

## Fire Task Force Minutes

August 5, 2013

**Members present:** Mary-Ellen Harper, Dave Martin, John Knapp, Bill Curran, Bob Holdsworth

**Members Absent:** Judy Didato

**Others present:** First Selectman Gregg Schuster, Deputy Chief Joe Danao Gardner Lake Dept.

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COLCHESTER, CT  
2013 AUG 12 PM 1:50  
NANCY A. BRAY  
TOWN CLERK

#1 CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 19:05 by Chairman Harper

#2 CITIZEN COMMENTS

There were no public comments

#3 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion to approve the minutes as presented by Dave Martin, seconded by Bill Curran  
All in favor...motion carried unanimous

#4 SPECIAL PRESENTATION

Deputy Chief Joe Danao Gardner Lake Fire Department gave the Task Force an outstanding presentation outlining the Volunteer Recruitment and Retention activities of the Gardner Lake Department.

Highlights:

- Recruitment and retention approached not as a Fire Department problem and program but rather as a community initiative
- Started by getting the 'house in order' before recruiting
- Included asking existing members what was needed to increase involvement
- High level of community interaction
- High level of marketing and public celebration of achievements
- Targeted recruitment activities by demographics (i.e. young members recruiting peers)
- Develop ownership for the future of the department

Questions and discussions followed by all members of the Task Force.

#5 REVIEW OF THE CHARGE FROM THE SELECTMEN  
Clarification to the members of the charge and the deliverables from the Task Force

#6 REVIEW OF THE FIRE DEPARTMENT'S CURRENT RECRUITMENT PROCESS

- Discussion of the accuracy of the UConn study done in 2011
- John Knapp explained the current recruitment process and challenges
- Discussion of the new applicant background check process
- Discussion of difference between paid and volunteer processes
- Discussion of ways to streamline the process for speed without sacrificing diligence
- Assignment to task force members to bring forth examples of process and forms from other departments

#7 DISCUSSION OF WHAT TYPE OF DEPARTMENT IS COLCHESTER HAYWARD?

- Discussion that public perception can increase or decrease applicants

Is the department a:

- Career department supported by volunteers
- Volunteer department supported by career personnel

#8 RECRUITMENT ACTIVITIES

- Analysis of existing personnel needed before recruiting can begin.
- Discussion of current, newly implemented stipend program for existing volunteers.
- Recruitment activities will need a clear marketing message and targets.
- Discussion that potential options be vetted via a survey

#9 TRAINING REQUIREMENTS  
Discussion of initial training required for firefighters and EMTs  
Discussion of recertification requirements for both  
Options discussion about in-house options

#10 REVIEW OF TAX ORDINANCE  
Discussion about potential amendments to the ordinance  
First Selectman Schuster explained the process to the members

#11 ADJOURNMENT  
Motion by Bill Curran, seconded by John Knapp...Motion carried unanimously @ 21:10