

Public Safety Committee Report
RE: Fire Department Initiatives and Improvements

Date: 4/18/19

Chair: Matt Whitcomb

Other Committee Members Present: Tom Depoy, Lisa Ryan, Scott Tommola, Melinda Humphrey

Other Aldermen Present: Board President Davis, Matt Reveal, Paul Clifford *Chris Ettovi*

Other's Present: Mayor Allaire, Chief Larsen, Cindy Larsen, Amber Gray, Roger Curfman, Renee Axelsen, Rod Kenyon, Colin Fitzsimmons, Seth Bride, Kyle Goodrich, Bill Lovett, Mike Barrett, Jenna Elliot

The Meeting Convened at 5:30 PM to discuss fire department initiatives and improvements that had occurred during the previous year. Chief Larsen provided a PowerPoint Presentation for those in attendance outlining the accomplishments of the fire department for the prior year. Chief Larsen began the presentation by providing a brief background of how he came to be the chief of the fire department outlining such items as; the interview process, initial meetings with the hiring committee and fire department members, and outlining the expectations and qualities expected of him upon hire.

Following background information, Chief Larsen discussed the history of the station's command vehicle. Chief Larsen outlined the evolution of the command vehicles utilization ranging from the 1920s to the present day, concluding with his belief that its current use and functionality provides significant benefit to the entire department.

Chief Larsen spent the remainder of the presentation discussing the department's accomplishments for the previous year, focusing on four main categories; development of systems, attention to safety, cost-saving measures, and community engagement. Related to the development of systems Chief Larsen highlighted the following:

- Introduction of cultural change by establishing a vision and creating alignment with that vision.
- The development of a mentorship program; focused on development of new firefighters
- A comprehensive 600 hour probationary manual before being confirmed as firefighter.
- A comprehensive review of personnel and resource deployment.
- Updated operational response protocols to help ensure appropriate staffing and improved efficiency.
- Reviewed and updated Tactical objectives and riding tool assignments that have resulted in increased efficiency and a significant reduction in response time.
- Creation of Acting Company Officers
- Creation of a Shift Commander Handbook which has resulted in consistency among shifts

Related to the development of safety Chief Larsen discussed the following measures introduced in the department over the previous year:

- As related to specific safety trainings:
 - o All department personnel have been trained in Traffic Incident Management System which has created a common language for communication.
 - o The department now regularly engages in live fire training exercises and has developed a training schedule for all firefighters. Training exercises include fire behavior training,

- forcible entry, fire hydrant water supply connections, blitzfire nozzles, tactical hose loads, ladder work and water rescues.
 - The department is now utilizing After Action Reports which serve as a former analysis of fire related events that occur.
 - All officers are now certified as incident safety officers.
- In addition to safety training initiatives the department has engaged in a comprehensive equipment review and upgrade process as related to safety. This process has resulted in:
- All vehicles are now outfitted with traffic cones.
 - Fire helmets have been updated to include easily identifiable features designating engine, ladder, company and rank. This has improved real time communication when fighting fires.
 - New Firefighting gear has been acquired to replace out of compliance gear and equipment.
 - All members of the department have obtained the wildland firefighting certification. Through this process the department worked with the State of Vermont to obtain a 50/50 grant for wildland firefighting gear.
 - Thermal imaging cameras used to monitor internal temperatures of structure fires have been purchased.
 - Deputy Chief Lovett has initiative a two year plan to acquire safety-self-contained breathing apparatus to replace out of date and non-compliant air cylinders.
 - Review and upkeep schedule has been designed and implemented for all radio devices.

Related to cost saving initiatives Chief Larsen highlighted the following:

- A Focus on recruitment of firefighters which has served to prevent overtime.
- Encouraging Firefighter's contribution while on shift to upgrade aspects of department. Examples of this include work related to department Lighting, Windows, Painting, overhead doors, fire station doors/locks, fire hole covers, and patching asphalt.
- Review of current and best practices and implementation measures that provide savings.
- A renewed focus on maintenance of equipment vehicles to promote longevity.

Related to community engagement Larsen highlighted the following:

- The department's participation in community events such as the mile a day challenge, United Way fundraiser, Wonderfeet Kid's Museum fundraiser, NewStory Walk, Halloween parade, Rutland Farmer's market, and local sporting events.
- A Partnership with dominos to engage community in fire safety/prevention.
- The departments engagement with local school such as the Advisory Board with Stafford Tech
- Increased Social Media Engagement to inform the community of the department's activity.

The meeting adjourned at 7:24pm. This report for information only.

Respectfully Submitted,



Matthew Whitcomb, Chair.