

Regular Meeting of the
Board of TFD Fire Commissioners

DRAFT -- Meeting Minutes – April 15, 2020

Thompsonville Fire Station, 35 N. Main Street, Enfield, CT

1. Call to Order: by Comm. DuFour at 7:00 pm.

2. Roll Call: present (via conference call) were Comm. DuFour, Comm. Dodd, Comm. Pliszka, Comm. Bouthiette, and Comm. Perry. Also present (via conference call) were Lindsey Allard, Madison St. John, and Ashley Lynch from Beirne Wealth Consulting, Chief Deskis, and Dept. Secretary Steneri.

3. Beirne Wealth Consulting Services, LLC: Pension and 457 Deferred Compensation Plan Updates:

Ms. Allard said on the phone with me is Madison St. John and Ashley Lynch. Ms. Lynch runs our 457 deferred compensation plans. She will provide an update on the transition of the plan from Prudential.

Ms. Allard said on behalf of myself and the rest of the Beirne Wealth team, I would like to thank the first responders and those on the front lines for protecting our community.

Ms. Allard said it has been an interesting several months in terms of stock prices. Strong economic data from the last quarter of 2019 led to positive gains prior to the end of February 2020. After that there was a big increase in volatility in the market. In the last week of March, the investors seem to digest the long-term effects of the virus and the market steadied a bit. Leaders in the domestic market are still large cap stock. The international market drastically declined over the first quarter for obvious reasons. No region in the world is immune to the effects of this pandemic. The Federal Reserve took aggressive action with policy response to the virus. At this point in time everything has been done from a monetary perspective. Now there needs to be some type of a medical resolution to positively affect the economy and turn the stock market around. There will be a lot of volatility in the next 3 – 5 months.

Ms. Allard explained some recent investment actions: the ARK position was decreased on February 4th. That was independent of the corona virus. Some of the domestic equity was paired back and 2% more was put into the international developed equity. On March 3rd when the virus was very prevalent in China and Italy, the Central Bank of the United States lowered fund rates by 50 basis points. The equity exposure was reduced by 8% and that money was moved to cash. The funds were taken out of the international market because the international market would be hit the hardest. We watched the market every single day from that point on. On March 19th, Beirne Wealth decided it was time to raise more cash because there was a shortage of supplies for hospitals which would be catastrophic for the US and the global market. \$216,000 of Vanguard International Equity was sold. Equity was reduced by 7% and that money was again moved to cash. The Fixed Income was reduced as well. Equity was reduced

again by 15% on April 1st because we were concerned about corporate earnings. We wanted to protect the portfolio's capital as best as we can. Another cash raise was done yesterday because of the uncertainty of what is going to happen to the economy. No one knows the long-term effects of the global economy. When the market stabilizes, the cash will be put back into the portfolio. It is important to stay focused on the long-term strategy of the pension fund.

Ms. Allard said there is an update on the 457 plan. Ms. Lynch said the plan blackout began April 13th. Prudential will liquidate the assets on April 16th. On April 17th Prudential will send a wire to the new custodian which will be Fidelity with a record keeper of KTrade. Once the wire is received, the back office will allocate participants' accounts and align with the fund mapping that was provided. The first payroll is expected to upload onto the KTrade platform on April 24th. Once the blackout period is lifted, we will begin working with the participants of the plan. Enrollment materials and an informational video will be sent out. Our contact information will be given in case the participants would like to set up individual meetings.

Ms. Allard said usually we meet with the trustees and the participants in person when we come on to a 457 plan. But every one can call our office and have full access to our advisory and administrative team.

Ms. Allard said our team thanks you for putting your trust in Beirne Wealth. If there is anything we can do, please let us know.

The Board thanked Ms. Allard, Ms. St. John, and Ms. Lynch for calling into the meeting.

4. Chief's Report:

Chief Deskis said the COVID-19 pandemic has been handled by the department very well. Our current supply of medical equipment has slowly grown. The only equipment that we really lack are the N-95 masks. Members' temperatures are taken every day before and after each shift. They are asked a series of questions as well. Members are encouraged to follow social distancing while on duty. The station is disinfected twice a day. Each member is sleeping in a different room at night.

Chief Deskis said the Thompsonville's Firefighters Union Local 3059 has filed a grievance for prohibited practices. Normally all the members would ride in the apparatus. Currently only 2 members can ride in the truck and the other 2 ride in the service while. This is to cut down on exposure if the call is a COVID-19 case. I am willing to challenge it because I think we have management rights during this time. Losing a shift would be detrimental to the department. We can't rely on mutual aid

because the other departments are going through the same thing. The attorney will contact the Union and we will probably have to sit down and talk with them. The Union wanted me to sign an MOU regarding the matter. I told them that I would need to have

an attorney review it before I sign it. The attorney advised me not to sign it because the MOU was worded poorly. This will help the department in the future in case something like this ever happens again.

Chief Deskis said he recently spoke with the department's insurance company. Our rates are going to decrease. That might change because the flashing was blowing off of the station due to the recent wind storms. The insurance company is going to have to take a look at that.

Chief Deskis said there is about \$58,000 left in the capital expenditures line item. Can that money be used to purchase new air bags, a hydraulic ram, or new radios? Comm. Dodd said the line item says compressor and air packs. So anything that is an air pack is okay to buy. The contingency fund is there to buy things that are needed. That is part of my treasurer's report. Chief Deskis said if we don't receive the grant then the air packs will be financed. Can we use the remaining air pack money to purchase other items that we need? Does that money have to be used specifically for the air packs? Comm. Dodd said I believe it has to be used for the air packs. Comm. Pliszka said the Hurst tool is included in that line item. Chief Deskis said we can purchase that. Comm. Dodd said she does not see that listed on the budget. But she is looking at the budget in QuickBooks. Maybe the Chief, Comm. Pliszka, and I can sit down and talk about this. Comm. Pliszka said the line includes gym equipment and battery operated cutting tool.

Chief Deskis said Captain Scott Ellis has been appointed the new Fire Marshal. Dan Pliszka has been promoted to Captain.

Chief Deskis said yesterday the members of the department rescued an elderly man who fell into the Freshwater Pond. The man hit his head when he fell in. He was treated for hypothermia as well as the cuts on his head. I am very proud of what the members did. There was a structure fire on Pleasant Street that was extinguished pretty quickly.

Chief Deskis said the department has applied for a SAFER grant. This grant is to help with staffing for fire departments. The grant money can be used for employees and volunteers. We don't have any gear available for volunteers. Captain Ellis is going to apply for fire prevention safety grants to use for community risk assessment materials.

Chief Deskis said the department's call volume has been very low during the past 2 months. People have been staying inside their homes.

5. Treasurer's Report:

Comm. Dodd said salaries have been down over the past month. Maybe that has to do with the low call volume. Our operating account has \$31,819 and the municipal investment account has \$2,137,000. The accounts payable total is \$45,726. I am bringing that up because we received a letter from our attorney regarding funding. The

Town may not collect taxes. If not, is the Town going to be able to fund the District? I am sure the Town has some sort of a plan. This is something we need to be cognizant of.

Comm. Dodd said as Comm. Pliszka said, we did received just under \$42,000 for the Supplemental Grand List. I believe that is revenue for this budget year and any funds left over gets rolled into the following year's budget. That money boosted our income for the month of March. That income plus the our auditor fees are the two big items that affected our income over expenditures. I did notice that salaries were down by \$18,000. Our overall expenses were under budget by \$30,773.

Comm. Dodd said for the entire year, revenues are over budget by \$7,000. There are still a few months left in the fiscal year. So far the actual total expenses for the year have been \$3,040,000. There is some money left over from the air packs line item and there is the contingency fund. We have to look at what are the needs of the department in the next 3 months and how do we utilize those funds. So far, the expenses are under budget which means we may have money left over from this year.

Comm. Dodd said she has some projections for the year. I looked at our expenses, divided that by the number of months and calculated a monthly average of \$337,684. I multiplied that amount by 5 months for a total of \$1,688,423. I wanted to take a look at our money in case we don't get funded in August. How long can we last if we aren't getting our funds? We have \$2,137,000 in the accounts right now. The difference is \$448,000. That is another month's worth of expenses. We can fund ourselves until September. Chief Deskis, Comm. Pliszka, and myself will discuss what the department needs and should we save the money from the things we don't buy.

Comm. Perry said the Town Council is having their meeting right now regarding their budget. The Board should watch it to see what the Town is going to do and then the Board can go from there. Comm. Dodd said the Town must have some sort of plan. If the Town wasn't funding us, then the District would have to have a plan. We may have to come up with one.

6. Public Communications:

None.

7. Commissioners' Communications:

The Board congratulated Dan Pliszka on his promotion.

Comm. Pliszka said Chief Deskis has been doing a very good job handling the COVID-19 pandemic. The department is getting new policies all the time. He is really trying to keep the members safe and healthy. Thank you very much Chief Deskis for doing what you are doing. I know it is not easy but you have to do what you have to do. The rest of the Board agreed.

8. Old Business:

None.

9. New Business:

None.

10. Approval of Minutes from February 11 special meeting, February 19 special meeting, February 19 regular meeting, March 31 special meeting, and April 1 special meeting:

MOTION to approve the meeting minutes from the February 11 special meeting, February 19 special meeting, February 19 regular meeting, March 31 special meeting, and April 1 special meeting made by Comm. DuFour, seconded by Comm. Perry. Discussion: none. Roll Call- Motion passed 5-0.

11. Adjourn:

MOTION to adjourn made by Comm. DuFour, seconded by Comm. Dodd. All in favor by ayes at 6:53 pm.