**Thompson Fire Advisory Committee**

**Wednesday, March 26, 2014 at 7 p.m.**

**Quinebaug Fire Station**

**MINUTES**

PRESENT: Kerstin Forrester, Mike Rivers, John Sharpe, Jeff Sheldon, Hogan Krohn, Alternates: Eric Fiske, Todd Mountford,

GUESTS: Peter Eng & Russ Dowd from Muddy Brook Fire Dept., E. Woodstock

* Kerstin Forrester, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.
* Motion to accept Minutes of February 26, 2014 meeting was made by Jeff Sheldon, 2nd by Hogan Krohn. Minutes accepted unanimously.
* Citizens Comments - None
* Committee Member Comments – Hogan asked for clarification of FOIA procedure for posting departmental agendas and minutes.
* Correspondence - None
* Old Business: Kerstin gave a brief update on budgets process and what had been presented to support request of an increase to $41,500 for each department.
* Russ Dowd gave a brief history of the formation of the Woodstock Fire Prevention Association.
  + Started because the 3 Woodstock Fire Departments were “stuck in the mud” with severe funding issues. Started with the thought of forming one tax district for all 3 departments.
  + #1 goal was to ensure that all 3 departments work together and that they were open and honest with each other and with the town. Total transparency required from both sides. They found a lot of commonality as they looked at their financials and other issues.
  + Took a 3-pronged approach with an oversight group to focus on:
    - Administrative costs – utilities, insurance, OSHA, maintenance
    - Discretionary costs – chiefs’ could decide what to spend money on – primarily PPE,
    - Apparatus purchases which are approved by the WFPA. Promotes discussions between chiefs & departments to ensure that decisions about apparatus is what is needed for the town and avoids unnecessary duplication. NOTE: the WFPA owns all apparatus purchased since the formation of the organization. Each Fire Department owns any apparatus that they had prior to the formation of the WFPA.
  + WFPA pays all bills submitted by the departments and presents monthly financial reports to the BOS and BOF.
  + Any money that the individual departments had on hand prior to the formation of the WFPA stayed with the departments and could be used for whatever they needed.
  + The only fund raising that the departments do now is the Bingo tent at the Woodstock Fair and the Emergency/Safety facility at the Woodstock Fair. The departments use this to provide an allowance to each volunteer to buy clothing with departmental logos, annual events, scholarships.
  + All of the departments are fully compliant with OSHA requirements.
* How to get started:
  + Build the case with the community – let them know what is going on and what you do.
  + Get the support of the citizens and town government
  + Hold public hearings to address:
    - History
    - Current status
    - Future requirements
* Next Steps:
  + Talked about making sure that each department reaches out to the community it serves to educate and inform
  + Use Thompson Community Day to create awareness
  + Contact local newspapers to highlight each department over a few months
  + Develop a survey to send out to “customers” after each response incidence.
* Great questions from all of the attendees!
* Adjourned at 8:55
* Next meeting April 30, 2014, 7 p.m. at Thompson Fire Engine Company

Respectfully submitted,

Kerstin Forrester, Chair