

# Draft

Litchfield Board of Fire Commissioners & EMS

Special Meeting Minutes

Litchfield Fire House, 250 West, Litchfield, CT.

May 2, 2016 5:00 PM

**Members Present:** Chairman John Campbell, Francine Spencer, Teresa Berry, Douglas Hatstat, Paul Parsons, Gary Shuhi

**Also Present:** Sam Kinkade, Troy Kaiser, Ethan Walker, Michael Barry, Elisa Bauer

**Call to Order:** John Campbell, Chair called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.

**Discussion and Possible Recommendation Regionalization of Fire Marshal Position:**

J. Campbell began the meeting by explaining the concept of a Regional Fire Marshal and that he had attended meetings with P. Parsons, the Mayor of Torrington, the Chief, and Leo and a separate meeting with the Torrington Chief, Deputy Chief and the Mayor's Assistant to discuss the situation and position. As a result of those meetings there will be no losses of duties of what we expect from the Fire Marshal. The position will be a full Fire Marshal position and night time coverage will be shared with our Assistant Deputies.

He continued, from rough calculations it was suggested that a twenty-four (24) hour per week position be established, however we are not certain this is an accurate number. An agreement to do quarterly reports for evaluation and to allow the Fire Marshal to attend 3 to 4 monthly Fire Commission meetings without loss of hours, was agreed to. Because this is a trial and to best be able to evaluate the position, monthly reports will be given with information and documentation, much more explicit than what is presently submitted. If more hours become necessary to complete the inspections we were told additional hours will be given to complete the work.

This will be a new Regional Position, it will be administered by the City of Torrington. J. Campbell will be our Commission's representative on the hiring team. It will be a union position of Torrington's Fire Department and will be solely a Fire Marshal position. It will not include any Emergency Management responsibilities.

Twenty-four (24) hours does not seem to truly reflect the estimations our Fire Marshal and Acting Fire Marshals have provided us with in the past. A short discussion regarding a twenty-four (24) hour work week position was quickly dismissed as being insufficient to perform the duties of the job.

A thirty-two (32) hour position was then discussed at length and the result was that a thirty-two (32) hour work week was much more realistic.

Questions:

**If we need additional hours where will that money come from?** Per P. Parsons it will come out of contingency. Contingency monies in the budget is for any department should a need arise for situations that are not accurately planned for and/or emergencies.

Who employed by: City of Torrington, at Captain's pay scale, and a contract with the Town of Litchfield.

Hiring position: Is this a 24 hour or 40 hour position? Not certain at this point but the understanding is that they want to build it into a forty (40) hour regional position with twenty-four (24) hours dedicated to Litchfield. Torrington feels they can fill the other 16 hours either with work from other towns or their own additional work.

Pay: Currently Captain's pay is approximately \$34 plus/minus, and we were told that the pay rate would be comparable to a Deputy Fire Marshal's pay rate. This money will come from the Selectmen's budget for the Fire Marshal position as it is currently.

Evaluation of the Position: This Commission will be receiving monthly and quarterly reports. From those reports we will evaluate the submitted information. We can either accept it or refer it to Leo who would then forward our report to the Torrington Fire Marshal Office as the position is created under their purview and disciplinary action would come from them.

J. Campbell explained this is just a concept that is being discussed and our task is to either agree to pursue it or to disagree and the discussion will end. If we disagree with the regionalization, the position goes back to forty (40) hours including Emergency Management responsibilities. Essentially back to where we are today, inspections not being completed as they should and duties required of a Fire Marshal not being fully accomplished.

Many questions and logistics remain and the selectmen will be discussing/negotiating those issues. Items such as union position, salary, weekend coverage, exactly how will this position be run, scheduling times, administrative support of the position (should stay as is), weekend coverage and pay, on call pay provision, minimum hours for call outs, large and time consuming issues, travel time, where the Fire Marshal will reside for office hours and many more.

Certain items/issues can be included in his agreement, i.e. probationary appointments every 6 months for a year, quarterly reviews by the Fire Commission, that a Litchfield, E. Litchfield, Bantam, or Northfield volunteer fire fighter applicant shall get additional consideration in the hiring per State Statue. Reposting of the position may have to occur if the position changes to a regional position.

As a regional position the flexibility of personnel is greater and it was discussed that if any unexpected need arises Torrington will guarantee that a Fire Marshal will be available to us. They will also handle certain administrative duties other than what our support staff currently handles. Information was shared that per State Statue any Deputy Fire Marshal must be appointed by the city (Litchfield) with specific job responsibilities stated and sworn in by the local authority (city/town clerk) before any duties can be performed here even in an emergency situation.

Whatever is agreed upon, J. Campbell will make a presentation to Dick Sheldon, Bantam Borough Warden, to keep him apprised of the situation.

If this Commission disagrees with the concept, Leo will then stop the negotiations for a regional Fire Marshal and at this point we are not certain how the Fire Marshal position will be filled. It is possible it could be a two part-time Fire Marshals position, one for Fire Marshal responsibilities and one for Emergency Management, or stay with the existing combined position, which we know does not allow for the job to be properly completed.

J. Campbell asked if we would be comfortable with going to a thirty-two (32) hour position and what would be expected of the position? If this concept is approved to go forward this Commission wants the flexibility to go over the final contract that will be offered before making any permanent decision/offer. Some items that are of importance and concern are: the safety of our residences and businesses being the first priority, inspections being completed on time, when and where the person will work, administering the quarterly reviews and probationary period, monthly reports, fire scene attendance, questions and follow-ups, availability to the public and this Commission.

T. Berry then motioned: To go to the next step, in pursuing this regionalization concept as a thirty-two (32) hour position. Seconded: D. Hatstat. Vote Ayes: T. Berry, D. Hatstat, P. Parsons, F. Spencer. Nay: G. Shuhi. Motion passed.

**Adjournment:** T. Berry made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:48 p.m. F. Spencer seconded, motion passed unanimously.

Transcribed by L. Bauer

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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John Campbell, Chairman