

DALTON FIRE DISTRICT BOARD OF WATER COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

August 8, 2024

Present: James Driscoll, Camillus Cachat, Michael Kubicki, Melanie Roucoulet, Chief Christian Tobin,

Public: Attorney Elisabeth Goodman, Tony Pagliaro, Steven Maranz, Bob Bishop, Al Nadeau, Michele Maranz, Arlene Cukor, James Peltier, Chris Cachat, Dale Hume, Mike Cachat, Marion Bergan, Cody Doyle, Niles LaValley, James Tobin, Ryan Foley, Tyler Colby, Robert Collins, Sabrina Damn-iberkshires, Tom Irwin, Don Davis, Agnes Witkowski, Heather Hunt, Todd Logan, Tom Hutchenson, John McDonough, Angela McDonough, Charlotte Crane, Tyler Miller, Chelsea Eichstedt, Owen Hoffman, Matt Martinez, Mark Strout, Deanna Strtout

James Driscoll called the meeting to order at 9:00AM

- Cell phones must be silenced or turned off
- Anyone who would like to speak please stand up and state your name and address.

- James Driscoll turned the meeting over to Attorney Elisabeth Goodman
 - Goodman states that the agenda today is a public open meeting at the request of Chief Tobin, states that the board wanted to have this meeting in executive session, but Tobin wanted an open meeting.
 - Goodman poses a question to Tobin that he has told the board that he will be leaving in the new year and asks Tobin if he would like to reach accord with the board and what it would take for him to leave sooner due to all the complaints filed against him.
 - Tobin states that he is just there to listen as it is the first that he has seen this list.
 - Goodman starts listing the complaints against him, she has interviewed several employees who have put in complaints against Tobin. Goodman has interviewed 3 women alone who state they have been harassed, intimidated, yelled at by Tobin, also a woman told Goodman that Tobin has talked in a sexual manner regarding his body parts, and that is considered sexual harassment, and the board is required to address those issues. A letter dated 7/23/24 signed by many members of the fire department raising serious concerns about your conduct to them. It was brought to her attention that people whom he hired were not certified to ride the ambulance using the taxpayers' dollars also putting at risk the license of the ambulance.
 - Goodman understands that Tobin has been putting in concerns, public records request, budgetary questions himself. But by weighing the balance with the conduct of the employees' concerns, the board is going to act.

- Jim Driscoll looking over the employment agreement with Chief Tobin upon his hire states that some of the requirements have not been completed, including obtaining his EMT, Fire prevention I or II, mismanagement of grant for bunker gear grant was overspent, review of training records, OSHA compliance.
- Michael Kubicki talks about one of his conversations with the chief regarding the purchase of the building

across the street that originally, they voted not to move forward with the building, Tobin told Kubicki that we could always buy the building and sell it later for a profit. Also, Kubicki asked Tobin in the past for an evaluation of our equipment, whether it would pass inspection or what we need to do moving forward, which he never received a response for. Kubicki talked to a few firefighters about how things were going, and they had mentioned some morale issues. When brought to the chief he stated that “He was not going to talk anymore, “I have things to do, slammed his door then left for the day.

- Can Cachat has had conversations with the chief that the hiring of new people is not in the budget, but the chief continues to talk about it.
- Goodman asks Tobin if he has any response to these allegations and Tobin’s response was This is your show, enjoy it.
- After a brief discussion with the board James Driscoll made a motion to suspend the chief for a period of 4 weeks on administrative leave with pay at that time Tobin will have a chance to come back to with any response. The board will come back at the time to render their response.
 - Don Davis of Kirchner Rd states that he has only been involved with the fire department and the chief for a short time, he believes that he is very knowledgeable, and he has never heard anything negative about him. Davis states that maybe he is a little aggressive. Davis believes that the department has a big problem.
 - Tom Irwin of Central Ave is not involved in the day to day operations so cannot react to that but has been working with the chief in regards to a possible new fire station. Irwin has never heard anything negative regarding the chief.
 - Todd Logan of Curtis Ave questions the process of approaching complaints placed against someone. Driscoll informed Logan that many of the employees were afraid of retaliation from the chief. Since the Chief states that the board is not working with him, he is not working with us, and all communication between the chief and the board has been via email. Since there is no good communication, the board decided that there needs to be a sit-down to discuss this.
 - Don Davis stated that he has talked to staff, and everyone was positive regarding the chief. Davis believes the board gives mixed messages regarding the building across the street as he does not see the possible purchase of the building moving forward. Davis then asks if the District will be moving forward with the building next door. Driscoll replies with, that is not the discussion of this meeting.
 - Mark Strout of Hemlock Hill asks the board who they are going to hire for the investigations and how long it has been since the complaints started coming in. Strout suggests that the board hire an outside firm to investigate the accusations. Driscoll acknowledges.
 - Bob Bishop of South Street inquires if the complaints that Tobin provided today were going to be addressed and when? Driscoll responds that when we reconvene all of the concerns will be discussed.
 - James Peltier of Flansburg Ave states that there is a lot of darkness throughout the fire department.
- James Driscoll states no more questions will be answered, and makes a motion to adjourn at 9:18am, passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Melanie Roucoulet

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Treasurer/Clerk

