

Meeting of the Board of Fire Engineers

November 15, 2000

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Meeting called to order at 7:45 p.m.

Members present: Chief Michael Trovato
Warren Alexander
Russell Zawaduk
Joseph Notaro
Gerard Menangas
James Roderick Jr.

Others present: Daniel Notaro

Chief's Report

Annual Ladder Test for Ladder truck due. Middleboro Fire Apparatus will be contacted to schedule appointment.

DPW Building & Grounds crew will be asked to clean area around Station #5. Letter of thanks will be sent to Sandy Turner.

Progress on the raising of Station #5 discussed.

Grant Administrator, Michelle Jarusiewicz, will be contacted re Mass. Fire Fighters Safety Equipment Grant.

FY2002 Budget discussed.

A Budget

Line item 5121 Part Time Fire will be increased by \$900 for 2 Rescue positions.

Line item 5122 Rescue Standby will be increased by \$2,376 for 3 additional days.

B Budget

Line item 5312 Employee Physicals will be increased from \$1,700 to \$3,000.

Line item 5715 Miscellaneous Travel will be increased from \$1,650 to \$6,500.

Motion: Roderick motioned in favor to increase the FY2002 Budget to \$ 308,455.00; Wolf seconded the motion; All in favor.

Daniel Notaro entered the meeting at this time.

Joseph Notaro and Warren Alexander expunged themselves from participating in the meeting.

Chief Trovato asked Daniel Notaro if he had received his certified letter from the board.

Notaro stated that he had received the certified letter.

Daniel Notaro requested the meeting be held in an open forum but asked other department members, other than the Board of Fire Engineers, to leave the room.

Wolf asked that it be recorded that the other people in the room left the meeting at Notaro's request.

Notaro stated that the problems all stemmed from one time during the summer when there had been conflicts between the Chief Officers and Engineers. The Chief had advised he and Rowell that Chief Jones had complained about their radio communications sounding like a CB Radio. Later that day a run was made by Rowell, Oxtoby and Justin White and on their way back to town they stopped to talk to Chief Jones to ask him why he had made the complaint. When they returned to the main station Rowell informed Notaro that Chief Jones had told him that he had not made the complaint. Oxtoby and White confirmed the conversation with Chief Jones. The Board then scheduled a meeting with the Rescue Squad to air grievances. Prior to the meeting District Chief Joe Notaro contacted Chief Jones by phone to confirm the conversation Jones had with Rowell. At the November 1st meeting when the Chief brought up the radio complaints, an Officer began to speak when the Chief said, "Are you calling me a liar"? Notaro stated he then raised his hand to speak and advised the Chief that he was sorry but he believed four people over one. He added that in turn he was saying that the Chief had lied. Notaro added that he was suspended for complete disrespect for the Chief and he did not agree with that. He explained that the meeting had been scheduled to air grievances in a democratic format and he had brought it up because he was angry at the fact that there was obviously a butting of heads between rescue and the board. Notaro added that based on the information he had received from the Rescue Lieutenant and the Rescue Engineer he believed them over the Chief. At that point it got into a heated personal level. He added that he thought it was a tit for tat thing between the Chief and Rowell and that the Chief was trying to get one up on Rowell.

Chief Trovato advised Notaro that he did not operate in that way.

Notaro stated that he believed him on that and apologized to the Chief. He added that the meeting was held to air grievances and if members felt they could not air their grievances without being suspended there would be no point to any discussions. Notaro apologized to the Chief and to the Board and stated that he did not mean to disempower the Chief's position by his statement.

Chief Trovato stated that he was told by members of the board that when he left the room, Notaro walked in front of the group and stated that he did not care who's soul the Chief swore on, the Chief was lying. The Chief stated that he considered that total disrespect. He added that Chief Jones had complained to him that Lower Cape Ambulance was using the administrative channel and using it as if it was a coffee and donuts channel. The Chief stated that the radio was the Chief's, the frequency was the Boards and LCA was allowed to use the frequency but when the Chief advised Rowell and the Lower Cape crew not to overuse the radio some people didn't like it so they were out to prove the Chief was wrong and try to make him look like a fool.

Wolf stated that he had never seen or imagined the type of atmosphere that was at the November 1, meeting in any organization where afterwards the people could still work together. He added that when Rowell said two or three times, it never happened, a whole group of people laughed and then after the Chief left, Notaro got up and made his own private statement in reference to the Chief, which was not a person-to-person situation. Wolf advised Notaro that he could tell the Chief how he felt in private but not at a meeting. He added there was a group attitude at the meeting. Wolf advised Notaro to stop interrupting him since he was not having a discussion with Notaro, he was telling him what he thought of the situation. Wolf stated that there was an argument as to who was lying at that meeting and that's what it was. The reason for the meeting was to try to solve problems within the department but nothing was solved and matters became worse. Wolf advised Notaro that he had been suspended for insulting the Chief, not for having a difference of opinion.

Zawaduk advised Notaro that at the November 1st meeting Notaro did disrespect the Chief. He added that there was talk of a letter that supposedly came from Chief Jones but when Notaro and Rowell asked for the letter the letter never came forward.

Menangas advised Notaro that accusations were made with no letter or facts to back up the situation. He added that at the meeting when Chief Trovato mentioned that the Truro Chief would back him up since he had spoken to him on the same day, rescue members at the meeting laughed and said they wouldn't believe the Truro Fire Chief either.

Chief Trovato stated that he had great respect for the squad and the only thing he'd ever done to upset the squad was to tell them how things should be done and some of them are rebelling to the point of extremes to make him look bad. He added that to be called a liar and be laughed at when he got up to call the Truro Chief was humiliating and made him feel like not doing the job any longer. He had also overheard a comment from someone at the meeting that if the Chief wanted respect; he would have to earn it. Chief Trovato stated that he had been in the department for 26 years and had never lied to anyone in the department and had gone out on a limb many times for department members and if he had not earned respect by now, he would never earn it and he might as well see the door.

Notaro apologized to the Chief and the Board for the increase in animosity and aggression that had been going on and realized that it had to stop.

Notaro stated that he knew other members of the department who had done a lot worse and didn't receive a suspension from the department.

Chief Trovato stated that a department member had been dismissed from the department for two years for disrespecting a member of the Board. The member reapplied two years later for membership; it was approved but with a two-year probationary period.

The Chief advised Notaro that he would not take his radio away and if the first Lower Cape Ambulance vehicle was on a run, Notaro could respond to a second call under the Mutual Aid Agreement with Lower Cape Ambulance and in that way Notaro would still be in the loop.

Motion: Chief Trovato motioned to suspend Notaro until January 15, 2001, without pay and since the annual payroll had already been submitted to the Accountant's office, time suspended would be deducted from Notaro's annual pay in 2002; Wolf seconded the motion; All in favor.

Capital Improvement Plan discussed.

A new Fire Chief's vehicle will be requested in FY2005.

Roderick suggested a Pick Up with a Utility Body, 4WD.

Adjournment

Motion: Zawaduk motioned to adjourn the meeting; Wolf seconded the motion; All in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 10:55 p.m.