



BURLINGTON FIRE COMMISSION
CONFERENCE ROOM FIRE STATION #1 136 SOUTH WINOOSKI AVE.,
BURLINGTON, VT 05401
MINUTES OF MEETING
October 3, 2023

1. Call to Order

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Commissioner Bond called the meeting to order at 08:30. Commissioners Bond, McLaughlin, Sheehey, Perkinson, and Chapman all present. Also present were BFFA President Kyle Blake, BFFA Secretary Philip Edgerley, Chief Michael LaChance, HR Director Kerin Durfee, and Administrative Assistant Meghan Sweeney.

2. Adopt/Amend Agenda

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Motion to adopt agenda made by Commissioner Perkinson and seconded by Commissioner Sheehey. Agenda adopted as submitted.

3. Public Forum

3. Public Forum

No members of the general public present.

4. Old Business

4. Old Business

Subject	4.1. BFFA is seeking clarification on the grievance decision made by Commission following the special meeting on June 28, 2023.
Meeting	October 3, 2023 - Fire Commission - Tuesday, October 3, 2023, 8:30 AM, Conference Room Fire Station #1 136 South Winooski Ave., Burlington, VT 05401
Category	4. Old Business
Department	Fire Department
Type	
Recommended Action	

4.1. BFFA is seeking clarification on the grievance decision made by Commission following the special meeting on June 28, 2023.

BFFA Union President Kyle Blake asked the Commission to clarify their ruling from the special grievance hearing meeting held in June regarding BFFA contract section 10.5A.

Commissioner Bond clarified that the special meeting held in June was only to rule on the contract language that was interpreting two pieces of data presented in a very vague paragraph.

President Blake agreed that the language in the contract supports BFFA taking the \$112,000 negotiated

dollar value and dividing it among the 84 members to establish a scale that would be used going forward with no caps.

HR Director Durfee said there are still very "squishy" sentences, and the contract language is very weak. The section of the contract may still need to go to arbitration.

Commissioner Chair Bond recognizes that the situation creates a need for more trust on both sides. This was a last-minute agreed-upon detail in the contract to get it signed. It could be clearer and written better. At this point, the Commission had ruled on their interpretation of the language and had sustained the original grievance. There is not much more they can do.

Commissioner Perkinson expressed frustration that this has come up again as the Commission has already reached its decision and is unsure what more they can clarify. Any additional clarifications he thinks will need to be sorted out in arbitration.

HR Director Durfee would like to see this move along. She wants what is best for the City and the BFFA membership. BFFA has a sustained grievance at this point. Communication will continue between the City and BFFA. Commissioner Perkinson asked what the grievance process would look like in the next steps. Once a grievance has been made and is still considered unresolved, it goes to an arbitrator, or another grievance is presented. Union President Blake asked Commissioners if they supported the document he provided that summarized their decision and the Union's interpretation of the grievance decision. Commissioner Bond said they could not at that moment. The grievance was sustained, and there is nothing further to provide.

Commissioner Bond closed this part of the agenda at 09:00 AM. HR Director Durfee and Union Secretary Edgerley left the meeting at this point.

5. New Business

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Subject	5.1. Discussion of proposed Community Response Team
Meeting	October 3, 2023 - Fire Commission - Tuesday, October 3, 2023, 8:30 AM, Conference Room Fire Station #1 136 South Winooski Ave., Burlington, VT 05401
Category	5. New Business
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Type

5.1. Discussion of proposed Community Response Team

The proposed Community Response Team is moving forward. BFFA President Kyle Blake has worked closely with Chief LaChance, drafting the proposal for the CRT ensuring the union members are committed to helping this plan get staffed and off the ground. This team will work in partnership with outside agencies to solve problems in our community and help take some of the load off members on shift with the constantly increasing call volume. The timeline that the department wants to start this is clear, and has already been hired, with the first shift being October 16th. Chief LaChance will bring this to the Board of Finance and City Council on October 10, 2023. Chief LaChance plans to request state opioid settlement monies to fund this initiative. However, at this point, we have yet to be recognized as a vendor for using these funds. He is willing to lobby at the state level to secure support.

The hiring for this team will only be voluntary and will be available for members to fill 12 hours/day 7 days a week. If the membership can't fill the full 12 hours, we will hire for the time frame that can be filled. Chief LaChance hopes this team will work in addition to the CARES team when that gets going. CARES is currently modeled to work more towards helping mental health type calls, while this team will focus on unresponsive and overdose responses.

Chief LaChance has asked the company working on our staffing study to wait until February to present their recommendations to allow the use of data from the CRT pilot. Chief LaChance recognizes there will be a lot of demand from the department members when we already cover our minimum staffing needs and are back to assist in the dispatch center.

Commissioner Bond thinks this is a bold decision, and she likes it. She is willing to help and give support in any way.

BFFA President Kyle Blake is hopeful that taking small steps to build this team will help make it successful. The team will focus on three areas: leaving preventative kits if no transport is needed, hailing ambulances when needed while providing immediate care, and putting them in contact with offered services.

Commissioner Perkinson asked what the plan would be if not passed by the Board of Finance. He wants to know if there is a way to prioritize calls like BPD does to help alleviate some of the call volume. Kyle Blake explained that many overdose calls come in as medical emergencies, even when third-party callers do not interact with these people. The department must respond and follow District 3 patient treatment protocols. Most often, this means the patient needs to be transported. District 3 protocols are not modeled on addiction medical events. Therefore, without detox facilities to help triage some of these calls, the patients are transported by ambulance to UVM MC.

6. Adopt Minutes

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Commissioner Bond asked for a motion to adopt minutes from previous meetings. Motion made by Commissioner Sheehey and seconded by Commissioner McLaughlin.

7. Chief's Oral Report

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Chief LaChance provided the commissioners with call information and reports before the meeting. Please see the attachments for this report.

Commissioner Perkinson asked if Regional Dispatch was still a discussion that was being had. At this time, no, but South Burlington has joined our Computer Aided Dispatch System (CAD). If the communities wanted to look at something down the road that allowed for Fire/EMS combined dispatch, it would be easier to transition as the CAD would already allow the view of multiple agencies.

Commissioners expressed interest in seeing a matrix for data that shows repeated calls to individuals.

8. Adjournment

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Commissioner Bond asked for a motion to adjourn. Motion made by Commissioner Sheehey and seconded by Commissioner McLaughlin. Meeting Adjourned at 09:54 AM.