not know who they are calling but it is incorrect and inaccurate and that he wants this information recorded in the records.

**Motion made to adjourn the meeting by Director Fagan -Perry and
Seconded by Director Quinn
All Voted Aye**

The meeting adjourned at 9:30