

TOWN OF HARRISBURG FIRE DEPARTMENT ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

Thursday, October 27, 2022
6:00 P.M. at Harrisburg Fire Administration Building

Present: Robin Torrence, William Kennedy, Ken Long, Division Chief Tim Wooten, Chief Bryan Dunn (via Zoom), Matt Stiene (via Zoom), Deputy Chief Ken Bradey (via Zoom)

Absent: None

Public attendance: None

Town Official(s): None

Meeting called to order by Chairman Robin Torrence

1.0 Invocation

Ken Long gave the invocation

2.0 Public Comment

None

3.0 Agenda Changes and Approval:

A. Agenda Adoption:

Robin Torrence requested adding Advisory Board Vice Chair position under new business. Matt Stiene made a motion to accept the amended agenda. The motion was seconded by William Kennedy 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 September 2022 meeting. William Kennedy made a motion to accept the Monthly Reports and Minutes from that meeting. The motion was seconded by Ken Long and passed unanimously.

5.0 Old Business:

A. Personnel Updates:

1. With the resignation of one of the recent lateral hires and the pending resignation of two firefighters who are expected to go to Charlotte, the department will have three firefighter vacancies, not including the vacant Battalion Chief position.
2. The Battalion Chief position is still open, with only a couple of applications received so far. The position will remain open and posted for another month.
3. The two department recruit candidates currently going through Concord's Fire Academy are progressing well and expected to graduate December 15, 2022.

B. New Ladder Truck:

The construction of the new ladder truck is progressing well, with final inspection section expected around the middle to the end of November. The truck will then be

delivered to the local dealer for some additional work required (ie., mounting tools and equipment). It is expected the new ladder truck will go into service in early 2023.

C. Town Pay Study:

As part of the Town's recent Salary Study, the Fire Department had proposed an alternative to the Town's merit-based pay plan and had suggested moving to a stepped pay plan.

1. The Department Administration and Advisory Board supported the proposed stepped pay plan. The plan would eliminate 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 easier to administer and would likely save the department (Town) money in overall salaries.
2. The proposal is currently under consideration by the Town Council, however at this time, it does not appear the council supports moving to such a plan for the Fire Department. The issue is scheduled to be on the Agenda for the November Town Council meeting.
3. At this time, it appears likely that department will continue in the Town's Merit based plan. As proposed, the merit plan would still result in pay increases for department staff. The department can also resubmit the stepped pay plan request in the future if appropriate.

D. Advisory Board Responsibilities and Duties:

A final draft document was presented to the Board, outlining the Board's duties and responsibilities. The Board approved the document and recommended submitting it to the Town Council as they are reevaluating and reassessing several of the Town's Boards.

6.0 New Business:

A. Budget Updates

1. With a new Town Council in place, many aspects of the Town's budgets are getting additional scrutiny, however the implementation of the Fire Department budget has continued to go smoothly. This includes moving forward with major purchases such as portable radios and vehicles, additions to the training center at Station 2 and some proposed renovations for Station 1.
2. The warning light for Station 1 is still moving ahead, but progress is slower than originally anticipated. This was funded in last year's budget, but the funds have been carried forward to this year.
3. The Town will be starting the budget preparation process for next year's budget soon. The Department anticipates no changes or major additions to next year's budget. The department will propose adding three firefighters to reach its stated objective of 5 personnel assigned to each company. This allows the department to move closer to assuring 4 FF on each truck and helps the department better deal with staffing shortages and changes.

B. Board Vacancy

With the resignation of Board member Barry Lefler, there is currently an opening for a member who resides inside the corporate limits. This raised two issues.

1. First, Barry Lefler has served as the Board's Vice Chair, leaving that role vacant. After discussion, Ken Long nominated Matt Stiene to fill the Vice Chair position. The motion was seconded by William Kennedy. There were no other nominations and

the Board unanimously agree that Matt Stiene will assume that role Vice Chair through the remainder of his term.

2. The second issue involves filling the Advisory Board vacancy. Bylaws allow the Board to recommend a replacement to the Town Council for appointment, however, no one knew any of any potential applicants. As a result, the Board recommends that the Town post the vacancy on the Towns website and seek applicants from the community.

C. Automatic Aid Agreement with Charlotte:

The recent addition of an Enhanced Mutual Aid Agreement with the Charlotte Fire Department was discussed. The agreement involves the assignment of an Engine, Ladder and Battalion Chief from the neighboring County on any high priority/risk calls, such as structure fires. The agreement went live earlier this month and early results indicate the agreement is working well, with one example being the recent working house fire in Engine 32's area that quickly added Charlotte Engine 34, Ladder 40 and Battalion Chief 2 to the assignment.

7.0 Next Meeting:

The board tentatively scheduled the next meeting for Thursday, November 17, 2022, at 6:00 P.M. at the HFD Administration Building.

8.0 Adjournment:

Ken Long made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Matt Stiene.

Members:

Inside corporate limits:

Robin Torrence – Chairman
William Kennedy – Secretary
Vacant

Outside corporate limits:

Matthew Stiene
Ken Long
Ex-Officio member: Tim Wooten