



BURLINGTON FIRE COMMISSION
CONFERENCE ROOM FIRE STATION #1 136 SOUTH WINOOSKI AVE.,
BURLINGTON, VT 05401
MINUTES OF MEETING
February 6, 2024

1. Call to Order

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At 08:30 on Tuesday, February 6, 2024, the Burlington Fire Commission was called to order by Commissioner Bond. Commissioners Bond, Sheehey, Perkins, and McLaughlin attended in person, and Commissioner Chapman attended via Zoom. Chief LaChance, Deputy Chief Petit, BFFA Union President Blake, BFFA Vice President Kirtlink, and Administrative Assistant Sweeney were also in attendance.

2. Adopt Agenda

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Commissioner Bond asked for a motion to adopt the agenda. The motion was made by Commissioner McLaughlin and seconded by Commissioner Sheehey.

3. Public Forum

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No members of general public were in attendance via Zoom or in person.

4. Adopt Minutes

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Minutes from previous meeting were approved by motion from Commissioner McLaughlin and seconded by Commissioner Sheehey.

5. Chief's Oral Report

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Chief's Oral Report is found in the Agenda Packet. Chief LaChance spoke additionally on some points.

- Personnel - Commissioner Bond asked if hiring firefighters with previous experience and getting them paid higher amounts for prior experience is a new idea or if this is currently being done elsewhere. Chief LaChance explained that other agencies may have a state-wide pension system allowing members to move to different departments while keeping their service years credited. The City of Burlington has its pension system, so there is no way to credit other members who come for their previous years of service in retirement. We can try to be more competitive financially and recognize those years as a way to pay them at a higher pay rate.
- Responses - Chief LaChance did clarify that these response numbers include deployments with CRT (Community Response Team). They do not quantify when making connections and doing public outreach. The data trend does show calls, especially EMS, are continuously increasing. It does appear that overdose calls are decreasing. The CRT is an attempt to help the community and solve some of the struggles the department was facing when responding to overdose and good intent calls. Chief

LaChance continues to work with local and national public figures to allow municipalities to get funding for projects like the CRT.

6. Old Business

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Subject **6.1. Follow up on Staffing Study**

Meeting February 6, 2024 - Burlington Fire Commission Meeting - Tuesday, February 6, 2024, 8:30 AM, Conference Room Fire Station #1 136 South Winooski Ave., Burlington, VT 05401

Category 6. Old Business

Department Fire Department

Type

Recommended Action

6.1. Follow up on Staffing Study

Commissioner Perkinson asked that the Staffing Study, when completed, be summarized to include key notes so that it's more consumable. He wants to know what's been learned from this study that wasn't already our knowledge.

Chief LaChance is working on getting the key points summarized. So far, the study confirms the need for additional staffing and considers recommendations regarding station consolidation.

Commissioner Bond asked if the mental health survey a few years ago would benefit the study. The survey referenced in the staffing study didn't have full participation, and she wondered if more was found with the previous one. Chief LaChance reminded us that the study was done in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, which was very challenging for the membership.

BFFA President Blake agrees that the study has not shown any surprising data. He is concerned that the Union hasn't been included in the oversight as much as they would have liked to have been. He's concerned that the information provided in the report is too broad for the requested guidelines of the RFP. If the report is too broad, it's challenging to focus on the actual concern, which is supposed to be the number of staff that the department has. Since the MOU for this study had three parties overseeing the study (Commission, Union, and City leadership), the Union is requesting that specific side topics from the study be removed as they are not a part of the study's scope and may influence the City's decision with what to do with the findings.

Any changes made as a result of this study will be a part of negotiations in the next contract. BFFA will put together a list of highlights they think the study is finding, focusing mainly on the staffing portion. Chief LaChance and Union Leadership agree that the results of the study and discussions that should be had should wait for the new Mayor to be appointed. They appreciate the efforts that Mayor Weinberger has put in to make this happen.

7. New Business

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Subject **7.1. Executive Session**

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Category 7. New Business

Department Fire Department

Type

7.1. Executive Session

Pursuant to Title 1, Section 313 of the Vermont Statutes, upon the affirmative vote a majority of the members present, a motion to go into executive session is carried to discuss matters where general public knowledge would place the Department at a substantial disadvantage. A motion to go into executive session to discuss a pending litigation was made by Commissioner McLaughlin and seconded by Commissioner Sheehey. Executive Session started at 09:32. Commissioner Bond stated that executive session ended at 09:38 with no action taken.