

APPROVED MINUTES of the Joint
Meeting of the City Council of the City of Rye and
the Board of Fire Wardens held in City Hall on
November 19, 2003 at 7:00 P.M.

PRESENT:

STEVEN OTIS, Mayor
FRANKLIN J. CHU (late)
CAROLYN CUNNINGHAM (late)
ROBERT H. HUTCHINGS
ROSAMOND LARR
DOUGLAS McR. MCKEAN
Councilmen

ABSENT: ROBERT S. CYPHER

CHIEFS:

GEORGE HOGBEN
PETER COTTER
JOHN WICKHAM

WARDENS:

OREN BEACH
NICHOLAS LODDO
PETER DONAHUE
JOSEPH CARLUCCI

BUILDING COMMITTEE:

JOHN MCDWYER- Career Firefighter
DANIEL DECARLO-Career Firefighter
GEORGE BELLANTONI-Volunteer Firefighter

1. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Otis called the meeting to order and invited the Council to join in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Roll Call

Mayor Otis asked the City Clerk to call the roll; a quorum was present to conduct official city business.

3. Discussion of the use of Fire Headquarters of the Rye Fire Department located at Locust Ave

Mayor Otis welcomed everyone and said that there were two important issues to discuss regarding headquarters; whether or not headquarters will remain open and the possibility of a Special Election/Bond Referendum for additional monies for the reconstruction/renovation of the building.

The Fire Department said that they had discussed, at a previous meeting, the idea of temporarily closing headquarters and moving to the Milton Firehouse because of issues resulting from the building. However, some of these issues have been mitigated and they feel that they can continue to use the building for a period of time.

4. Discussion of Special Election/Bond Referendum for the renovation of the Locust Avenue Fire Headquarters

John McDwyer, Building Committee, said that two plans have been discussed. Plan A, the original plan for the total reconstruction of fire headquarters or Plan B which would address some of the renovations such as ADA compliance issues and the stabilization of the existing addition. The Fire Department prefers Plan A, but indicated that additional funding is necessary. They said that there was an error of \$900,000 in the original bid; costs escalate at approximately 5% every six months. (Bond Referendum/Special Election held on October 5, 1999) and the study conducted by Kaestle Boos Associates, Architects, Inc (provided architectural and engineering services) did not include contingency or escalation costs. There is currently \$2,000,000 left and they estimate that they will need an additional \$2,600,000 to complete the project. Plan B would cost approximately \$3,200,000 but is substandard to Plan A. Councilman McKean pointed out that either plan will require a referendum. Councilwoman Cunningham stated that the Fire Department should include in the information they will be submitting to the Council the impact on taxes generated by the referendum. Mayor Otis said that it is very important that the Fire Department gain the support of the community. Mr. McDwyer stated that the Fire Department's public awareness program will include an "Open House" at the Milton facility with tours every half hour, and an information packet which will include an FAQ section. (Frequently Asked Questions). Mayor Otis requested that the Fire Department submit complete plans to the Council and George Mottarella, City Engineer and schedule a meeting for discussion and review purposes. Councilman McKean suggested that everyone, including Councilmen-elect Duncan Hennes, Mathew Fahey and Gerry Seitz, have a copy of the Kaestle Boos study because it is a good reference document.

George Bellantoni, volunteer firefighter, asked the City to help with the preparations for the bond referendum and for a recommendation regarding the date for the special election. Councilman Chu suggested that the election be held after the 2004 budget process is completed and recommended that they ask for it to be placed on the agenda as a formal item in January. Councilman-elect Duncan Hennes said that they should get approval for the referendum before the new Council begins their terms in January. He said it will take the new Council a long time to review and become fully informed. Also, the public perception is not good and the standard of proof of necessity will be very high. People have expressed concern about the scale and costs of the new Milton Firehouse and the increasing debt. Mayor Otis said the Council must be completely prepared to answer all questions and is relying upon the Fire Department to furnish them with all the necessary information.

5. Adjournment

There being no further business to discuss, Councilwoman Larr made a motion, seconded by Councilwoman Cunningham and unanimously carried, to adjourn the meeting at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane C. Moore
Deputy City Clerk