



BURLINGTON FIRE COMMISSION
CONFERENCE ROOM FIRE STATION #1 136 SOUTH WINOOSKI AVE.,
BURLINGTON, VT 05401
MINUTES OF MEETING
December 5, 2023

1. Call to Order

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The meeting was called to order at 08:30 by Commissioner Bond. Commissioners Bond, McLaughlin, Perkins, and Sheehey were present. Chief Michael LaChance and Administrative Assistant Meghan Sweeney were also present.

2. Motion to amend/adopt agenda

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Commissioner Bond asked for a motion to adopt agenda. So moved by Commissioner Sheehey and seconded by Commissioner McLaughlin.

3. Commission Awards

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Chief LaChance presented commissions to Lieutenants Kyle Blake, Joshua Kirtlnk, and Michael Jordan. Members on shift came in for the meeting for the presentation. All members left after the commissions were given out.

4. Public Forum

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No members of public attended on Zoom or in person.

5. Adopt Minutes

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There was a motion made to adopt minutes from the October meeting by Commissioner McLaughlin and seconded by Commissioner Sheehey.

6. Chief's Oral Report

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Chief LaChance provided the commission with his Chief's Report before the meeting (see attachment). While discussing the report, the following topics were spoken about:

- Chief LaChance shared his concern that the fire department's response to the latest high-visibility incidents is not recognized adequately. The fire department members provide high-level care with professionalism at these scenes, and their response significantly impacts the scene and the members of the public involved in the incident.
- Mandatory minimum staffing is up significantly. Many members who typically sign up for voluntary shifts also sign up to cover shifts on the CRT and in dispatch.
- The fleet continues to be a concern as the city struggles to budget for new vehicles (for all departments). Along with budget concerns for new vehicles, there are challenges with maintaining an aging fleet without

increasing the funds in Public Works to allow for increased staffing and parts.

- Multiple station projects are being planned but have no definitive completion date. While discussing the Gateway Block developer's walkthrough, the ideas of what a new station will require was discussed. Chief LaChance said while the study from 2018 is being used for information on where the station would be located, other department needs will need to be assessed to design a facility that would be adequate for decades to come. (training space, conference room, business offices etc).

- The Community Response Team (CRT) shows signs of success. Members see proof of the leave-behind kits being used, and the department can track the amount of Narcan it distributes.

- The department is looking to do recruitment training with Karen Stackpole of Paul Frank + Collins. Some members had participated in a previous meeting with her and found the information very beneficial. They hope that it will help with our current recruiting process.

Commissioner Perkinson asked about the recruit school process for new employees and if they are paid during that time. Newly hired members are paid the same weekly wage on probation regardless of whether they are in the recruit academy or assigned to apparatus.

Commissioner Perkinson also asked what the general feel of the department is regarding station consolidation and Gateway Block discussions. Chief LaChance explained that he is still determining how the consolidation would influence apparatus deployment, staffing and rank structures.

Commissioner Perkinson expressed his thanks for the reports that Chief LaChance provides and said he finds them information helpful.

Commissioner Perkinson asked if there was a way that the fleet could be budgeted annually versus bonded as it's been done or if bonding could be done to allow purchasing of trucks more often. A few years ago, a city representative presented the commission with information about why fleet purchases are bonded. Whatever the finance mechanism, we need a plan that allows for more consistent fleet purchases. The commission asked for a report that shows data on when apparatus are out of service and for how long. Chief LaChance will work on putting something together that shows this information.

Commissioner Sheehey said she is receiving positive feedback from neighbors and others who have seen the work done by the CRT. Chief LaChance said they have seen a reduction in the number of calls. that the downtown companies respond to. The intention of the team appears to be working. BTV Cares update: Chief Murad has updated City Leadership that the Police Department is in the process of getting the positions for the team hired and that it's the closest it's ever been to being live.

7. Old Business

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Commissioner Bond asked if there has been any progress regarding the retention bonus between the Union and the city. Chief LaChance has requested the Director of HR, CAO, and City Attorney to work with Union to resolve this. Multiple plans are being considered, and discussions are still underway.

8. New Business

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Commissioner Bond asked if, with the new Gateway Block Project, there was any way to get more of the public in to see the buildings and the reasons for requests. Chief LaChance said there are already tours that the station provides (both scheduled for larger groups and drop-ins for smaller ones), and there is usually an open house for Fire Prevention Week. Commissioner Bond offered support with help and exposure if needed to move forward.

Chief LaChance said there is a project to update the patch and rebrand. There is also active work to change the uniform policy for members on shift.

Subject	8.1. Approve predicted schedule for 2024 meeting dates (subject to change).
Meeting	December 5, 2023 - Fire Commission - Tuesday, December 5, 2023, 8:30 AM, Conference Room Fire Station #1 136 South Winooski Ave., Burlington, VT 05401
Category	8. New Business
Department	Fire Department
Type	

8.1. Approve predicted schedule for 2024 meeting dates (subject to change).

Commissioner Bond asked for a motion to accept the 2024 proposed meeting dates. Motion made by Commissioner McLaughlin and seconded by Commissioner Sheehey. 2024 meeting dates are subject to change.

Meeting adjourned at 09:31.