



## Town of Seymour

COPY RECEIVED  
DATE: 9/17/25  
TIME: 8:00 AM  
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE

### BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

1 FIRST STREET, SEYMOUR, CONNECTICUT 06483

Regular Meeting  
September 8, 2025  
7:00 P.M.  
Great Hill Hose

Attendance: Pete Sampiere, Pat Keough, Christian Miller, Matt Calzone, Gary Parkosewich

1. Call the meeting to order- meeting was called to order at 7:00pm
2. Pledge to the flag – All were led in the pledge to the flag
3. Public Comment – No comment
4. Chief's meeting minutes – No meeting
5. Chief's Report: Discussion – see attached Chief's report  
Christian Miller/Pat Keough made a motion to accept the Chief's Report Vote: 3/0
6. Commissioners' Meeting Minutes: August 2025 meeting minutes  
Pat Keough/Christian Miller made a motion to approve Commissioner Meeting Minutes dated August 2025 Vote: 3/0
7. Correspondence - none
8. Financial Report: discussion and approval  
Discussion was had on the Financial Report. Pete Sampiere/ Pat Keough made a motion to accept the Financial Report. Vote: 2- yes, 0 – no, 1- abstain (Christian Miller)
9. Fire Marshal's Report: Christian Miller/Pat Keough made a motion to put the Fire Marshal report on file. Vote: 3/0
10. Building Maintenance – Issue with drain in truck bay at Great Hill, hasn't seen it come back since 2 barrels of sludge were removed. Through the Chair, the First Selectwomen clarified that it was material from water separator that hasn't been cleaned in at least 10 years. The facilities director called Clean Harbors who will pump out the two drums and then pump out the rest of the water separator. There will then be an annual pump out schedule.  
Nine new lockers will be hung at Great Hill.
11. Unfinished Business:
12. New Business:  
Pat Keough/Chrisian Miller made a motion to add hose surplus hose to agenda. Vote: 3/0
  - a) Surplus of Hose  
Pat Keough/Christian Miller made a motion made a motion to surplus hose Vote: 3/0

Telephone: 203-888-1909



## Town of Seymour

### BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

1 FIRST STREET, SEYMOUR, CONNECTICUT 06483

Pat Keough/Christian Miller made a motion to review and discuss Chief Edwards proposal to agenda. Vote: 3/0

b) Discussion on Chief Edwards Proposal to Ordinance Committee

Commissioner Pat Keough asked for confirmation that Chief Edwards was the person that wrote the proposal, which Chief Edwards confirmed.

After the Commissioners reviewed the document, Pat Keough suggested that at the next meeting it should be discussed among the board themselves. Pete Sampiere stated that he likes most of it but does not agree with the three-year rule. Chief Edwards stated that ordinances go through the Ordinance Committee and then the Board of Selectmen, not through Board of Fire Commissioners.

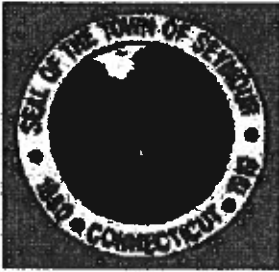
Through the Chair the First Selectwoman confirmed that it does not matter that the letter was submitted on department letterhead and signed as the chief. The First Selectwoman indicated that there were two public meetings on the proposal, an Ordinance meeting and Board of Selectmen meeting. Nobody has shown up to talk about it. It has already gone through the town attorneys. It has not been voted on; there are 30 days for the commissioners to send a letter.

Chief Edwards asked why it was okay for the Commissioners to have three-year terms, and Pete Sampiere to have a 15 year term, but the chiefs get one or two year terms. Commissioner Sampiere asked why the chiefs get a vehicle and he doesn't.

Pat Keough explained that the reason the two-year rule was set up this way was to keep people moving. Chief Edwards stated that the Seymour Fire Department is 25 years behind because they keep changing chiefs.

Chief Edwards asked where the Commissioners were for the fires over the last few days. He asked if anyone on the Board of Fire Commissioners asked how members were doing, if anyone got hurt. Commissioner Sampiere said they had not. Chief Edwards asked if they knew it was a member's house on Great Hill Road that had a structure fire and did anyone reach out. Commissioner Sampiere said they had not.

Telephone: 203-888-1909



## Town of Seymour

### BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

1 FIRST STREET, SEYMOUR, CONNECTICUT 06483

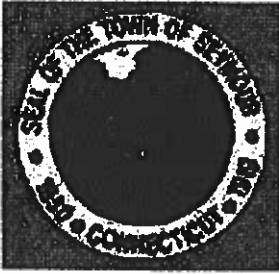
Commissioner Sampiere said the Chief could keep throwing crap at them all night, and the fact remains that there was just an incident where someone went out of the chain of command. He said and that he knows exactly who is pulling the strings on this. Chief Edwards restated that this proposal was 100% by him. Commissioner Sampiere stated he had the proposal read to him by two people who conveniently left out the fact that it had gone through the Ordinance Committee already and that withholding the truth is the same thing as lying.

Chief Edwards then handed out the Ordinance, Charter and two SOPs for the Commissioners to read through. Discussion was had regarding what exactly the state statute says about the Fire Commissioners having control over the business part of the firehouse. Chief Edwards stated that the statute reverts back to the town ordinance and charter. Discussion was had regarding the department SOGs.

Chief Edwards stated that if Past Chief Lombardi's 5 years, and Chief Edwards four years doesn't prove two-year rule isn't working then he doesn't know what to say. The Board of Fire Commissioners get three-year terms, a 15-year term. Chief Edwards wants to set this up for the next Chief so he can continue the job.

Commissioner Keough stated that if they go with the three-year terms it will be nine years before someone starting can become chief. Chief Edwards stated that there is no consistency through the ranks. Commissioner Sampiere stated that its an unwritten rule that chiefs get two years. Chief Edwards stated that he thinks commissioners should only get one year. Commissioner Sampiere stated if that happened he would get up the next day and go to work and his threats mean nothing.

Commissioner Sampiere asked if the chief wanted a department full of past chiefs or a department full of people who don't want to be chiefs. Chief Edwards stated that right now they have a department of members that don't want to be chief because it is a lot of work. Commissioner Sampiere stated that he bets that will change next time.



## Town of Seymour

### BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

1 FIRST STREET, SEYMOUR, CONNECTICUT 06483

Commissioner Keough stated that the chiefs are not giving people a chance. Chief Oczkowski asked that if there are four chiefs who are getting along and getting the job done then why would that be changed. Commissioner Keough asked about the guy that wants to be chief. Oczkowski stated that person would have to wait. If the department is moving forward and the chiefs are doing their jobs, why would they have to change? Commissioner Keough stated there were people behind him that wanted to become chief.

Chief Levey spoke up and stated the chiefs are way beyond the two-year rule and there has to be some sort of consistency. As an example, the chiefs are working on a new ladder truck and it takes a significant amount of time for the ladder truck to come in. Chief Edwards was the chief that started the ladder truck and Chief Levey feels it is only right Chief Edwards should see the ladder truck come in, make sure it's the actual way that it was supposed to be. Trying to rob Peter to pay Paul by passing it on to the next guy - things could change. In his opinion adding an extra year is very valuable. They've moved away from the two-year term because they don't have the volume to support it.

Commissioner Keough stated that things have become complacent. Chief Levey agreed but stated it has gotten better thanks to adding the fire truck, and adding all the additional training. Chief Levey stated that from a business standpoint the three year term makes sense, though its probably nothing compared to what can be done when someone is gaining steam. Personally, Levey stated he has been in the department for 15 years and he has served his time and is very happy where he is at. Moving into the chief position was something he considered but said Chief Edwards was way better at it. From a business standpoint, he feels that this is the way this department needs to start heading. Otherwise, the department will start losing members. They have to start being more accountable on a lot of things.

Commissioner Keough stated the department is already starting to lose members. Chief Levey asked if he would recommend having a guy start out for two years, get something going and then move them. Commissioner Sampiere stated that Chief Edwards is at four years and the guy before him was at 5 and volunteering has not improved. Edwards clarified that volunteer departments everywhere are losing members not just Seymour.

Telephone: 203-888-1909



## Town of Seymour

### BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

1 FIRST STREET, SEYMOUR, CONNECTICUT 06483

Chief VanWart asked how many previous head chiefs had more than two-year terms. There were no issues with extended terms, or three-year terms during those times. Two-year terms have not happened since he's been on the board. There hasn't been a set two years for each chief. Compared to other valley departments he's had experience with, Chief VanWart stated that Seymour is doing really good volunteer wise – and volunteering saves the town a log of money. He does not believe Seymour's volunteers are down – they have a very solid core group of guys that go to every call all the time. He does not see what the issue is if they want to make sure the chiefs are in there to make sure that keeps moving forward.

Commissioner Sampiere stated that if this three year rule was implemented than in a few years they'll come back and say "three years isn't enough, I need more time, look at where the department is going." Then three years turns into six years. Then it turns into nine years. Chief VanWart stated that whoever is the chief of the department for those three years, sets the chiefs up underneath. Commissioner Sampiere stated that should have been happening from the beginning. Keough stated that an assistant chief is there for six years before they get to become chief if it goes like it is supposed to.

Chief Oczkowski stated that during your first year as chief you are working off of the last Chief's budget. So, if you get a two-year term, it's really only one year. Commissioner Sampiere said that isn't unique and that has been going on for 25 years.

Chief VanWart stated that during his first year as FD4 he barely had a year in and the next thing he knew he was FD3 because Chief Rochelle stepped down as FD2, he moved up to FD3. And Chief Edwards moved up to FD2. Chief Levey and Chief VanWart were the only chiefs recently that had to move up in less than two years.

Edwards stated that as a fire service they could either stay where they are and fail, or they can change. He stated they have changed so much in the last four years. Come July he is out and they can do what they want. He is only trying to set the next chief up for success. He stated that the Seymour Fire Department needs to change. Chief Edwards suggested that someone ask the captain in attendance what he thinks. Chief Edwards said they are working off of a policy from the 1980s.



## Town of Seymour

### BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

1 FIRST STREET, SEYMOUR, CONNECTICUT 06483

Commissioner Keough said they can change policies, but they come before the Board of Fire Commissioners. Chief Edwards stated he was told they go through the Ordinance Committee and Board of Selectmen. It's not a department policy; it is a town policy.

Chief VanWart asked if it actually did go through the Board of Fire Commissioners what their opinion would be. Commissioner Keough stated he would want to go over it with the Board of Fire Commissioners.

Commissioner Calzone stated that this issue was brought to the board months ago – that it was brought up twice and the commissioners did nothing about it. Commissioner Calzone stated that it was always tabled to the next meeting. Commissioner Sampiere stated that changing to three years was never brought up. Chief Edwards stated that it was discussed a roundtables. Commissioner Keough stated that there has never been a formal presentation to them.

Chief VanWart stated that technically they don't have two-year terms because every year they have to be re-appointed. Every year he must put a letter of intent in to remain on the board. Commissioner Keough stated that the people who set this up did so for a reason – so they could let go of a fire chief who wasn't performing, or to extend them one year. Chief Edwards stated that policy was implemented in 1970, 55 years ago, and it is time for a change in the department.

Chief Edwards stated the department needs continuity and it does not have it. Chief Edwards spoke of how he still has not received a response to his email regarding the situation with the bees, with a member who is highly allergic. Commissioner Sampiere stated the bee issue is a maintenance issue. Chief Edwards stated it was made clear months ago he was not in charge of building maintenance. Commissioner Sampiere stated that if it was an emergency he could do something about it. Commissioner Parkosewich stated he let Tim Connors know about the bees.

Commissioner Calzone referenced an April 25, 2025 text message about the chief terms among the commissioners. When it was brought up at the following meeting it was pushed



## Town of Seymour

### BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

1 FIRST STREET, SEYMOUR, CONNECTICUT 06483

aside. He stated it was discussed via text in April and it was pushed off. Commissioner Keough stated that it was because there was no formal presentation. Commissioner Calzone stated that is because the commissioners were supposed to do it themselves as it is their job as commissioners – not the chiefs.

Commissioner Sampiere stated that anything concerning the fire department should go through the commissioners and referenced a violation in chain of command a few weeks ago. Chief Edwards stated he was told by the town that this is the process it takes.

Through the chair, the First Selectwoman spoke. She stated that any resident can submit an ordinance, it does not matter if he is the chief. As chief, he is the chief 24/7, commissioners are commissioners 24/7 and she is the First Selectwoman 24/7. It does not matter what you are doing, you are in that active position. She stated that even if Chief Edwards didn't put the proposal on letterhead the commissioners would still be going for him. She stated that ordinances are done through the Ordinance Committee which is a subcommittee of the Board of Selectmen.

The First Selectwoman stated that Commissioner Sampiere called her a month ago and asked about this issue and she hasn't heard from him since. The proposal went in front of the Board of Selectmen who sent it to the Ordinance Committee. It was on the agenda, and she figured the commissioner would have been there because he was so concerned about it. However, no commissioners showed up. It was at the Ordinance Committee last week and none of the commissioners were in attendance. It now goes for a 30-day comment.

According to the town attorney, the fire commissioners oversee the budget, and the equipment. Fire commissioners make policies; however, this is an ordinance. The First Selectwoman asked the commissioners if they had an issue with the three-year rule why didn't they attend the meetings. Commissioner Keough stated that he couldn't find where and when the Ordinance Meetings were.

The First Selectwoman stated that when she would hold roundtable meetings all she would hear was "we don't want to be Oxford" so an SOP/SOG was voted on that stated in order to



## Town of Seymour

### BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

1 FIRST STREET, SEYMOUR, CONNECTICUT 06483

be a chief there were a long list of trainings that are required. So, if a member does not have the training, then they cannot be chief.

The First Selectwoman has been hearing firehouse issues for twenty-one years. If a member doesn't have this training, you can't be this, if they don't have this training they can't do that. If you don't like this person, you get thrown out of the fire house. She stated this was personal knowledge, not a political statement. She stated there has never been a five-year truck plan. Past Chief Lombardi tried to put in a five-year truck plan but never had a five-year truck plan. Now there is a five-year truck plan under Chief Edwards. Past Chief Lombardi tried getting a strategic plan. Now the town has a five-year strategic plan under Chief Edwards. She stated that it does not matter who is chief, the fire department needs to start moving forward. Ansonia is losing volunteers and closing fire houses.

This Ordinance allows town employees, if they are certified firefighters, to go to calls, which Commissioner Sampiere agreed was a good idea. The First Selectwoman went on record to confirm with Commissioner Sampiere that the only issue he has with the proposal is a chief having three years. Commissioner Sampiere said yes. Commissioner Keough stated this issue was not discussed as a board. Chief Levey stated that the only thing the commissioners can do right now is go to the public comment at the Ordinance Committee.

The First Selectwoman indicated that they had chances to talk about it at the roundtables. She stated the Ordinance needs to be updated because of the state statute that states unless there are 10 volunteer firefighters you don't need a Fire Commissioners under the Connecticut State Statute. Oxford's First Selectperson is their Fire Commissioner. Derby has one Fire Commissioner. If the town charter is stricter than the state statute it overrules it. Commissioner Sampiere stated that ordinances are easier to change than a charter. The First Selectwoman asked where they were during the charter. Everything in the Charter was reviewed. Commissioner Sampiere stated that there were no changes in the Charter. The First Selectwoman stated that if someone wanted to make a change to the Charter they should have gone to the nine months of meetings.



## Town of Seymour

### BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

1 FIRST STREET, SEYMOUR, CONNECTICUT 06483

Commissioner Keough stated that all he is trying to do is keep things moving. If there are four chiefs and they all do three years that means an individual would be there nine years before he gets to become chief.

Chief Levey stated the commissioners can put whoever they want in whether it is one year, two years, or three years. This year change does not matter because they must get appointed every year.

Commissioner Sampiere said there was a past chief that was removed for cause, and he just wasn't reappointed. If the three-year rule was in place, that chief would have been there for two more years. Commissioner Calzone stated that they can remove someone if they don't think they are doing their job. Chief Edwards stated that there is a policy to remove people in the SOGs – which was approved by the Commissioners. There is a discipline plan to take a chief out of the position. The same goes SOG applies for captains, lieutenants, and engineers. Commissioner Keough explained that after three years, if there was nobody to be appointed, all the chiefs would have to be extended another three years.

Commissioner Calzone stated the reason why members don't want to apply for the chief position is because the board fights the stupidest stuff. He stated that is why there is nobody applying for the chief positions. He stated he was one of those people and he stopped because of the bullshit the first time he tried. Commissioner Sampiere stated he is hearing that people aren't applying because they don't want to step on anyone's toes. Commissioner Calzone stated that's just what they're saying because they don't want to hurt any feelings.

Commissioner Keough stated that if after a three-year term there are no qualified candidates, they will have to extend the chiefs term another three years. Commissioner Calzone stated if they're doing a good job and there are no other candidates then what is the problem with extending.

Commissioner Miller reminded the board that at one point they were considering only having three chiefs on the board. Chief VanWart stated that he was the chief they wanted to remove when they demoted him to FD4.

Telephone: 203-888-1909



## Town of Seymour

### BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

1 FIRST STREET, SEYMOUR, CONNECTICUT 06483

Chief Edwards stated the chief before him was there 5 years and a lot was done in those 5 years. He has been there for four years, and they have done a lot in four years as a board. They have moved the department forward in the last 9 years.

13. Matt Calzone/Pat Keough made a motion to add public comment to the agenda Vote: 5/0

Comment was made by Ryan Keough regarding the bickering between the boards. He stated that the way to keep guys around is by teamwork. They're allowed to disagree and allowed to argue once in a while. He is going on six years with the department, and it has been like that the entire time. He said that everyone should get together and try to come up with something rather than arguing. Arguing is not the correct way to go about it. He said that the way to keep guys around is by teamwork, brother helping brother. That's how numerous members got in, including himself. Volunteer agencies run by helping one another. Blindsiding one another is not the way to do it. There was a lot of yelling from where he is sitting and a lot of this could have been avoided if there were actual discussions and calm talking. Food for thought.

14. Executive Session: none  
15. Chief Requisitions: none  
16. Roundtable Discussion: none  
17. Commissioner's Comments:

Pat Keough: No comment

Matt Calzone: No comment

Pete Sampiere: No comment

Gary Parkosewich: No comment

Christian Miller— Going forward we need to work together collectively.

18. Adjournment: Pat Keough/Christian Miller made a motion to adjourn at 7:46pm Vote: 5/0

Respectfully Submitted,

Angela Chernesky

Telephone: 203-888-1909



**Seymour Fire Marshal's Office**  
**One First Street**  
**Seymour, CT 06483**  
**(203) 881-5010**

**SEYMOUR FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE MONTHLY SUMMARY**  
**August 2025**

Building Inspections		
New: 11	Existing: 17	Re-inspections: 10

Investigations			
Structure Fires: 0	Vehicle Fires: 0	Other: 1	Follow up: 0

Training	
Attended: 3	Provided: 0

Miscellaneous:		
Propane Tanks: 0	Blasting Activities: 5	Burn Permits: 1
Plan Reviews: 11	Complaints: 5	Meetings: 17
Follow up: 13	Reports: 1	Oil Tank Removals: 17
Other: 9	Fire Prevention: 0	Fire Lanes: 0

**Major Activities: DFM Rockwell has returned (may miss some future dates)**

1. Newport Academy (Riverview) issued Certificate of Occupancy
2. School inspections and Fire Drills
3. Numerous Multi-family inspections
4. Fireworks/Explosive Hands on training in Ashford
5. Numerous Plan Review

**On-going Projects:**

1. Blasting is On-going
2. 231-237 Pearl Street (no movement)
3. Comcast Renovations (new updated suppression plans)
4. Stop & Shop Renovation
5. Dunkin' at Henny Penny
6. UPS Store renovations
7. Tu Marqueta at Auto Zone Plaza still being review
8. Valley Pharmacy at Seybridge
9. Main Street Nail Salon beginning

Respectfully,

*Timothy P. Willis*

Seymour Fire Marshal Timothy P. Willis



## **SEYMOUR FIRE DEPARTMENT**

**1 FIRST ST  
SEYMOUR CT. 06483  
(203)-888-1909**

***Christopher M Edwards***  
***Chief of Department***

***September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025***

### **September Chiefs Report**

The department has been very active this past month. We responded to two structure fires—one residential and one commercial in a strip mall. Our members did a fantastic job on both incidents, keeping damage to a minimum.

We currently have five members enrolled in Firefighter II. In addition, three department drills are scheduled for the remainder of the year.

The annual fit test process is nearly complete, with 16 firefighters still pending. DOT and pump testing have been completed, with truck 14 tested this week. Hose testing is complete, and ladder testing is scheduled for next month.

At this time, we have four members out of service: three for physicals and one on suspension.

The insurance claim and repair estimate for my chief's vehicle has been submitted, with repairs totaling \$16,500. No repair schedule has been set yet.

We are currently working on a recruitment drive, with a letter to be published on social media and in the local newspapers. I will also be finalizing the Swift Water equipment grant order next week.

The Junior Firefighters will host a car wash fundraiser at Citizens' on September 13th. Additionally, the Seymour Fire Department, Citizens' Engine Company, and Great Hill Hose Company will be recognized at the State Convention for our efforts during the 2024 flood. This event will be held on September 13th in West Haven.

One ongoing challenge is daytime driver coverage. Over the past two months, it has been difficult to secure available drivers during the day, resulting in myself frequently covering this need. We are reviewing the root causes as a group and will provide a follow-up update to the board next month.