

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT

FIRE COMMISSION

POLICY AND PROCEDURES

I. PURPOSE AND MISSION

The Weathersfield Fire Commission was established by vote of the Town Meeting in 1990. The purpose of the Fire Commission is to aid communications between the two (2) fire departments.

The mission of the Weathersfield Fire Commission is to assist the Ascutney Volunteer Fire Department and the West Weathersfield Fire Department in providing high quality, well-coordinated fire protection services for the town of Weathersfield, while fostering a close working relationship with the Select Board.

II. ORGANIZATION

- A. The Commission shall consist of five (5) members:
- (1) One (1) member of the Select Board, appointed by the Board;
 - (2) The Chief Engineer of the Ascutney Volunteer Fire Department;
 - (3) The Chief Engineer of the West Weathersfield Volunteer Fire Department;
and
 - (4) Two (2) members appointed by the Select Board from the general public.
- B. The Commission, at the first meeting after the annual appointments, shall conduct a reorganization meeting, electing a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and Secretary.

III. MEETINGS

- A. The Commission shall comply with all provisions of Vermont's 'Open Meeting Law.'
- B. At its reorganization meeting, the Commission shall establish a regular meeting day, time, and location for the following year.
- C. The Commission shall publish an agenda in accordance with the Statutes.
- D. The Commission shall keep written minutes of all the meetings. Minutes of the meetings will be approved at the following meeting, signed by the Chairperson, and submitted to the Town Clerk for recording.

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IV. GOALS

- A. The Commission shall act as a conduit for communications with the Select Board and Town Manager.
- B. The Commission shall facilitate communications between the two (2) fire departments.
- C. To foster cooperation between Weathersfield's two (2) fire departments.
- D. To foster development of water resources for fire fighting purposes.
- E. To achieve an improved Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating for the whole Town of Weathersfield.
- F. To present to the Select Board, during budget development sessions, the annual operating expense needs for both departments.
- G. To advise the Select Board regarding the long-term capital needs of the departments.
- H. To improve coordination and communication by and between all public safety operatives of the locality and the bi-state region.
- I. To plan joint training drills and other activities involving the two (2) departments. This to be done with the assistance of the Select Board and the townspeople when appropriate.
- J. To be a source of fire prevention education to townspeople.
- K. To work with and coordinate the following groups: Weathersfield Police Department, Vermont State Police, Windsor County Sheriff, highway maintenance, and mutual aid.

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V. REPORTS

- A. The Commission shall report to the Select Board monthly.
- B. The Commission shall submit an annual report for publication in the Town Report.
- C. The Commission shall prepare a procedural document defining the relationship between the Town and the individual fire departments. This document shall include policies and procedures for the use of Town-owned equipment and funding.

VI. FINANCES

- A. The Town Treasurer shall handle all requests for the expenditure of Town funds recommended by the Commission, as authorized by a warrant issued by the Select Board.
- B. The Commission may request a monthly budget status report from the Town Treasurer.
- C. The Commission may vote to recommend to expend Commission funds:
 - (1) The meeting minutes will state the motion for expenditure [which shall include the purpose], that the motion carried, and who is to receive the monies.
 - (2) The Commission will submit a written request for expenditures to the Town Manager, with invoices and/or receipts attached as appropriate, using the standard form developed by the Town.
 - (3) The request shall be submitted to the Select Board for approval.
- D. The two (2) departments will provide to the Commission draft budgets for review and appropriate recommendations.
- E. The Commission shall prepare an annual budgetary request in November for the following fiscal year. This request shall be submitted to the Town Manager for consideration in the annual budgetary preparation.

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VII. OTHER DUTIES

The Commission shall perform, but not necessarily limited to, the following functions:

- A. The Commission shall prepare and maintain a five (5) year capital plan for the two (2) fire departments, which shall address the following:
 - (1) The plan shall include an inventory of all vehicles and equipment.
 - (2) The plan shall project the future needs of the two (2) fire departments.
 - (3) The Commission shall update the plan yearly, and present it to the Select Board for their review and approval.

- B. The Commission shall work with both fire departments to submit the Insurance Standards Office (ISO) rating review requests for the Town. The Commission should also explore the feasibility of obtaining a better 'ISO' rating for the Town.

- C. The Commission shall act as mediator for any disputes or complaints brought against the fire departments.

VIII. INCONSISTENT POLICIES REPEALED

This Policy shall amend and replace any provisions of any policy of the Town of Weathersfield in effect at the time of enactment of this amended Policy governing any activity included in this amended Policy.

IX. SEVERABILITY

If any section, subsection, subdivision, paragraph, sentence, clause, or phrase of this Policy, or any part thereof, is for any reason held to be unconstitutional or invalid or ineffective by any court of competent jurisdiction, such decision shall not affect the validity or effectiveness of the remaining portions of this Policy or any part thereof.

The Select Board hereby declares that it would have passed each section, subsection, subdivision, paragraph, sentence, clause, or phrase thereof irrespective of the fact that any one or more sections, subsections, subdivisions, paragraphs, sentences, clauses, or phrases be declared unconstitutional or ineffective.

X. EFFECT

No section of this Policy shall be construed to supersede or replace any Vermont statute.

This Policy shall be entered in the minutes of the Select Board's meeting.

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The foregoing amended Policy is hereby adopted by the Selectors of the Town of Weathersfield, Vermont, this twentieth day of May, 2004, and is effective as of this date until amended or repealed.

C. Peter Cole, Chairperson

Norman John Arrison, Board Clerk

Daniel E. Boyer, Selector

Patricia W. Daniels, Selector