

RIDGEFIELD FIRE COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

Date: Monday, June 8, 2026

Time: 6:30 PM – 7:30 PM

Location: Town Hall, Large Meeting Room

Commissioners Present: Rudy Marconi, Barbara Manners, Maureen Kozlark, Sean Connelly, Geoffrey Morris

Also Present: Fire Department Chief Rommie Duckworth, Assistant Chief Tony Cerulli

1. Meeting Schedule

- Chief Duckworth proposed moving Fire Commission meetings from a quarterly to a bi-monthly (every other month) cadence. Additional meetings would be recorded as Special Meetings.
- Currently scheduled meetings: September 2, 2026 and December 9, 2026. A late-October meeting (October 21, 2026) would be added.
- Bi-monthly schedule to begin in 2027.

2. Administration

- Chief Duckworth reaffirmed the department's commitment to its vision: a department where every firefighter is skilled, supported, and healthy, and whose work sets the standard for excellence. The Chiefs strive to never place firefighters in a position where they are asked to do something they have not been properly prepared and equipped to do.
- **Foundational training continues** in support of the Mission, Vision, and Values adopted by the Commission and Board of Selectpersons.
- **Local EMS Plan:** Renewed by the Connecticut Department of Public Health.
- **HeartSafe Community:** Designation renewed. The department also received a fourth consecutive American Heart Association Mission Lifeline Gold Award.
- **Public education:** During EMS Week, the department provided hands-only CPR training, Stop the Bleed instruction, First Responder awareness events, and continued CERT support.

3. Staffing and Personnel

- **Promotional process:** The recently completed lieutenant promotional process was reported as a success and a model for future promotions as well as for leadership and officer development.
- **Staffing stability:** The department has achieved 9 career firefighters per shift. The prior paramedic shortage and staffing crises have been resolved.
- **Clinical pipeline:** FF/Medic McAllister has begun the Connecticut paramedic certification pathway; application submitted to OEMS.
- **Next priorities:** With the officer corps filling out, the priority shifts to formalizing acting-officer credentialing and deliberate succession planning so the leadership bench is built proactively rather than reactively.
- **The intern and ride-along program continues**, covering RHS interns and RVFD ride-alongs under a revised policy.
- **The Shift Commander now responds in Car 6** when the shifts are fully staffed.

4. Training and Professional Development

- Assistant Chief Cerulli provided a recap of training **activities over the past three months**.

- **Training ground development** is led by Lt. Kindschi and supported by Ridgefield Thrift Shop grants and private donations.
- **Volunteer firefighters are invited to participate in training opportunities.**

5. Operations, Dispatch and Communications

- **Dispatch Performance Improvement Program:** A structured PIP is in place across the Fire Department, Police Department, and Human Resources. Dispatcher staffing is being actively addressed.
- **Old dispatch consoles** at Fire Department headquarters are being repaired for possible use as a backup during severe weather events.
- **Major Incident Protocol:** Active. Car 6 (Shift Commander) is CAD-dispatched to any call with three or more apparatus assigned.
- **Radio program:** A multi-year radio program begins in July, including tri-band portable and mobile radios, repeater upgrades, and NORCOM/state programming approval.

6. Facilities and Strategic Planning

The Chiefs provided an update on headquarters facility work:

- Additional showers: funds approved; planning in place.
- Roof repairs: funds approved; scheduled to begin this year.
- Chain room conversion to supply storage is in progress.
- Bunk room renovation and water heater installation have been completed.

Adjournment

- The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:30 PM.

Minutes prepared by Fire Chief Rommie L. Duckworth