

DALTON FIRE DISTRICT BOARD OF WATER COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

August 27, 2024

Present: Jim Driscoll, Camillus Cachat, Michael Kubicki, Melanie Roucoulet, Water Superintendent Bob Benlien, Richard Olsted, Tom Murray

Public: Sabrina Damn-iberkshires, Tom Irwin, Don Davis, Rob – Dalton TV, Charlotte Crane, Frank Barnes, Henry Rose, Louise Hume, Dale Hume, Mike Cachat, Ken Sagendorph, Chris Cachat, Ken Lincoln, Al Nadeu, Cheryl Cachat, Pete Cachat, Kelli Sagendorph, Bill Higgins

James Driscoll called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

General Business:

- James Driscoll made a motion to accept the minutes from the July 30, 2024, August 8, 2024, and August 20, 2024, meetings as printed, Cam Cachat seconded, approved unanimously.
- Tom Scanlon from Scanlon & Associated joined us to discuss the deficit that people have been talking about. Scanlon stated that for the past 2 years they have not conducted a financial audit but have been more accounting consultants. Since Quickbooks does not work great with municipality they have been helping putting balance sheets together for free cash, and tax rates. The deficit in the past 2 years has been with the fire department and the ambulance in the amount of \$165,000.00 When the deficit is talked about, we know where all the money went to and it is accounted for. The fire department budgeted at the annual meeting for FY23 was \$547,311.00 and spent was \$604,000.00 overdrawn that line item by \$57,663.00 which was caused by overtime for the firefighters. The ambulance budget was set for \$591,212.00 but spent \$654,652.00, overdrawn by \$63,439.00 due to overtime for ambulance personnel. There was no monies set for overtime on the budget at the annual meeting. There are no expenditures that are not accounted for.
- Tom Irwin questions what years the deficit began. He also asked if FY24 has been started and if we know if there is a deficit. FY22 was \$44,000.00 in the deficit due to overtime and FY23 was \$121,000.00 .
- The treasurer/clerk is in the process of changing over to Vadar for their accounting software which is more of a budget friendly software.
- Henry Rose asked if we are billing all that we can for the ambulance bills and how aggressive we are being in retrieving money. Scanlon states that recovering money for ambulance bills is as 2/1 ratio.
- Jim Driscoll stated that recovery of ambulance fees depends on the insurance carriers. It was discussed that we may be in a deficit for the ambulance and the ambulance will never make money. We are trying to get a handle on cost vs income. It was stated that we are trying to create mutual aid agreements with surrounding towns.
- Chris Cachat explains the concept of mutual aid on the fire and ambulance side.
- Dale Hume asks why the ambulance is now running 3 personnel, Driscoll stated that was set up by Chief Tobin to cover our busy times of the day.

Fire/Ambulance Department:

- Acting Chief Chris Cachat whom has been the assistant chief for over 20 years now. He would like to discuss the possibly of replacing the ambulance and getting back on our rotation of replacing vehicles every few years once one gets paid off. It would be much better to stay up to date with vehicle maintenance. The Ambulance that we have now is a 2019 Ford 450 which was built as a BLS unit with lighter brakes, now that we are an ALS unit we are carrying more equipment, and the truck is getting worn out. Our second ambulance has been out of service for a few weeks with brake issues. He is looking to create a committee to start looking at new ambulances. Driscoll believes it will be a great idea to start exploring our options for a new ambulance.
- Ambulance director Leon has stepped down as our ambulance director and also his position as a paramedic but will stay on per diem and pick up shifts when needed. An internal email was sent out to paramedics/EMTs looking to fill the position.
- Status of the Ladder Truck from North Collier Florida, Chief Cachat was notified the day after discussion of the donated truck that it was no longer available for donation, North Collier was going to keep the truck and put it back in service when needed. Also the price of transferring the truck to us went from \$5,000 to \$12,000.
- Training has been going great, keeping great documents. Also preparing an advanced schedule 30 days out.
- We requested an audit with OSHA that was this morning to go through our facility and make sure that we are compliant with all that needs to be done. The bulk of the visit was discussing policies to make sure we were compliant with all of ours. We already have adopted policy 800 which is on the respiratory program, we will need to make a small amendment. She also gave us a few other policies that we need to adopt at the next commissioners' meeting. She was very happy with what she saw at the department.

Water Department:

- All shut off notices have been delivered.
- While working on Raymond Dr Berkshire Rooter ripped into a water service line, the water department went over and helped repair it.
- The Methodist Church called due to the sound of a running water, turned out to be an internal plumbing issue.
- Due to the implementation of the new website the CCR was delivered past its due date. Mass DEP issued a Notice of Non-Compliance, Bob has completed and returned the approval form.
- Bob has been working on testing the SCBA system, Ron from Tighe and Bond was hired to be our new SCBA technician.
- Pete Filkins from Lenox Construction tapped the main and installed a new sprinkler line to 191 E Housatonic St.
- Flushed the water main at 95 and 101 Main Street.
- Bob has been working with Tighe and Bond on the Lead Service Line Inventory, all data has been collected and they will be sending out a mailer to each home.
- There was a problem with the generator at the Pinecrest Water Storage Tank, a local contractor came out and fixed it.
- A missing gate box cap was replaced on North Street.
- Alex and Nathan have seal coated the driveway at the Washington Mt Rd. pump station and started the seal coating at the stockhouse.

- 40 dig safes were completed this month.
- Hinsdale Rd was repaired when the water main break was over the winter.
- Henry Rose asked if there were any red flags on the CCR.

Treasurer's Report:

- All shut off notices were delivered and payments have been coming in on old bills.
- Roucoulet has been working with Vadar on getting our new software up and running, they all currently working on a new Chart of Accounts for us.
- I have been working on several public record request and am getting to them as quickly as I can.
- We have been having a hard time getting all the details covered for the sporting events for high school.
- July Financials are completed and in you packets for the meeting.
- Mike Kubicki made a motion to go with Renatus and their electrician to get our cameras set up. Cam Cachat seconded, passed unanimously.

James Driscoll made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:08pm seconded by Cam Cachat, passed unanimously.

The next meeting will be September 24, 2024 at 6:30pm

Respectfully submitted,

Melanie Roucoulet

Melanie Roucoulet
Treasurer/Clerk

