



# VESTAL FIRE DISTRICT

1136 Front Street, Suite 01  
Vestal • New York • 13850  
Phone: 607-797-2756  
[www.vestalfiredistrict.org](http://www.vestalfiredistrict.org)

**Board of  
Fire Commissioners**  
David Harrington  
Daniel Kirchheimer  
Thomas McCartney  
Keith Purdy  
Mark Tomko

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## Special Board of Fire Commissioner Meeting Minutes March 11, 2026.

1. Present: Thomas McCartney, Chairman  
David Harrington, Commissioner  
Mark Tomko, Commissioner – Absent  
Daniel Kirchheimer, Commissioner  
Keith Purdy, Commissioner
- Others: John Paffie, Fire Chief  
Chuck Paffie, Assistant Fire Chief  
Steve Langeland, Asst. Fire Chief  
Andy Eaton, Dept President, SO  
Jon Weber, Captain Station 1  
Bill Fletcher, Foreman Station 1  
Colin White, Brush 1 Committee  
Chair  
Don Albrecht, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant  
5 members of the public
- District Staff: Susan Bowen, Fire District Secretary  
Paige Willes-Brown, Director of Purchasing  
Marisa Butler, Fire District Treasurer - Absent  
Clay Ellis, Director of Communications
2. Meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm by Commissioner McCartney.
3. Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner McCartney
4. Approval of the Previous Meeting Minutes – None
5. Correspondence Report - None
6. Bid Openings - None
7. Scheduled Appointments (Guests) – None
8. Operations Report – Chief Paffie (or Designee) – No Report
9. Department Business Report – President Eaton (or Designee) – No Report
10. Station Reports (Fund Raiser/Special Events/Member Requests) – No Reports
- a. Station 1
  - b. Station 2
  - c. Station 3
  - d. Station 4
11. Membership (New and Current)
- 11.1 Motion by Commissioner Purdy, seconded by Commissioner Kirchheimer to accept the recommendation from Chief Paffie for the suspension of Firefighter Cole Abbott for 30 days from February 25, 2026.
- All in Favor: 4 (McCartney, Kirchheimer, Harrington and Purdy) Opposed: None Absent 1 (Tomko)



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Motion Carried.

12. Commissioner Report – No Reports

**a. Commissioner McCartney – Administrative/Policy**

**b. Commissioner Harrington – Financial/Records Management/Quality Assurance/LOSAP**

**c. Commissioner Tomko – Training/Safety Programs/Fred Singer Training Facility**

**d. Commissioner Kirchheimer – Facilities/Information Technology/Physical Security/Human Resources**

**e. Commissioner Purdy – Asset/Equipment/Fleet Management**

13. Director of Communications-Clay Ellis

- Held a news conference at the Training Facility regarding the Community Grant Program
- Social Media post regarding assisting visitors traveling from NYC back to Ontario, Canada.
- Spoke with Bob Joseph from WBNF regarding the Sale of Old Station 4.

14. Secretary Report – No Report

15. Elections (Annual or Special) - None

16. Treasurer Report – No Report

17. Approval to Properly Audit and Pay Claims as Submitted

17.1 Motion by Commissioner Kirchheimer, seconded by Commissioner Purdy, to approve the Audit of Claims for 2026 Expenses & Encumbrances dated for March 12, 2026, in total amount of \$42,990.67. All in Favor: 4 (McCartney, Kirchheimer, Harrington and Purdy) Opposed: None Absent 1 (Tomko)  
Motion Carried.

18. Director of Purchasing Report – No Report

19. Resolutions - None

20. Policies and Procedures - None

21. Unfinished Business

21.1 Review of Open Apparatus Projects

- a) Rescue 2 Freightliner Cab/Chassis. (Change Order)  
Awaiting Chassis Drawing



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- b) M-2/M-3 Weight Restriction Update  
Continuing to work through the weight restriction issues.
- c) Brush 3 Completion Update  
Director Willes-Brown to get quotes for items requested to finish the truck.  
Chief Paffie confirmed that Boat 4, Utility 32-1, Brush 32-3 are all approved by the county.
- e) Ex-M 3 Update  
The vehicle is at Federal Safety to get finish repairs done plus work that Little Meadows requested. Bill of Sale and title to be ready, invoice to be sent to Little Meadows.
- f) Boat 4 Update.  
Paperwork was signed and given to the Director of Purchasing.
- g) Spill Trailer 4 Update (New trailer.)  
Trailer needs to be NFPA compliant
- h) UTV 2 Trailer Update.  
Trailer needs to be NFPA compliant
- i) (2) Chief Vehicles / (2) UTV's Update  
Waiting for the conclusion of the permissive referendum before starting the projects.
- j) Engine 5 Update  
Engine 5 is ready for Endwell Fire Department when intermunicipal agreement is completed.
- j) Ex-Tower 1 Decisions.
- **Proposal & Evaluation:** Commissioner Purdy proposed forming a committee to evaluate keeping the old Tower One as a reserve apparatus. The truck has low mileage, a well-maintained Series 60 engine, and is a straight-wire system, not multiplex, which is a long-term benefit. It also carries more ground ladders than a pumper. An inspection by a factory-authorized person at Sutphen dealership determined the truck is "highly viable" with significant value, contrary to initial expectations it was only scrap. The current reserve, Engine Five, is not widely used, while Tower One is newer, has higher horsepower, and fewer engine/pump hours.
  - **Repair & Financials:** An initial repair estimate of \$89,000 was discussed, which included a \$26,000 hydraulic generator that could be replaced with a portable one. An evaluation confirmed the aerial is undamaged, with issues stemming from a collapsing cylinder. The necessary repairs to make it operational as a reserve are estimated at around \$30,000. Selling the current Engine Five could potentially bring in \$20,000, offsetting this cost. The committee noted that even if repaired, the truck could be sold later, as there is already approval to sell it.
  - **Logistics & Operations:** A key challenge is storage, as Tower One does not fit in two of the four stations; off-site storage options like Warner Brothers were mentioned. Station One personnel are already certified on Tower One, which is operationally identical to the new tower, providing continuity if their primary vehicle is out of service. It is considered a more versatile and better value-add than the current reserve engine.
  - **Liability & Intermunicipal Agreements:** Commissioner Harrington raised concerns



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about becoming the "Southern Tier reserve department" and footing repair bills for loaned equipment. However, Commissioner Purdy clarified that an aerial truck cannot be loaned to other departments due to certification and liability issues. Commissioner McCartney mentioned an intermunicipal agreement is being developed to ensure any borrowing agency would cover repair costs for loaned equipment like pumpers.

- **Communication Strategy:** Commissioner Harrington also noted the need for a well-prepared public message to explain keeping a truck previously declared obsolete. The justification will focus on fiscal prudence, enhanced reserve capabilities, firefighter safety, and the fact that parts for Tower One are available, unlike for the current reserve engine from a defunct manufacturer.
- **Conclusion:** A committee, chaired by Jon Weber from Station One, will be formed to analyze the proposal and will report back with a recommendation before the next fire commission meeting on March 25.

k) Brush 1 Directional Update.

- **Project History & Constraints:** The project, managed by Commissioner Purdy for over two years, has faced numerous issues, including multiple bidding rounds and vendor challenges. It operates under a strict price ceiling based on a fraudulent number from a previous vendor, preventing the team from building a brush truck to their specifications. Station clearance is another constraint, with a legally required 36-inch safety clearance between apparatus.
- **Current Status & Chassis:** A 2023 Ford F-550 crew cab chassis is at Federal Safety Equipment, partially painted with warning lights mounted. A new Darley skid pump is available for installation. The chassis has an upgraded 19,500 GVW rating and currently has 2,500 pounds of reserve capacity. The primary missing component is the truck body. Wiring is being done on the bare chassis to expedite the process.
- **4x4 Conversion Options:** The original plan for a DBL Design conversion was reconsidered due to post-delivery service issues. An alternative from Firematic, involving a lift kit and super single tires, would not require major chassis modifications, would preserve the Ford factory warranty, and would save about \$20,000. The decision was made to proceed with suspension work, with a preference for Ferrario Ford.
- **Truck Body Options & Design:**
  - Bids were received from Ward Apparatus, Nuthouse Industries, and Jutland Bodies for a flatbed configuration. A request was made to consider a service-style body instead.
  - The committee, chaired by Colin White, designed a custom truck body, favoring the Nuthouse style for its flair and artistry. They did not want to settle for a pre-built Duramag or Jutland body.
  - It was clarified that Jutland could build a custom body very close to the Nuthouse design, including angled and gullwing doors.
  - To meet station clearance constraints, the truck will have a low, shallow rear step, "bull bar" style front bumper guards, and a "clipped and bobbed" rear end with



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folding steps.

- A full-through compartment for long tools at the front of the body is planned, which the short skids on the chassis can accommodate.
- **Vendor Payment Issues & Decision Path:**
  - A major roadblock with Nuthouse is their requirement for progressive payments, which the district's attorney will not allow due to a past negative experience and state law prohibiting payment before taking possession of an asset.
  - Jutland does not require prepayment and is paid upon delivery and acceptance.
  - A two-part plan was established: **Plan A** is for Commissioner Purdy to get a final written answer from Nuthouse on waiving progressive payments. **Plan B**, if Nuthouse refuses, is for Commissioner Purdy to confirm Jutland can build the custom body. The suppliers' responses will determine the final choice.

21.2 Motion by Commissioner Kirchheimer, seconded by Commissioner Purdy to approve to move forward with the burn building work at the Fred Singer Training Facility with the following:

- Excavation and concrete (Prichard) \$7,765 (part of the grant)
- Roof rails and install (Murphy's) \$8,540 (separate install)
- Stairs and install (Murphy's) \$22k+/- (part of the grant)
- Engineering \$750

All in Favor: 4 (McCartney, Kirchheimer, Harrington and Purdy) Opposed: None Absent 1 (Tomko)  
Motion Carried.

## 22. New Business

22.1 Motion by Commissioner McCartney, seconded by Commissioner Harrington to hire Kelian Cleaning in the amount of \$1,180 per month, to service the four stations and the district office. There is no formal contract, allowing for performance evaluation.

All in Favor: 4 (McCartney, Kirchheimer, Harrington and Purdy) Opposed: None Absent 1 (Tomko)  
Motion Carried.

## 23. Public Input Session – Members of the public may speak on meeting items only.

## 24. Announcements

24.1 New York State Department of Environmental Conservation annual statewide ban prohibiting residential brush burning begins March 16 and runs through May 14.

24.2 Next Board of Fire Commissioner meeting will be on March 25, 2026, at 6:30 p.m. at Vestal Fire Department, Station #3.

## 25. Executive Session (if needed)

25.1 Motion by Commissioner Kirchheimer, seconded by Commissioner Purdy to enter executive session to discuss the employment history of a particular person(s) under Public Officers Law Section 105 (f).

All in Favor: 4 (McCartney, Kirchheimer, Harrington and Purdy) Opposed: None Absent 1 (Tomko)



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Motion Carried..

Enter Executive Session at 8:26 p.m.

Motion by Commissioner Harrington, seconded by Commissioner Kirchheimer to exit the executive session and enter back into regular session.

All in Favor: 4 (McCartney, Kirchheimer, Harrington and Purdy) Opposed: None Absent 1 (Tomko)

Motion Carried.

Exit Executive Session at 8:55 p.m.

No decisions were made from the Executive session.

26. Motion by Commissioner Harrington, seconded by Commissioner Tomko to adjourn the meeting at 8:56 p.m.

All in Favor: 4 (McCartney, Kirchheimer, Harrington and Purdy) Opposed: None Absent 1 (Tomko) Motion Carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan Bowen  
Fire District Secretary