

**FIRE TRANSITION STUDY COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING – VIRTUAL
April 8, 2021, 6:00 P.M.**

CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL:

By: Pacholski

Time: 6:04 p.m.

Place: Virtual

	PRESENT	ABSENT
Chuck Beecher	X	
Ken Boutin	X	
Craig Malan, Vice Chairperson	X	
Bud Meyers	X	
James McLoughlin, Staff	X	
Steve Pacholski, Chairperson	X	
Josh Ziel, Secretary	X (arrived 6:16)	

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS:

No one was present to speak.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES:

Motion: The Fire Transition Study Committee approves the minutes of the February 11, 2021, meeting.

By: Malan

Seconded: Meyers

Corrections:

- Page 2, third paragraph – add “budget” before “presentation”.

Discussion: The agenda for this meeting lists the minutes to be approved as being from February 16, 2021. That was the date the minutes were distributed to the Team members; the meeting was held on February 11, 2021.

Motion carried with the following vote:

For: Pacholski, Beecher, Boutin, Meyers, McLoughlin, Malan

Against: None

Abstain: None

OLD BUSINESS:

a. Officer Selections

Pacholski has received several responses after sending emails about the process for applying and interviewing for the permanent leadership position. He has not had the chance to go through all the resumes of the interested parties to see if they meet the requirements of the position. In phone calls with interested parties it was clear that not have or are missing some of the driving clearances. Some people expressed interest in multiple roles. Some indicated they were interested in certain level roles (i.e., any Captain role).

Malan said our requirement is to make sure the Fire Chief meets the requirement; the remaining levels are approved by the Chief and the Town Manager.

It may be possible that a person is eligible of a lower role than applied for as far as meeting the job requirements. The Chief may reach out to see if a person is interested in that role. A position can be left open if no one meets the requirements.

Malan asked if the Fire Chief position is considered a Town or department position since he reports to the Town Manager. Pacholski said everyone is considered an employee for worker's comp but the Chief is not viewed as being a Town employee other than being accountable to the Town Manager.

Pacholski said the Town does not always follow 100% of the job description qualifications when hiring. It is up to the Chief and Deputy Chiefs if a role is kept unfilled until someone is qualified or they can give a period of time for a person to meet the qualifications. Pacholski said he would like to think people have had a year to meet the qualifications of a role they are interested in. Meyers said this selection process has begun before that year is up. Some people are getting tested or taking classes that will be completed in May. If a person needs to be qualified to drive one or two apparatuses there is still a grace period to get that done. These positions are being filled for July 1, 2021 and that is when the qualifications are in effect.

McLoughlin said we should make the recommendation of Fire Chief to the Town Manager based on Meyers letter of intent. The Town Manager will arrange for an outside interview panel which is likely to be made up of two Fire Chiefs from other towns and a Town Manager or two. Even with only one person being interested this establishes the process of hiring to include an outside interview panel. Once the Chief is selected that person will work on filling the other positions and making sure the corresponding job requirements are being met. This is the same process that was used to fill the interim positions.

Motion: I move that the Fire Transition Study team recommends the Town Manager to proceed with the oral panel and interviews with Bud Meyers for the position of Fire Chief.

By: Malan

Seconded: McLoughlin

Discussion: McLoughlin asked if we want to include in the motion that the remaining slate of officers selection process mirrors the process that was used for the interim

appointments. Malan prefers to recommend via motion the Chief position and the other positions separately. Meyers meets all of the requirements for the position that he has held for the last nine months. Meyers is the only person interested and has been doing a good job.

Motion carried with the following vote:

For: Pacholski, Beecher, Boutin, McLoughlin, Malan, Ziel

Against: None

Abstain: Meyers

Motion: I recommend to the Council that the appointed Fire Chief will then appoint the remaining officer and staff positions as deemed necessary for the department to run successfully with the approval of the Town Manager

By: McLoughlin

Seconded: Malan

Amendment proposed by McLoughlin and accepted by Malan: The Fire Chief will appoint the Deputy Chiefs with ratification by the Town Manager and the remaining positions as he deems necessary.

Discussion: Don't we want the process to continue as presented to the Council? Pacholski displayed the *Selection Process for Officers Update* slide that was in the presentation to the Council.

McLoughlin withdraws his motion.

Motion: I move that the Fire Transition Study team recommends to the Council that the Deputy Chiefs are selected by the Fire Chief and ratified by the Town Manager.

By: McLoughlin

Seconded: Malan

Motion carried with the following vote:

For: Pacholski, Beecher, Boutin, McLoughlin, Malan, Ziel, Meyers

Against: None

Abstain: None

Motion: I move that the Fire Transition Study team recommends to the Council that the Captain and Lieutenants are selected by the Deputy Chiefs and ratified by the Fire Chief.

By: McLoughlin

Seconded: Malan

Motion carried with the following vote:

For: Pacholski, Beecher, Boutin, McLoughlin, Malan, Ziel, Meyers

Against: None

Abstain: None

Motion: I move that the Fire Transition Study team recommends to the Council that the Staff Positions, the Chief Engineer, and Health and Safety Officer be selected by their immediate supervisor and ratified by the Fire Chief.

By: McLoughlin

Seconded: Malan

Motion carried with the following vote:

For: Pacholski, Beecher, Boutin, McLoughlin, Malan, Ziel, Meyers

Against: None

Abstain: None

Pacholski said the Fire Chief selection process will kick off immediately. Once that is concluded he will provide the information collected from interested parties for the other positions to the new Fire Chief.

b. Incentives

After the Council budget meeting there was a follow up meeting with Boutin, Mike Hymer, and other fire department volunteers regarding the incentives and point system. He understands the meeting went well.

Meyers said Boutin and Hymer did a fantastic job of explaining what they were looking for. The Council put \$12 per point into the budget with the possibility of doing a percentage increase each year. Boutin said the discussion was about how the point system works and what the volunteers are looking for.

c. Status of Association contracts

Pacholski said the CVFA has gone back and forth with an attorney a few times. The draft for approval has been sent to the interim Fire Chief and Fire/EMS Administrator. Meyers said the changes made in the contract are acceptable to him and McLoughlin; the contract has been moved to John Elsesser, Town Manager, and possibly the Town Attorney this afternoon. Pacholski said the CVFA still has to vote on the contract. If it comes back from the Town Attorney materially the same, the membership will agree to it.

Meyers said he has been after the NCVFD to move on this. There is a membership meeting at the end of the month and they may disband the Association. The majority of the members have moved forward with the Coventry Fire Department. A few feel that they have no vision of what the department should be doing. It could be that is to just close the doors. Pacholski said that is unfortunate but he understands. Meyers said there will still be an agreement for use of the building with the contractual agreement still recognizing NCVFD. The meeting minutes have to be maintained permanently and other records kept for 30 years as the Secretary of State office requires.

NEW BUSINESS:

Pacholski asked if the Team expects to meet in May. Malan said if there is an issue with the appointment of the Fire Chief the Team may have to meet.

McLoughlin said at the least the Team should hold the June meeting to do a final review of the charge and the recommendations made to the Council. We could make a motion to recommend to the Council that it disbands the Fire Transition Study team.

Pacholski said the Team will plan to meet the second Thursday in June, but not in May.

CORRESPONDENCE:

None

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion: I move to adjourn the meeting at 6:48 p.m.

By: Malan

Seconded: Boutin

Motion carried with the following vote:

For: Pacholski, Boutin, Ziel, Malan, Beecher, McLoughlin, Meyers

Against: None

Abstain: None

Respectfully Submitted,

Yvonne B. Filip

Yvonne B. Filip, Recording Secretary

PLEASE NOTE: These minutes are not official until approved by the Fire Transition Study Committee at the next Committee meeting. Please see the next Committee meeting minutes for approval or changes to these minutes.