

Town of Watertown Fire District
Meeting Minutes
February 8, 2023

The February Monthly Meeting was called to order by Arthur Cooley at 6:02 pm.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America was recited by all.

Attendance:

Commissioners: Arthur Cooley, Michael Hanley, Meredith George and Brian Wilcox were present. Warren Day was absent

Secretary/Treasurer: William Bamann

Chiefs: Chief David Johnston and Assistant Chief Ronald Wareham.

District Employees: Fred Sourwine

Guests: Gordon MacIvennie, Robert Johnston, and Wayne Scott

The floor was opened for public comment. Gordon MacIvennie presented a comprehensive insurance quote from VFIS (see attached). Robert Johnston asked about the status of the new 10% property tax exemption. Chairman Cooley stated he will follow-up to see what the Town is doing. There being no one else who wanted to speak, the floor was closed for public comments.

Communications:

Arthur Cooley mentioned several upcoming events from the Association of Fire Districts. They were also previously sent out to all the Commissioners via email.

Minutes: The minutes of the January meeting were provided for review/approval.

Upon a motion made by Brian Wilcox, seconded by Michael Hanley, and after a discussion held, the following resolution was approved:

Be it resolved that the minutes from the January meeting as presented are approved.

Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent		Recuse
Arthur Cooley	X					
Michael Hanley	X					
Meredith George	X					
Warren Day				X		
Brian Wilcox	X					

The Motion carried.

Bills and Treasurer's Report: Secretary-Treasurer Bamann presented the bills (see attached Abstract of Bills), financial reports, and Bank Statements. The Commissioners were reminded

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to review and sign the Abstract of Bills as well as sign the Vouchers for each payment. One Commissioner also needs to review and sign/initial the account reconciliations and Bank Statements.

Upon a motion made by Meredith George, seconded by Arthur Cooley, and after a discussion held, the following resolution was approved:

Be it resolved that the bills presented on the attached abstract of bills be paid.

Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Recuse
Arthur Cooley	X				
Michael Hanley	X				
Meredith George	X				
Warren Day				X	
Brian Wilcox	X				

The Motion carried.

The Secretary-Treasurer also presented a report of unused 2022 funds and recommendation as to which Reserve funds to transfer then into (attached).

Upon a motion made by Arthur Cooley, seconded by Meredith George and after a discussion held, the following resolution was approved:

Be it resolved that the Truck Reserve Fund shall be reimbursed the \$30,245.60 used to pay for repairs to 46-1-1 from the leftover 2022 funds.

Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Recuse
Arthur Cooley	X				
Michael Hanley	X				
Meredith George	X				
Warren Day				X	
Brian Wilcox	X				

The Motion carried and the Secretary-Treasurer was directed to make the transfer.

Upon a motion made by Michael Hanley, seconded by Brian Wilcox, and after a discussion held, the following resolution was approved:

Be it resolved that \$65,000 of the leftover 2022 funds be placed in the Building Reserve Fund.

Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Recuse
Arthur Cooley	X				
Michael Hanley	X				
Meredith George	X				
Warren Day				X	
Brian Wilcox	X				

The Motion carried and the Secretary-Treasurer was directed to make the transfer.

Upon a motion made by Arthur Cooley, seconded by Meredith George, and after a discussion held, the following resolution was approved:

Be it resolved that \$10,000 of the leftover 2022 funds be placed in the Radio Reserve Fund.

Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Recuse
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Arthur Cooley	X				
Michael Hanley	X				
Meredith George	X				
Warren Day				X	
Brian Wilcox	X				

The Motion carried and the Secretary-Treasurer was directed to make the transfer.

Upon a motion made by Brian Wilcox, seconded by Meredith George, and after a discussion held, the following resolution was approved:

Be it resolved that \$25,000 of the leftover 2022 funds be placed in the SCBA Reserve Fund.

Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Recuse
Arthur Cooley	X				
Michael Hanley	X				
Meredith George	X				
Warren Day				X	
Brian Wilcox	X				

The Motion carried and the Secretary-Treasurer was directed to make the transfer.

Upon a motion made by Arthur Cooley, seconded by Meredith George, and after a discussion held, the following resolution was approved:

Be it resolved that the remaining \$32,457.68 of the leftover 2022 funds be placed in the Truck Reserve Fund.

Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Recuse
Arthur Cooley	X				
Michael Hanley	X				
Meredith George	X				
Warren Day				X	
Brian Wilcox	X				

The Motion carried and the Secretary-Treasurer was directed to make the transfer.

The Secretary-Treasurer also presented purchase requests including quotes for two new computers and a floor machine for Station 3.

Upon a motion made by Meredith George, seconded by Brian Wilcox, and after a discussion held, the following resolution was approved:

Be it resolved that the purchase of two new computers is approved (see quote sheet).

Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Recuse
Arthur Cooley	X				
Michael Hanley	X				
Meredith George	X				
Warren Day				X	
Brian Wilcox	X				

The Motion carried.

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Upon a motion made by Michael Hanley, seconded by Brian Wilcox, and after a discussion held, the following resolution was approved:

Be it resolved that the purchase of the new floor machine for Station 3 is approved (see quote sheet).

Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Recuse
Arthur Cooley	X				
Michael Hanley	X				
Meredith George	X				
Warren Day				X	
Brian Wilcox	X				

The Motion carried.

Chief's Report: See Chief's Report attached.

Chief Johnston reported Jeffery VanBrocklin resigned as 2nd Assistant Chief and per the Fire Department By-Laws, the other Assistant Chiefs will move up. The Department will be looking for someone to fill the 46-0-4 position.

The Chief asked to go into Executive Session to discuss sensitive personnel matters.

Upon a motion made by Michael Hanley, seconded by Brian Wilcox, and after a discussion held, the following resolution was approved:

Be it resolved that the Board of Fire Commissioners shall go into Executive Session to discuss personnel matters.

Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Recuse
Arthur Cooley	X				
Michael Hanley	X				
Meredith George	X				
Warren Day				X	
Brian Wilcox	X				

The Motion carried and The Board went into executive session at 7:08.

Upon a motion made by Michael Hanley, seconded by Arthur Cooley, and after a discussion held, the following resolution was approved:

Be it resolved that the Board of Fire Commissioners shall come out of Executive Session and continue the regular meeting.

Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Recuse
Arthur Cooley	X				
Michael Hanley	X				
Meredith George	X				
Warren Day				X	
Brian Wilcox	X				

The Motion carried and The Board came out of executive session at 7:27pm.

Employee's Report: See attached report.

There was a discussion regarding the leasing versus purchase of new trucks to replace the utility and Chiefs' vehicles and which brand trucks will work best based on the information provided.

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It was recommended to get quotes from Syracuse and other downstate area dealers to ensure best pricing. The consensus among Board members was that purchase was better than leasing.

Upon a motion made by Meredith George, seconded by Michael Hanley, and after a discussion held, the following resolution was approved:

Be it resolved that the Board of Fire Commissioners approves Channel 7 News doing a story on the fire department, volunteers, the bunk-in program and conduct a ride along as long as they follow privacy and safety policies/procedures.

Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Recuse
Arthur Cooley	X				
Michael Hanley	X				
Meredith George	X				
Warren Day				X	
Brian Wilcox	X				

The Motion carried.

Committee Reports:

The Paid Firefighter Committee met with Jefferson County Human Resources to discuss the process, job descriptions, approval of the Fire District Manager job, etc. Several issues were discussed. NYS told the County that the Fire District Manager could not supervise paid firefighters and that there must be a paid Chief. This was disputed and the County will go back to the State for further clarification as our understanding was that a paid Chief was not required. The County told us to go ahead and put together a Form 222 Job Duties for Firefighter and once approved we can hire part-time firefighters from already qualified NYS professional firefighters working full-time in paid fire departments in New York State. We will continue working with the county as the desire is to have at least two firefighters on duty 24/7. The Board discussed applying for a SAFER grant now, but it was agreed that we are not yet ready. The issue of due diligence was discussed in regards to getting pricing from the City of Watertown to provide a first-due Engine Company to our fire calls in lieu of hiring paid firefighters of our own. A meeting will be set-up with the City Manager to discuss this option.

Old Business:

The Fire District Manager Job Description is still awaiting approval by the State

The new HR policy and Union Negotiations are on hold until the disposition of the new job descriptions is finalized.

New Business:

The Personnel Committee will conduct Fredrick Sourwine's annual performance review and report back next month.

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Upon a motion made by Brian Wilcox, seconded by Michael Hanley, and after a discussion held, the following resolution was approved:

Be it resolved that this meeting is adjourned.

Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Recuse
Arthur Cooley	X				
Michael Hanley	X				
Meredith George	X				
Warren Day				X	
Brian Wilcox	X				

The meeting adjourned at 8:37 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



William L. Bamann
Secretary-Treasurer