

979th Board of Directors Meeting, November 21, 2024

The meeting was called to order by President Gina Kline at 18:32

Pledge of Allegiance

Board Members Present: Bruce Appell, Jeff Bernetich, Jeff Borges, Jamie DiPace, Steve Gwizdak, Gina Kline, Kristen Shaw, Jim Speich, and Mark Wilson **Absent:** Brian Baldwin, Tom Post

Other Members Present In Person: Dave Bourgoin, Nancy Crozier and Tom Kline.

Executive Session Annual Performance Evaluation for Fire Chief:

- Jamie DiPace made a motion with Jeff Borges seconding to go into Executive Session. Motion passed. Went into Executive Session at 18:34 Came out of Executive Session at 19:04
- Discussed the feedback and there are a few changes to the document. President Kline will make those changes and send them to Chief Appell. Once he has had a chance to look them over she will set up a date and time to go over the evaluation with the chief and one other board member.

October 24, 2024, board minutes and November 12, 2024, special board meeting minutes were approved with one correction to take off the Executive Session on November 12, 2024, minutes with a motion made by Jeff Bernetich and seconded by Kristen Shaw. Motion Passed

Communications from Members: None

Board Member Reports:

- Mark Wilson – Had a question on the Service Awards. Was anyone left out? The service awards will be given out for this year 2024, but last year the new amounts were never voted on so the members who received service awards last year will be getting a check for the difference of what they received and what they should have received.

Treasurer's Report – Kristen Shaw

- Kristen went over the expenses for October.

Old Business:

- **Building Committee Updates and Next Steps** – Jim Speich
 - The committee is finalizing the responses to questions the Town Council had. The draft of the answers will go out to the committee to comment on them and then they will be presented to the town council hopefully at the December meeting. If not then it will be in January.
 - Techcon should be giving the committee the next set of work plans in the next few days.
 - Moving forward the committee will be looking at where to save money and prioritizing what the department needs/wants.
- **Member In Good Standing:**
 - The focus group met on October 29, 2024. It was well attended by members of all companies and a handful of officers.
 - Some of the feedback is as follows:
 - Firefighter in good standing incorporating extra time in the criteria.
 - Doing some type of conversion for the duty shift, something like 2 hours of duty shift would equal 1 incident.. Assistant Chief Speich would like to get feedback from the duty shift pilot before committing to anything.
 - Lower training requirements for members with over 20 years, but there was mixed feedback. Some members thought the senior members would be able to help the newer members with training.

- **Member in Good Standing cont.**
 - Fire Police did not know when to fill out blue sheets. They did not know that when they do driver training that this requires a blue sheet for training. They did have questions on when a blue sheet should be filled out.
 - HQ members did not know that if they are doing work at home they need to fill out yellow sheets even if they don't get points.
 - Look into some software to keep track of points instead of the paperwork system we have. There is nothing right now that would help with this.
 - Can't change the AOG due to reporting restriction. Will have to look into this more.
 - President Kline will change the verbiage for EX-4 to reflect that for the expense reimbursement Member in Good Standing would not affect this. She will make the changes and have the board look over to vote on the proposed changes.
- **Service Awards – IRS Considerations**
 - This topic came up because there was a question of whether to do checks or cash. The thought was that if cash was given out it would not be taxable, but if it was a check it would be taxable. President Kline went onto the IRS website to check out what the answers were and she found that according to IRS any money or cash equivalent is taxable as well as service awards. Steve Gwizdak will check on this with a tax accountant and report back to the board.
- **AOG Proposed Revisions – Status Update – Tabled until January**

New Business:

- **VCOS – Key Takeaways**
 - There was a lot of information on health and wellness for firefighters.
 - Recruitment and Retention were especially important and there was a lot of information via speakers and printed materials. When recruiting a new member the families should be involved so they know what is expected of any new members.
- **Communications – External Support**
 - Jamie DiPace had a conversation with Laura Ward and she told him that she is interested in joining the department and doing communications and social media like she has done in the past. Gina has had some members reach out to her regarding doing something with communications and social media. Gina will talk to Laura Ward and report back to the board.
- **Town Ordinance re: Tax Relief for firefighters (discussion) Tabled until January**
- **Board of Directors Vacancies**
 - After some discussion it was decided to leave this open for now and revisit in three months since any decision might affect the By-Laws.
- **Reappointment of External Board Member – S. Gwizdak (Vote)**
 - Jeff Borges made a motion to appoint Steve Gwizdak for another year as a board member with Kristen seconding. Motion passed unanimously.
- **2025 Board of Directors executive Officers (Vote)**
 - A motion was made to approve the slate of the 2025 Board of Directors Executive Officers by Nancy Crozier and seconded by Nancy Crozier. Motion Passed.
 - The following are the 2025 Board of Directors Executive Officers:
 - President – Gina Kline
 - Vice President – Jamie DiPace
 - Secretary – Mark Wilson
 - Treasurer – Steve Gwizdak

Chief Report: Bruce Appell

- **Hold Harmless Agreement:**
 - If the board agrees the hold harmless agreement can be used now so that retired members can fill out and come to the stations then the chief will work on it more and have the board look it over. Will have to work on membership status if the board wants the members to be able to come in more under a new membership status and this would require a By-Law change along with the new membership status would need to have a physical and some type of job to perform. Let the chief know if you want him to continue fleshing this out or wait for membership status change.
- **Buildings:**
 - Working on specifications for generator at Company 2. Working through Sourcewell for both 2 and 3.
 - Getting quotes to replace lading by the rear door at Company 2, No action on this yet.
 - Company 4 exterior lighting – We had Tower Electric change out the lights. Things are better but we still need to address a couple of items.

Jamie DiPace made a motion with Jeff Borges seconding to adjourn the meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 20:13

Respectfully submitted by
Grace Bianchi
Board of Directors Clerk