

# CLARENCE FIRE DISTRICT NO. 1

10355 Main Street, PO Box 340

Clarence, NY 14031

Phone: (716) 759-8842

Fax: (716) 759-0641

## Board of Fire Commissioners:

David R. Metzger, Chairman  
Douglas G. Garlapo, Vice-Chairman  
Gerald J. Roy, Jr.  
James Schlabach  
Nathan M. Work

## Treasurer/Interim Secretary

Kim M. Lash

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The Board of Fire Commissioners' work session meeting was called to order by Chairman Metzger on **Monday, January 25, 2016** at 18:30 hours.

## ROLL CALL:

Present: Commissioners Metzger, Garlapo, Roy, Schlabach, Work (at 20:00 hours) and Treasurer/Interim Secretary Lash

Absent:

Guests: Chief Jeff Schlabach

## DISTRICT RULES AND REGULATIONS ARTICLE V FIREMATIC OFFICERS AND QUALIFICATIONS

### REVIEW:

Review of Article V – Firematic Officers and Qualifications draft prepared by Chairman Garlapo using Snyder and West Seneca Fire District's Rules as a template and edited further through input from past Chief Major, and then Assistant Chiefs Jeff Schlabach and Ken Beil. The original draft was used for discussion purposes along with the Board minutes of the November 23, 2015 meeting. Commissioner Garlapo suggested the first order of business should be to settle the biggest issue of how many assistant chiefs. It is a significant cultural change and the Board members weighed many pros and cons. Chief Schlabach provided the following rationale that Clarence should change from five Chiefs and one Captain to adopt three Chiefs and three fire captains:

- 1) When Clarence responds to incidents it will only be in District owned vehicles. Eliminating response in personal vehicles provides a more professional impression which is a major goal of his administration. The alternative would be to purchase two additional Chief vehicles which is not feasible in the budget nor does the current call volume support such a decision.
- 2) This command structure has been discussed with all officers. They are okay with the change and understand why. People are not being eliminated only titles are changing.
- 3) The most efficient organizational structure is a pyramid. Clarence's is currently shaped like an hour glass with 5 chiefs, then only one fire captain followed by many lieutenants. The proposed structure would be one chief, two assistant chiefs, three fire captains still supported by the lieutenants. The same number of officers will still be elected. This is not a new concept; all fire companies in our area operate with this command structure other than Clarence. This moves the district in the right direction for the future and there are greater benefits than there are nuisance items.
- 4) There is a small financial benefit to not buying district equipment for personal vehicles to both install and remove. Alarms mileage will also be substantially reduced.
- 5) The list of qualifications are important because there is a structure for grooming officers to be successful by providing a road map of what training is needed rather than relying on self-discovery for training.
- 6) The Chiefs should have more qualifications than those they are teaching. Basic courses such as Firefighter I and EVOC are essential. This also gives more confidence to the members because they know the person has the necessary knowledge and qualifications to act appropriately at incidents and drills.
- 7) There will be no grandfathering. It sends the wrong message to set standards and then immediately disregard them.
- 8) Captains will know how to do many tasks so more can be delegated to them. Chiefs may supervise or help get a project off the ground but the projects the Captains complete and the skill sets developed during these years will prepare them to be effective Chiefs having learned more of what is required of the job coming up through the ranks.
- 9) This well trained command structure will not happen overnight and will likely require "tweaking" as we progress through sticky situations as we learn.
- 10) The New York State list of courses was used to maintain consistency. There is a legacy diagram used by the State and County that translates previously named courses to the newly titled courses. However, it should be noted that those not receiving the Firefighter I certification are not viewed to be as qualified as those that do, in the eyes of the State.

**DISTRICT RULES AND REGULATIONS REVIEW (continued):**

With agreement on the Firematic Officers list discussion turned to the list of qualifications for each.

## 1) Appointed Officers:

- (a) Only change to remove Paragraph 3 A bullet 2.
- (b) Suggestion of requiring lieutenants to have Firefighter I was discussed and discarded.
- (c) Lieutenants driving experience was discussed and the impact of District Rules and Regulations Article VII. The suggestion was made to change the rule from “twenty-one years of age” to “three years licensed driver experience”. This is an excellent position to learn the basics of the district before beginning driving on calls. The terms drivers’ list and operators’ list should each be defined and are not synonymous. For example, driving Engines 1 and 2 require the ability to be a pump operator but this skill is not necessarily required of the truck’s lieutenant.

## 2) Elected Officers:

- (a) Paragraph 2 E bullet 2 – add that the certification will be from New York State.
- (b) Paragraph 2 D – Suggest adding the requirement of NYS Commanding Initial Response course, or the equivalent. Commissioner Garlapo and Chief Schlabach will research further and make recommendation to the Board. It was noted this course has different content than ICS 400.
- (c) Paragraphs 2 A – D – after significant discussion it was resolved to remove the EMT certification requirement from Chiefs and the Fire Lieutenant. With these individuals often the first on the scene of an EMS call and with the larger proportion of District incident response as EMS, rather than fire, the initial perspective was EMT certification should be required. However, the State continues to increase the training requirements for EMS providers which is forcing too great a volunteer time commitment. The prime requirement of the District is to provide fire protection. If EMT certification must be a requirement of District officers then it was offered the solution would be to divide into a fire and EMS service like Lancaster to be able to remain proficient at both. Twin City has already been implemented as the EMS back-up to first responders in Clarence. Chief Schlabach has a February meeting scheduled with the District’s medical director Dr. Lynch to clarify EMS protocol.
- (d) Paragraphs 2 A – C – it was suggested the bullet be added to “Remain on the qualified drivers’ list for all apparatus”.
- (e) Paragraph 2 A – Strike the last bullet for maximum officer terms and let the elections dictate officer proficiency.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

Commissioner Work reported that he spent an hour and one half on Sunday, January 24 starting to sort through the Secretary’s piles of papers to find members’ 2015 training certifications so that members’ LOSAP 2015 point totals may be completed. He would like to start taking the piles home so he may sort them there. Chairman Metzger stated that he will help Interim Secretary Lash sort through the piles in the office so the records aren’t removed from the District.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**MOTION** by Work, second by Schlabach, that the #9 vehicle be returned to Chief Schlabach for the remainder of his time on light duty so that he may attend to administrative duties. On the question was discussion of the requirements of being Chief and needing a vehicle versus pulling a vehicle from incident response when Fire Captain Hanford has no response equipment on his personal vehicle. Roll call vote: Garlapo – no, Metzger – no, Work – yes, Roy – no, Schlabach – yes. Motion defeated.

**MOTION** by Garlapo, second by Roy, to approve the VFBL and Workers’ Compensation insurance premium payment due January 31, 2016 to Fire District of NY Mutual Insurance Co. in the amount of \$41,743, carried. Work opposed.

**GOOD OF THE FIRE DISTRICT:**

The next regular meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners will be held February 8, 2016 at 6:30 PM.

**MOTION** by Work, seconded by Roy, to adjourn the meeting at 21:33 hours, carried unanimously.

Attest,

Kim Lash, Treasurer and Interim Secretary

cc: Commissioners