

Town of Watertown Fire District
Monthly Meeting Minutes
July 12, 2023

The July Monthly Meeting was called to order by Arthur Cooley at 6:00 pm.

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

Attendance:

Commissioners: Arthur Cooley, Michael Hanley, Warren Day, and Meredith George were present. Brian Wilcox was excused due to job commitments.

Secretary/Treasurer: William Bamann

Chiefs: Chief David Johnston and Assistant Chief Ronald Wareham.

District Employees: Fred Sourwine, Chip Metzler, and Justyn St. Croix

Guests: TWFD Firefighters Joshua Wilcox, Robert Johnston, Christopher Brass, and Robert Buchman; and Jessica Hudon

The floor was opened for public comment.

Josh Wilcox spoke about the District's letter to The City to contract firefighting services. He stated many Fire Department members were surprised by the letter in the news and were offended the Fire Department wasn't consulted before sending the letter. The Board of Fire Commissioners explained that they are doing their due diligence in ensuring fire protection in the wake of low volunteer response to calls and that the Fire Department members' concerns are noted.

Robert Johnston spoke about the Property Tax exemption letter the Fire District sent to the Town Supervisor. It was discussed that the Town did nothing with the letter as there's no property tax charged to the Town Residents. The Town should have endorsed the letter to the County and the School District; The Fire District will send letters directly to these two taxing jurisdictions for them to provide the tax exemption.

There being no one else who wanted to speak, the floor was closed for public comments.

Communications: None. Any communications received are sent to all the Board members via email.

Minutes: The minutes of the June Monthly meeting were provided via email for review/approval.

Upon a motion made by Arthur Cooley, seconded by Warren Day, and after a discussion held in that there were no edits required, the following resolution was approved:

Be it resolved that the aforementioned minutes from the June meeting are approved.

Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent		Recuse
Arthur Cooley	X					
Michael Hanley	X					

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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 to review and sign the Abstract of Bills as well as sign all the Vouchers for 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 Michael Hanley, and after a discussion held, the following resolution was approved:

Be it resolved that the bills presented 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.

Secretary-Treasurer Bamann presented the Actual versus Budget report to date as well as the Bank Account balances (attached). He then presented two quote forms for equipment for approval to purchase (attached). He also reminded the Board of Fire Commissioners that they need to schedule some special meetings to draft a budget for 2024 as we’re required to have it finalized by September for a public hearing then approval in October..

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 Board of Fire Commissioners shall hold a special meeting to begin developing a budget for 2024 on August 16, 2023 at 6 pm.

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

The Motion carried.

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

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Be it resolved that the Board of Fire Commissioners approves the purchase of the budgeted Fire boots and Ice Machine per the attached quote package.

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.

The Chief discussed "Cancelled Enroute" calls and stated that he would always cancel responding units to minimize risk when there was no need for Fire Department.

Employee's Report: See District Manager's report.

Fred Sourwine mentioned the need to establish the date for the Annual Community Days events if the Fire District wanted to do this again this year. September 23rd was discussed as the best possible date.

Committee Reports: The Paid Firefighter Committee visited the Belgium-Cold Springs Fire District to learn how they went about hiring paid firefighters in their District as they are about a year ahead of us in the process. They employ 10 part-time Firefighters to supplement their volunteers. The Committee presented several recommendations based upon their visit: start by hiring part-time only firefighters to provide at least 2 firefighters on duty to cover the day shifts, Monday through Friday, when most volunteers are not available due to their jobs; give priority of hiring to current members and employees; and hold a public hearing to ensure the public understands the reasoning and potential costs for the hiring.

Old Business:

The Fire District Manager and Firefighter Job Descriptions are still awaiting approval by Jefferson County; we were told they're on the Director's desk for signature.

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

New Business:

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

Be it resolved that the Board of Fire Commissioners approves holding a Public Hearing on Tuesday August 29, 2023 at 6pm for the hiring of up to 10 part-time firefighters so that we can have 2 firefighters on duty Mondays through Fridays during the day to ensure response when volunteers are least available.

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

The Motion carried.

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

Be it resolved that the Board of Fire Commissioners will go into Executive Discussion 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. The Board went into Executive Session at 7:18 pm.

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

Be it resolved that the Board of Fire Commissioners will come out of Executive Discussion and continue the Regular monthly 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. The Board came out of Executive Session at 7:59 pm.

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

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Be it resolved that the Board of Fire Commissioners approves hiring Jessica Hudon as a part-time (18 hours a week) Cleaner at the new pay rate of \$20 per hour effective the week of July 24, 2023.

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

The Motion carried.

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

Be it resolved that the Board of Fire Commissioners approves the dismissal of Fire Driver Daniel Lowe, for insubordination and walking off the job, effective immediately.

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

The Motion carried.

Upon a motion made by Arthur Cooley, seconded by Warren Day, and after a discussion held that there's no other business to discuss, 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 7:58 pm.

Respectfully submitted,


 William L. Bamann
 Secretary-Treasurer