

MINUTES OF THE 946th BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING January 25, 2022

The meeting was called to order by President Nancy Crozier at 19:45

Pledge of Allegiance

Board Members Present: B. Appell, B. Baldwin, J. Borges, N. Crozier, R. Deming, J. DiPace, J. Farzinzad, G. Kline, T. Post, K. Shaw, and James Speich.

Other Members Present: Adam Corrado, Dave Costill. Sue Jansen, Tom Kline, Sharon Levin-Shein and Robert Theriault.

Minutes of the 945th Board Meeting were approved.

Communications from Members:

- None

Board Representative Reports:

- Company 1 – Jamie DiPace
 - Joe Farzinzad did send out an email to Company 1 members. He did not receive any communication back.
- Company 2 and Fire Police – Gina Kline
 - Gina will contact the members to let them know that she will be their board representative.
- Company 3 – Jeff Borges
 - New module is on the Stairmaster and once COVID restrictions are lifted the Stairmaster will be thoroughly cleaned.
 - Pool table refurbishing has begun.
- Company 4 – Brian Baldwin
 - Brian will reach out to the members of Company 4 to let them know he is their board representative.
 - Brian did have two members ask him about the out-of-town tax abatement and the points going back to being given out annually instead of twice during the year and what is the interval for checking the Suggestion Boxes.
- HQ – Kristen Shaw
 - A member asked Kristen to get some clarification on physicals for HQ members that want to do a little bit more in the field. Some confusion on whether they can go to scenes or not, if they need physicals or not. Per Chief Appell HQ members would have to get a physical according to what is written in the Medical Manual.
 - Clarification on HQ members coming into the office with COVID protocols. No communication from Captain of HQ to members. HQ members were told they could come in if their job was critical. What is critical? Need more clarification. There is a lack of communication. We don't do meetings, but I think HQ members need to meet to keep communications open. Chief Appell will address this with Captain Sedlak.
 - Chief Joe Speich wants Recruitment to be top priority for the board.
- Explorers – Tom Post
 - 2 members are waiting for physicals to come back.
 - New gear finally came in and will be given out to the Explorers the gear was ordered for. More gear will have to be ordered. Butt tags were missing on the gear. Will look into this.
 - The advisors are working on the training schedule for the rest of the year.
 - 1 Explorer is almost ready to be moved up to become a probationary member.

Question from Jamie DiPace

- Two board representatives had questions from members. Who will address these issues. They should not have to wait for another month before they get answers. Vice President Kline told Jamie that items like this may be added to the Agenda under New Business. Then the board can vote on an item if it pertains to something the board is responsible for.
- Chief Appell responded by saying members coming and going into the fire stations is under operations which is his responsibility, he will get answers and work on communications. If it is a board issue it will be taken up under new business. To wait another month to get an answer to them is not acceptable. If there is a question of HQ members coming into the office there are plenty of ways to accommodate the members during COVID. They can be set up in the boardroom if they do not need a computer or if they do need a computer, they just need to let Katie or Grace know that they would like to come into the office. It is not like everyone will come in at once. If you need more workstations, we can open the Assistant Chief's office and set someone up there. Grace or Katie can let them in.
- Kristen Shaw stressed that there is no communication at all for HQ members and that needs to be addressed.
- Once the numbers come down then the COVID restrictions can be lessened. Chief Appell will send out a COVID update.
- Out-of-town tax abatement for life – The town council did not approve a lifetime out-of-town tax abatement. Town Council only approved it for members who live in town. This is something that the board may have to address. Grace Bianchi will send out the tax abatement ordinance to Avonfire. Gina Kline said that maybe when looking into this it could suggest asking the Town Council to grandfather the few members that have always lived out of town for their whole membership. Jim Speich said it might be worth getting all the information together and presenting it to the town council. This will be brought under new business so that a committee or taskforce can be established to investigate this topic.
- Points Checks – The board changed paying out the points from annually to twice a year. In May and November. This was done during the first stages of the COVID pandemic. It was to help the members who might have needed extra money during this time to give it out twice a year. Brian thought that it warrants a revisit of this. Get a temperature of the member to see what the consensus is. He has received feedback from members to go back to annually because they looked forward to getting it before the holidays. Brian feels the board should do a Survey Monkey to get feedback. Tom Post told the board that at the time it was a trial to see how it worked out. This should be addressed again. This will be added to new business.

Treasurer's Report – Ryan Deming

- 1099's are all finalized and will be mailed out.
- The financials were sent around to the board members.
- We are coming off COVID where we had hardly any expenses and now there are more expenses. This is something that the board should monitor. The other driving force for spending was the repairs to Company 2.
- AT&T Stock – Jeff Borges asked whether the Corporation should have stock. If it was permissible. Ryan told the board he would check on this. Ryan is trying to look into this to see where these shares came from.
- Corporation:
 - As of December 31st, we have total cash of \$841k which includes restricted cash of \$682k leaving us with unrestricted cash of the Corporation of \$160.7k. This is compared to unrestricted cash of \$181.4k as of 11/30/2021.
 - For fiscal year to date revenues, we have total revenues of \$208k. \$163k is from the town grant income. \$12.6k is amounts release from restrictions that were used for Company 2 roof and driveway repairs and amounts released related to the live burn building. The remaining amounts are from donations \$31.8k.

Treasurer's Report cont.

- Corporation cont.
 - Expenses for the fiscal year to date are \$233.8k of which \$163k is from expenses associated with town grant. Corporation expenses amounted to approximately \$70k in total. The largest spend categories are as follows: \$33.9k for Company 2 roof and driveway repairs, \$12.9k annual dinner expenses and \$7k Live Burn expenses.
- Budget:
 - For the budget year our total spend-to-date (July-December) is \$235k compared to \$312k in the same period last year. No expense categories are close to the total budget amounts with equipment being the highest at 49% of total budget.

Town Representative Report – James Speich

- Jim recommended that the department should have a professional Public Relations person or firm to help with social media, activities and other areas that the department needs help with.
- Jim will be doing a report in April to the Town Council on the department. What we are doing and other pertinent information the Town Council should know about the department.
- Jim would like to be involved with the operating budget that is sent to the town.

President's Report: Nancy Crozier

- Planning retreat was great. There were a lot of take aways that the board will be working on and there are still somethings that will be done and that will be at the February board meeting.

Chief's Report – Bruce Appell

- There was a total of 635 calls last year.
- Membership we are at a plus 4. There were 13 new members 2 regular members changed and we lost 10 members from rolls. There are 142 members if you subtract the Senior Veterans that drops you to about 120 on the rolls.
- Truck 16 had an accident which is under investigation. Will get you more details later.
- Waiting for the insurance company to get back to us about Engine 14 accident. We looked into painting the truck for around \$30,000. The whole officer's side need to be painted and new roll doors. The price for that is around \$60,000. We don't know what the insurance will pay for, but we will have funds after the end of the year to get the truck refurbished and repainted. Chief Appell will keep you posted on this. Brian Baldwin asked if the town could do something to secure the items until it can be fixed. The Chief said he would check with the town.

Unfinished Business:

- Members in Good Standing Taskforce – Gina Kline
 - The taskforce took all the AOG's that related to membership issues and moved them to MEM's with in the AOG's. There were so many items that needed to be looked at and changed that it was easier to give this its own section of the AOG's. Gina Kline will send out all the MEM's and she would like the board to look them over and be prepared to discuss them at the next Board meeting. The biggest changes will be in the By-Laws Articles I and V. The taskforce would like to do all the changes to the By-Laws before going to the membership for approval, so the By-Laws only go to the membership once.
 - With all the changes that the taskforce is making the taskforce had to look in all documentation to make sure the verbiage is all the same. The biggest change will be in Article 5 where the different members categories are. These will all be different to keep the Member in Good Standing consistent with that membership status.
 - Gina wants all the board members to look over all the proposed changes and be ready for the next board meeting.

Unfinished Business cont.:

- Recruitment and Retention – Jamie DiPace
 - Jamie did get together with a few members. The recruitment chairperson needs to be a stand-alone position whether the board decides to make it a paid position or a member just does this as their duties in the department.
 - Jamie feels this position needs to be filled by a younger person who will have a better feel for how to recruit younger people.
 - Retention should be its own committee. Recruitment will take up a lot of time and who ever chairs that committee shouldn't do retention also.
 - Recruitment person should be involved in the application process. Jamie feels the vice president should be involved in this process as well. There should be an exit interview to find out why a member is leaving.
 - Jamie will be looking into what committees we have now and who is chairing them and go from there.
- AOG AA-4 Physical Policy
 - Chief Appell looked at the By-Laws, the current AA-4 and the medical manual. When he was looking at all this there were very different verbiage for each of them. The Chief suggested the board look to clean this up. He suggested the board should put a group together to work on the physical requirements and how they get done. Jamie DiPace suggested the group contact CIRMA who is the department's workmen's comp carrier to see if they could give the group some guidance. After this discussion Gina Kline made a motion with Jeff Borges seconding to put together a taskforce to investigate this issue and report back to the board. Motion passed
- Explorer Dress Uniform Jackets
 - Tom Post agreed that the Explorer's should have jackets, single breasted, but not to march only to wear if they are required to wear dress uniforms in the colder months. Tom Post said they could use 8 jackets. He will talk to the Rick Solari, who is the steward and ask him to get a quote for these jackets. Tom will come back to the board with how much it will cost.
- Suggestions Boxes – Gina Kline and Kristen Shaw will be the ones to open the suggestion boxes. Gina will send out a summary after this meeting to the board members. If anything has to be brought to the board under Executive Session Gina will let the President know ahead of time so that it is on the agenda.

Bring Under New Business:

- Gina made a motion to bring under New Business with Jamie DiPace seconding the out-of-town tax abatement for members who retire after 25 years and also , changing the points disbursement from twice a year to once a year and hiring a public relations person or firm, Motion passed.

New Business:

- Annual Points Checks – after some discussion Brian Baldwin suggested that the board should put out a survey to get a consensus of what the members feel about this issue. Brian will work on the wording of the survey and Gina will get it posted.
- Out-of-town tax abatement lifetime benefit – After discussing this it was decided to put together a committee to investigate how many members this would affect and the cost and other information so the board can have information to go back to the town council with. Jamie DiPace feels that the members this would affect should be on the committee. Kristen Shaw made a motion with Joe Farzinzad seconding to form this committee. Motion passed.
- Public Relations Firm – The board discussed this topic and agreed that it should be done. Jamie DiPace and Jim Speich will work on this and report back to the board with their findings.

New Business cont.

- Board meeting change – The board will be going back to the Tuesday before the second Monday. This was originally when the board met.
- Corporation Meeting every month – With COVID this cannot be done yet. Will revisit this at another time.
- Executive Session – Jim Speich told the board there should always be an Executive Session on the agenda even if there is not one held and if there is going to be one then there should be a bullet of what it will be, but not what will be discussed.

Meeting adjourned at 21:35