



Town of Seymour

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

1 FIRST STREET, SEYMOUR, CONNECTICUT 06483

COPY RECEIVED
DATE: 3/9/26
TIME: 8:00 AM
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE

Special Meeting
February 26, 2026
7:00 P.M.
Great Hill Hose

Attendees: Pete Sampiere, Pat Kough, Matt Calzone, Christian Miller, Paul Wetowicz

1. Call the meeting to order- The meeting was called to order at 7:00PM
2. Pledge to the flag
Paul Wetowicz announced that he would be recording the meeting on his personal cellphone as part of FOIA. It was noted that the meeting was also being recorded by the undersigned recording secretary.
3. Public Comment- No comment
4. Discussion/Possible Action on FD ordinance change-

Paul Wetowicz/ Pat Keough made a motion during the special meeting. See attached motion document. Vote: yes 2, no 3. Motion failed.

Through the chair, discussion was had regarding the use of chief's use of their vehicles. The First Selectwoman noted that the vehicles are owned by the town and driven by the chiefs which goes through the Town of Seymour. She has checked with the town attorney, the town CPA, the town finance director and the IRS. There are no tax implications at all. The town pays for the vehicles, the town pays for the insurance and gas. There is nothing that they can do. The town ordinance allows them to use the vehicles because they are on call 24 hours a day, call week or not, they use it at any time. It has nothing to do with the Fire Chiefs, the Fire Commissioners, the Fire Houses. It is a town rule that has been in place since there was a fire on South Main Street and none of the chefs had their vehicles and they had to go get their vehicles to get to the fire. It was put in place over 20 years ago. They take their vehicles home and they have 24 hour use for them. Fire Commissioners, no matter how much control they think they have, they cannot overrule the town.

Commissioner Keough noted that for his work vehicle he has to keep track of his milage. Through the chair, due to pending lawsuits, Chief Edwards noted that it is a first responders' vehicle and it cannot be used for personal recreation. It is outfitted for him and when he is in



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the car he has to respond. This all came from the town attorneys. It was all checked and the reason it was checked was because there are certain residents that are friends with people that constantly bring it up because the chiefs are in different towns with their cars. It was included to cover the chiefs and have something in writing because there was nothing in writing.

Through the chair, the First Selectwoman noted again there are no tax issues. She spoke to the town attorney to make sure she could even attend the meeting as there is an email in writing that says counsel has been spoken to – someone was getting counseled. So because someone was getting counseled, even though there in an appointed position, the town must be very careful. If there is a lawsuit that is being threatened, then they can only go through the chair.

Commissioner Sampiere asked to clarify that the motion proposed by Commissioner Wetowicz was to make a recommendation to the Ordinance Committee to reject the ordinance change submitted by Chief Edwards. Commissioner Wetowicz confirmed that was the intent of his motion. He said the intent was to have a civil discussion and compromise on all sides.

Through the chair, First Selectwoman noted that this discussion has been going on since April of 2025. Commissioner Wetowicz stated that was not the case, according to the meeting minutes.

Through the chair, the First Selectwoman noted again that his has been going on since April 2025. She stated that it is up to the commissioners, and there are two commissioners from each house, to bring this up to their members to talk about it and they can't get the houses confused with the fire department. This is the Seymour Fire Department. Everyone has their own set of rules. To be a member of Citizens they have to go in front of a committee to be interviewed and you have to wait 5 years before someone can become a line officer. To become a member of Great Hill they have to wait 3 years before they can become an officer. Those are the house rules. The ordinance is for the Seymour Fire Department. She understands what the president of Great Hill Hose was trying to do, trying to make it so that if this went through the Ordinance Committee and Board of Selectmen, but it must work with both houses.



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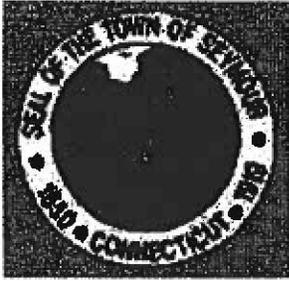
The First Selectwoman asked if the houses practiced together, to which Chief Edwards responded only on department drills which are usually once a month. He stated that there are people at Citizens that don't know anybody at Great Hill and vice versa.

Mike Blood noted that he has been doing a lot of training downtown and Great Hill is invited to come but only a few show up.

Through the Chair, the First Selectwoman stated that she has been in this town for 22 years and she understands the friction between Great Hill Hose and Citizens and the battles that go along with that. She stated that it has to stop. She has gone back and watched the Board of Selectmen and ordinance meetings. It was requested for the commissioners to go back so a meeting could be held to discuss the ordinance change, however it never happened.

This ordinance is not about Great Hill vs Citizens vs Seymour Fire Department. It is trying to strengthen the department. You can only belong to Great Hill if you live in Seymour or touching the borders. You can only join Citizens if you live in in Seymour and touch the borders and Naugatuck. The Seymour town employees that may want to join – they may not live in Seymour and they may not touch the borders. You've already broken your bylaw there. The bylaws are for the individual companies for the social aspect of it, not for the firefighting. The chiefs would never put a firefighter or a member or a town employee into a truck without the proper training and if someone really and truly thinks that then there is an issue.

Point of order was made by Chief Edwards. He noted that the Special Agenda listed "Discussion/Possible action FD Ordinance Change" and that technically there is only one ordinance up for vote to be changed. As a result, Commissioner Wetowicz cannot have his motion on a new ordinance because it is not listed that way on the agenda and that the special meeting was called to discuss his FD Ordinance change. The First Selectwoman noted that if Commissioner Wetowicz wanted to change the ordinance, it would have to be listed as "Discussion and Possible Action" on the agenda. You can't put a whole new ordinance through.



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Commissioner Wetowicz stated that he understands the intent however he goes by what he said and that per the 2025 meeting minutes it was not discussed until the September meeting. During that meeting there was a lot of heated discussion. In his opinion this is about compromise. He noted that what Chris Edwards proposed can't be changed. Chief Edwards clarified that his title is Chief Edwards. There was back and forth over Chief Edwards vs Chris Edwards. Chief Edwards commented that it was a public meeting of the Fire Commissioners and his title is Chief Edwards. Commissioner Wetowicz stated that he cannot change what was proposed, however the option is to say it is all okay or suggest a compromise or further discussion. He wants to note that it opens up the choice to anybody else who wishes to propose an ordinance. He does not think this will be resolved tonight. He has concerns, others have concerns. He feels a nice discussion at another time is necessary. Commissioner Sampiere stated that it had been discussed since April 2025 via emails and discussions and there has been back and forth. Commissioner Wetowicz was not aware of that.

Commissioner Calzone asked why two weeks ago when agenda items were requested for the special commissioners meeting, a week before the ordinance meeting, neither of the commissioners brought it up. If he really wanted to discuss it, there was a special meeting held two weeks ago and it was not added to the agenda. Then a week later it was brought to the Ordinance Committee without anything being discussed.

Chief Edwards noted that all this discussion is being done on Commissioner Wetowicz's motion and not the ordinance on the agenda. A vote would need to be taken on the motion or Commissioner Wetowicz would need to rescind his motion because it's not on the agenda. Commissioner Wetowicz disagreed and feels that the commission should vote one way or the other on his motion. However, he feels his motion is not out of line and that he has a right to do that and if it's voted down then fine.

The motion failed.

Commissioner Sampiere stated that based on the texts and emails, this issue is getting resolved tonight one way or another. The meeting was called to discuss Chief Edwards' ordinance, and it is the last time it will be discussed. It has gone on for too long. He had



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difficulties with it in the beginning, but he has come around. Things change and the only thing he wants to add is that the extension can be for one year. He does not want to extend people for three years. To clarify it is three years with one-year extensions. It would be an appointment.

Chief Edwards wanted to discuss why he first did this. There have been 140 calls so far this year. Two members at the table, one has 10 calls the other has zero calls so far. During the day he is hurting. He is driving trucks, the captain is driving trucks, FD3 is driving trucks., sometimes showing up to calls with only two or three members. So he tried to come up with a plan. He sees a problem on the horizon and he is trying to fix it. Bring in paid town employees while they are here working their jobs. It is in all the town contracts that they can leave for fire calls while they are working.

Over the last year he has had committees working on driver training for the Seymour Fire Department. None of it has to do with Great Hill Hose or Citizens Engine. It has to do with the Seymour Fire Department. ADM3 outlines all training requirements and driver training SOGs. You would need to pass everything and keep up with your calls no matter who you are per ADM3.

Chief Edwards has spoken to Commissioner Wetowicz at town hall and explained all this to him. He was in favor of it and he spoke in favor of it a few days after he spoke. Somewhere along the lines he changed his mind. Brandon Santos from Great Hill reached out to Chief Edwards with questions. He answered every one and stated he'd be more willing to sit down with anyone at any time and go over these and why he thinks it is time to change. He never received a response to his suggestion of sitting down with him. The following week, after all the questions were answered, Brandon Santos still went with all the false information Commissioner Keough gave him from an illegal workshop and went with that false information to the ordinance meeting. Chief Edwards has email proof that he explained himself. It was an illegal workshop because an agenda was not filed and minutes were not taken. Where are the 16+ members that were against this? There is one member that has a stake in this from Citizens, a caveat that allows him to stay even though he lives in



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Naugatuck. This member has been in the department for a long time and they are making a revision so they can stay in. If the ordinance committee turns this down, it is what it is. At the end of the day, he put on paper that there is a problem. He has been in charge of the department for 4 years. There is a response problem during the day and he is trying to prevent going to paid staff. For the record, they will go to paid staff if they can't fix the problem. There are people downtown that get up and leave when calls come in. That is a problem. If Great Hill thinks it is a problem against them, it is not. At the end of the day, these buildings and those trucks belong to the town and the taxpayers.

Chief Edwards job, along with his deputy and assistant chief, are to make sure they get out. It is a slap in the face that two members of this board went and spoke so negatively against this, got the rules of this department messed up and made the fire department look like jerks on a town meeting, on video, forever now. Everyone was emailed a copy of the ordinance and if it was actually read, none of this would have been brought up tonight and the motion by Commissioner Wetowicz would not have been brought forward. If someone has a question ask him. He will email you back. If you don't call and you don't ask, he is not hunting you down. Thirty-five guys from Citizens asked him questions and they all got their answers. He thought he did his due diligence by emailing Brandon Santos. Everything is black and white in the email. The last page is the SOG that he wrote, if the ordinance goes through, on a new policy for the members. If anybody in the department thinks he is going to take somebody off the street and let them do what they want, they are a fool. He doesn't even let his own members do anything if they're not trained. They can't even drive a truck with a plow if they are not trained. If they think he will let someone in the front door and hand them the keys – then you don't know your chief.

Commissioner Keough asked why he just didn't bring it up to the board originally. Chief Edwards stated that he has done that since last June, but Commissioner Keough wouldn't know that because he never made it to a roundtable. He's been asking and asking and nothing has happened. Chief Edwards wasn't going to bring it up tonight, but Commissioner Keough told him that "if you sign this we are having a problem".



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Mike Scheppa made a comment supporting a lot of what Chief Edwards said and agreed that the Seymour Fire Department did look like a jerk at the ordinance meeting because they didn't have their act together. Instead of debating the past, can the meeting now come up with something and not leave until it is done. Commissioner Sampiere stated that if an agreement is made then a letter will be sent to the Ordinance Committee.

Chief Edwards made one more comment. There was something said at the ordinance meeting about leadership being stagnant. That is wrong. If anyone has been doing their research it takes hundreds of hours to get certified, nights and weekends. It is limitations on family and time. It is not 1985 anymore. People need to realize the fire service is moving way far ahead of them and they can't keep up. He did his time, he doesn't have much time left. FD3 has a lot of time left and he will not leave him with a department that is falling apart. He can only ask so many times for something to happen before he takes it into his own hands. You need to come to meetings to know what is going on. You have to come to calls to know what is going on. You need to answer emails to know what is going on.

Through the Chair, First Selectwoman discussed the 3 years for the chiefs but its time, people have families and to go from FD4 to FD1 that's 12 years. As the wife of a former firefighter, she understands the time away from home and she has nothing but respect for the volunteers. It takes a lot out of a family to do it.

There are 17,000 residents in this town. There are millions of dollars in infrastructure, businesses and homes. Whoever is taking the FD1 position needs to have that training. That is why she keeps saying to Commissioner Keough – are they guidelines or are they requirements? She knows that when she spoke to Scott Andrews he said that when he was a commissioner it was requirements. That is also when Tom Eighme was here. There were requirements that were needed because the town is relying on you and your firefighters to keep it safe. That is why she is saying it is a requirement and he is saying it is a guideline. They are not guidelines because if you are putting someone in FD1 that does not have the certificates and training then you are putting the entire town in jeopardy. If someone really wants to be FD1 they need to make sure they are taking the proper classes to go from FD4 to FD1. She has seen the town insurance rating go down which is great because it saves the town

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money. If the training isn't in place the rating will go up and that will cost the town money. The town will be in big time trouble if they have to go to a paid fire department. Seymour cannot afford that.

Chief Edwards stated that it is 798 hours to be a chief in the department. It is not like 30 years ago where you were good with just Fire One. The standards are a lot higher now. You need time to get there. As a board, if they put someone in that is not qualified it will fall back on them. It will be the commissioners that appointed a non-qualified chief. This ordinance isn't written for him. He was done. He now has to apply for one more year because Chief Levey left and he cannot leave FD2 and FD3 with a new chief. He needs the time to get FD2 ready to take over the FD1 spot. There are steppingstones, you can't just throw anyone in there. Originally it was five years, then it went to three years with one year extensions. That is a good compromise. You need to give people time to get there.

Commissioner Calzone noted that every past chief that he's talked to always asked for a third year and was always denied. A lot of those guys needed that third year to finish what they were doing. And they were pushed along with the two year rule. Every single past chief has asked for a third year because it really is what is needed.

Comment made by Brandon Santos regarding the email he sent Chief Edwards. He explained they were running a business meeting and they got a lot of feedback so he asked everyone to come together and he consolidated the feedback, which is what he presented to the chief and the ordinance committee. He was soliciting feedback based on what was in the ordinance changes. Nobody had any of the background information that the chief had provided since then. Chief Edwards clarified that he answered all the questions he was asked in the email that was sent by Brandon Santos. Santos said that if members came to him with complaints or concerns he wants to make sure that is heard.

Chief Edwards stated his issue with that is that he answered his questions with facts and he still went to the ordinance meeting with none of the answers he was given by the chief.



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First Selectwoman understands what Brandon was saying, but their bylaws state one thing and the ordinance would not allow that. She has watched people go in front of their interviewing commission and she has watched them be turned down.

Chief Edwards stated that Great Hills bylaws state you need to live in a bordering town, town ordinance says you need to live in a bordering town plus Naugatuck. Up until 3 weeks ago you had to live in the Town of Seymour to join Citizens. How is the chief supposed to run a department and do recruitment and fix a problem with people that are already in the town, covered by the Town of Seymour and you legally cannot join the company per the bylaws. Commissioner Calzone completely appreciated what Brandon Santos was trying to do and feels it is great as a younger member that he is doing it but there is a chain of command. He spoke to the chief and then the Board of Fire Commissioners had a meeting on February 17th. Why did he not come to the meeting and discuss it with the commissioners?

Brandon Santos stated that he provided his feedback to his superior officer who reports to the commissioners.

First Selectman stated that Brandon Santos is president of Great Hill Hose, Inc. and that entity does not fall under the fire chiefs or the fire commissioners. As a firefighter on scene, he answers to his captain and his chief on scene. The president does not report to the board. Commissioner Calzone asked if he brought it to the chiefs, why couldn't he bring it to the commissioners before going to the ordinance committee if there were additional questions. Why didn't this discussion happen two weeks ago.

Through the chair, the First Selectwoman stated that there are two commissioners that belong to Great Hill Hose, and two chiefs that belong to Great Hill Hose. Commissioner Calzone agreed and stated that were asked to provide agenda items two weeks ago and neither of them said anything. Commissioner Keough stated that was because at the previous ordinance meeting the ordinance was gone through and he assumed it was done and there was no more discussion to be had. It was clarified that there was going to be another meeting for the commissioners and then nobody brought it up. Chief Edwards stated that if you go back and watch the tape it is said that the issue was being tabled so that they can go back for more information.



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Comment from Mike Scheppa asking if they can go through the ordinance that night and come to an agreement.

Commissioner Calzone stated that the Chief have a meeting on the first Monday of every month and the Commissioners have a meeting on the second Monday of every month. As president go to your commissioners and ask to be put on the agenda to discuss it.

Comment by Mike Blood asking for clarification on who runs the department, the commissioners, the chiefs or the two companies. Why are the companies running the show? The two companies should comply with the town rules.

Commissioner Keough thinks the idea regarding the town employees is great, but he feels the companies need to come together on the bylaws. Commissioner Calzone asked Commissioner Keough if one of the rules was unified, will all the rules be unified. Commissioner Keough stated they should all be as uniform as possible.

Discussion and crosstalk was had about how that would never happen.

Chief Edwards stated that as he was doing this he did call around for input. Shelton has 1,500- 2000 call per year. They take people 25 miles as the crow flies.

Commissioner Calzone asked Great Hill members after everything they heard what were their thoughts on the ordinance. It was noted that there were no officers from Great Hill in attendance. It was also stated that all this information was explained in detail to the three officers at the chief's meeting.

Cross talk discussion regarding the town ordinances superseding the company bylaws and the older generation going against this and bucking the system. Discussion was had regarding beverages in the fire houses and the Christmas parties. Discussion was had regarding the culture changing with younger guys coming in. Discussion was had regarding how things worked 20+ years ago don't work now. Discussion was had regarding how the town will be growing and what is coming.



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Commissioner Calzone noted that the residents do not see two different firehouses, especially when their house is on fire. They just want someone to show up when they need them. Chief VanWart spoke about how Great Hill runs their meeting. Regarding the ordinances, contrary to what is believed, the chiefs work really well together and he feels that drives people crazy because they expect them to not get along. When something is discussed in the chiefs meeting and it gets moved forward, the thought process is that it does not need to be discussed further because they've done their research and due diligence. So when the ordinance is brought up, he told Captain Iott that his members need to show up. The people in Seymour just want people to show up when they need them. Chiefs and line officers shouldn't be driving apparatus, but they will if needed to get the trucks out. Example was given about standby crew during the snowstorm and he had six members to evacuate multiple floors. He is 100% in favor of the ordinances. As a taxpayer in town he does not want to see a paid department. Shelton has 200 members, Seymour does not have that. The issue with the ordinance has been blown out of proportion. Questions should have been asked at the meetings not at an ordinance committee. The entire department looked ridiculous. He was chair of driver training committee, and they came up with a lot of great ideas, which were all approved.

Commissioner Wetowicz noted that if it wasn't for a couple people making comments, they wouldn't be having this meeting. Chief Edwards stated this meeting could have been held in January and that Commissioner Wetowicz could have had added it to his January or February meeting agenda.

Commissioner Calzone stated that Commissioner Wetowicz didn't join until January, but after the ordinance meeting there was another meeting held that it could have been brought to. Discussion was had regarding the process of asking questions and attending Fire Chief meetings and Fire Commissioner meetings before you go through a fully recorded town meeting and state opposition without having discussion at smaller town meeting.

Matt Calzone/Christian Miller made a motion to support chiefs' ordinance with the addition of one year extensions Vote 4-yes 1-no.



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Discussion was had regarding next steps. It will be drafted for the commissioner's meeting on March 9th.

5. Adjournment: Matt Calzone/Christian Miller made a motion to adjourn at 8:05pm. It was noted that motions to adjourn were no longer required.

Respectfully Submitted,

Angela Chernesky

Motion for Fire Commissioners Meeting February 26 2026

Whereas CGS Chapter 104, Section 7-301, in part, provides for a town fire commission to manage, discipline and control said fire department.

Whereas, Seymour Town Charter, Section 12.6, states the duties of the Fire Commission shall be set forth in the CGS.

Whereas, we take these duties seriously, We recommend the Ordinance Committee to reject the following recently proposed ordinances by Chris Edwards.

Section 6-2 (c) – Unauthorized removal and use of equipment, use outside town, in part, use of chiefs vehicles for personal use.

Section 6-21 – Officers and members.

Section 6-22 Enlistment, qualifications of volunteers.

The following are the reasons:

- 1. The checking of online Board of Fire Commissioners meeting minutes for 2025 and 2026, indicates that the meeting in September 2025 is the only indication that a discussion occurred on these proposed ordinances. Future discussions in a civilized form are necessary for a compromise involving all necessary organizations, necessary authorized town personnel and other personnel.**
- 2. The inclusion of town employees into the fire department should include the approval of both volunteer fire companies in some way.**
- 3. A substantial support for these proposals is lacking within the fire department, at this time. More compromise should be considered.**
- 4. The use of town vehicles by the fire chiefs may involve tax implications for both the Town and any present or future fire chief which may not want to be experience. This needs further evaluation.**

Submitted by, Fire Commissioner Paul Wetowitz 2-26-2026