

TOWN OF HARRISBURG FIRE DEPARTMENT ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

Thursday, September 22, 2022
6:00 P.M. at Harrisburg Fire Administration Building

Present: Robin Torrence, Barry Lefler, William Kennedy, Ken Long, Chief Bryan Dunn

Absent: Matt Stiene, Division Chief Tim Wooten, Deputy Chief Ken Bradey

Public attendance: None

Town Official(s): None

Meeting called to order by Chairman Robin Torrence

1.0 Invocation

Barry Lefler gave the invocation

2.0 Public Comment

None

3.0 Agenda Changes and Approval:

A. Agenda Adoption:

Barry Lefler made a motion to accept the agenda. The motion was seconded by Kenny Long and passed unanimously.

4.0 Review of Consent Agenda and Changes:

A. Monthly Reports:

The Monthly operations report was presented to the committee.

B. Minutes:

Board reviewed the minutes from the Aug 2022 meeting. William Kennedy made a motion to accept the Monthly Reports and Minutes from that meeting. The motion was seconded by Barry Lefler and passed unanimously.

5.0 Old Business:

A. Personnel Updates:

1. The department posted the vacant Battalion Chief position about a month ago. The position is open to both internal and external candidates and will be open for 90 days. To date, only two applications have been submitted. If the department does not receive more applications by the closing date, they may reevaluate the position and process.
2. The department just completed the hiring 3 new lateral firefighters. These lateral FF are already certified and are going through orientation and training and being evaluated by department leadership. All are expected to be successful, but if there are any deficiencies, they can be sent through the next recruit school.
3. Two of the three department recruit candidates currently going through Concord's Fire Academy are progressing well. However, the third was recently dismissed from the school and terminated by the department.

4. The department currently has one firefighter vacancy, not including the vacant Battalion Chief position. The joint application recruitment and application process has started again.

B. ISO Rating Review:

The department received the results of the ISO Inspection/review that occurred in December 2021. The department did well and received an ISO rating of 2. This makes the HFD one of 88 fire departments in NC and approximately one of 1,600 departments nationwide to receive this ranking. There is a clarification period where the department will address some issues raised in the evaluation, however with the department rating a solid 2, any changes in the clarification will probably not change the overall ranking.

C. New Ladder Truck

The construction of the new ladder truck is progressing well and is actually ahead of schedule. The department is now anticipating delivery in early November. At that point, there will be some additional work required (ie., mounting tools and equipment), plus training for the crews. It is expected the new ladder truck will go into service in early 2023.

D. Town Pay Study:

The Town Manager presented the results comprehensive salary study at last month's Town Council Meeting. The Town Manager was recommending accepting the results and implementing the recommended salary rates to the Towns current merit based system. As part of the study, the Fire Department has been examining an alternative pay plan and has suggested moving to a stepped pay plan.

1. The Step Plan would feature defined salaries based upon years of service, rather than a set starting salary and annual merit based increases. One of the issues a step Plan would eliminate is different salaries for staff doing the same work and ensure higher ranks would be paid more than longer serving staff at lower ranks. The Plan would be similar to the City of Charlottes pay plan for the fire and police departments.
2. The Board discussed the advantages and disadvantages of implementing a step plan. Such a plan would be easier to administer and would likely save the department (Town) money in overall salaries. It would also satisfy concerns of staff regarding disparate salaries in the department.
3. It would be important for the department to continue to have a robust and viable performance evaluation, even if these are no longer directly tied to salaries. Department administration believes such a system could be created and implemented.
4. After the discussion, William Kennedy made a motion that the Advisory Board express our support for the implementation of a Step Pay Plan for the Harrisburg Fire Department. That motion was seconded by Barry Lefler and unanimously passed. The Board will draft a letter of support for the proposed pay plan and forward it to the Fire Chief.

E. Advisory Board Responsibilities and Duties

As a follow up to last month meeting, a draft document was presented to the Board, outlining the Boards duties and responsibilities. The Board will review and revise as needed the document, and then finalize for submission to the Town Council at the next meeting.

6.0 New Business:

A. Budget Updates

The start of the budget year has gone smoothly. This includes major purchases such as portable radios and vehicles.

B. Board Resignation

Board member Barry Lefler announced that he will be resigning from the board, effective immediately. Mr. Lefler stated that he is moving out of the district and as such, will no longer be eligible to serve as a member, based on the Boards residency requirements. The Chair and all the members thanked Barry Lefler for his service and his contributions to the Town and the Fire Department.

7.0 Next Meeting:

The board tentatively scheduled the next meeting for Thursday, October 27, 2022, at 6:00 P.M. at the HFD Administration Building.

8.0 Adjournment:

Barry Lefler made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by William Kennedy.

Members:

Inside corporate limits:

Robin Torrence – Chairman
William Kennedy – Secretary
Barry Lefler – Vice Chairman

Outside corporate limits:

Matthew Stiene
Ken Long
Ex-Officio member: Tim Wooten