

**Board of Fire Commissioners Regular Meeting
Commissioners' Conference Room at Fire Headquarters
72 New Haven Avenue, Milford, CT
Tuesday, March 18, 2014**

Call to Order: Vice-Chairman McGrath called the meeting to order at 1901 hours. A quorum was present.

1. Roll Call

Commissioners Kevin McGrath, Howard Stein, Richard Smith, Aaron Sanner, and William A. Brennan. Also present were Chief Douglas Edo, Assistant Chief Gary Baker, and Union President Michael Dunn.

Chairman Riso and Commissioner Weber were excused.

2. Public Statements limited to the function of the Board of Fire Commissioners:

Union President Dunn passed out to the Commissioners photographs from the Sandy Ground Playground project. He informed the Commissioners the landscaping of the grounds will begin this week. He explained the ribbon cutting of the playground will be on March 22nd at noon, following a road race to be held at Fowler Field at 10. Union President Dunn explained the Mattioli family requested a "low-key" opening of the playground.

Union President Dunn noted the playground was built in five hours because of the amount of support lent. The Dinosaurs provided food for all the workers. He added James Mattioli has been made an honorary member of Local 944, and a plaque has been made. He asked permission of the Commissioners to utilize the Department patch on the plaque that will be mounted on the pilings at the playground.

Commissioner Smith inquired if funds are available for the maintenance of the park if needed. Union President Dunn said the City insures the playground. Spare parts for the playground were provided at the time of the build, and Union President Dunn said the Union has a direct contact with the contractor. He added that nothing on the playground can be modified, as it is completely ADA compliant.

Commissioner Stein inquired where exactly the Department emblem will be mounted if permission is granted for use; Union President Dunn showed him and all the Commissioners where on the playground all signage will be placed. Commissioner Stein inquired of Chief Edo if anything in the SOPs require examination prior to granting permission for use of the Department emblem. He stressed he is not against the proposed idea, but wanted to be sure to avoid any later issues that might arise. Union President Dunn said there is nothing in the SOPs that he knows of.

Commissioner McGrath suggested getting in touch with the City Attorney first thing in the morning to see if there is any language that might hold up the process.

Commissioners McGrath and Smith made and seconded a motion to approve the use of the Department emblem on signage at the playground, pending approval by the Milford City Attorney. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner McGrath noted he was at the site for a time and he said it was an impressive operation. He gave his kudos to the spearheads from New Jersey and to all members of the Milford Department who helped during the weekend to build the playground. He added on behalf of the Commission, it was a job well done that reflects well on the Department.

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**3. Consideration of Minutes:
Regular Meeting – February 18, 2014**

Commissioners Brennan and Smith made and seconded a motion to accept the minutes of the February 18, 2014, Regular Meeting, as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

4. Communications:

a. Thank-you card from Daisy Scout Troop thanking the Department for the tour and experience at the station.

b. Card enclosing a check for \$20 in memory of Mildred Brotherton who passed away on January 31st, 2014, from her family, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Oliver of Milford.

Commissioners Smith and Stein made and seconded a motion to accept and deposit the check into the Good and Welfare Fund. Motion carried unanimously.

c. Card enclosing a check for \$25 in memory of Mildred Brotherton who passed away on January 31st, 2014, asking for an acknowledgment be sent to the family of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Hunter of Milford. The contribution was made by Mr. and Mrs. Jeffrey Tinner in Virginia.

Commissioners Smith and Sanner made and seconded a motion to accept and deposit the check into the Good and Welfare Fund. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner McGrath inquired on how the acknowledgments are sent to families in situations such as this. Chief Edo informed the Commissioners the letters are posted in the station where the call was originated, and the secretaries of the Department write letters to the families as requested.

5. Committee Reports

East Side Fire Station

Commissioner Brennan reported the station still has door problems. He noted there will be a meeting on March 20th with everyone involved to discuss and hopefully resolve this issue. The heating system is not operating correctly and the Firefighters continue to use electric space heaters. Commissioner Brennan has met with a national company of experts to begin an independent analysis on the heating system and will issue a report. He noted the Committee will fund this analysis and report, and will request reimbursement from the responsible party. He commented it is unfortunate because this is a public bid, public job where contractors cannot be chosen, and it has been a fight for four years.

Commissioner McGrath inquired if the Committee will remain in place until all issues are resolved. Commissioner Brennan said it will remain; in fact, they will need to call a special meeting in the near future to have expenditures authorized. Commissioner McGrath noted it might be a long road to resolution. Commissioner Brennan said the process at this point will not be a long one; if the items that need to be fixed are not agreed to be fixed by the responsible party, the City will hire a third party to resolve the issue and will bill the responsible party accordingly.

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Commissioner McGrath inquired from an operational standpoint how costs are adding up. Chief Edo admitted he did not have the current figures in front of him, but he knew the electric bill at the East Side Fire Station was \$200 to \$400 more than the monthly bills at Stations 5 and 6. He realizes this is due in part to the use of the electric heaters. He added he has put the Mayor on notice the accounts will fall short because of this.

6. Chief's Report

Chief Edo reported the results of the Inspector's Test: Two individuals took the test and one passed; he has accepted the position, Steve Mantie. He will begin his new position on April 1st and will begin class on April 2nd.

The Chief informed the Commissioners the Quint bid was won by Smeal Fire Apparatus. He passed around to the Commissioners the specs for the truck to see what it will look like. Commissioner McGrath asked how many companies bid on the work; Chief Edo said there were two total. Commissioner McGrath noted the Commission will have to formally approve the bid.

Chief Edo reported Marine 1 has completed several sea trials. He noted there were three very minor issues that were addressed as a result of the sea trials. Marine 1 will be put in the water on April 1st and will remain in for the season. Assistant Chief Baker noted the sea trials were delayed initially because the harbor had been iced over. He added he hopes there will be further sea trials this week prior to it being put in the slip this weekend. Commissioner McGrath inquired if there are enough staff to cover usage of Marine 1; Assistant Chief Baker said there are. Chief Edo commented that compiling the punch list with a definite timeframe really expedited the completion of the work needed to get Marine 1 seaworthy. Commissioner Brennan noted Marine 1 looks great and the work performed was done extremely well.

Commissioner McGrath asked if the water rescue done over the weekend was facilitated by the Zodiac; Chief Edo said it was, and it has been nice to have a second boat to use for such reasons.

The Chief reported all the Department apparatus has been inspected by the State for EMS licensing of the three ambulances.

Chief Edo informed the Commissioners he is in receipt of a spending control measures memorandum from the Mayor, putting a freeze on all new hires and seasonal temps, and all purchase reqs are to go through the Mayor. He noted the memo's receipt seemed to be earlier than in previous years.

Commissioner McGrath asked how this will affect the Department with staff. Chief Edo noted overtime has to be an emergency or in extenuating circumstances. He said the Department has overtime daily due to required training and school. He noted the Mayor requires all overtime hours are sent to him for approval weekly; this has been in practice since February 19th and so far nothing has been sent back as not approved.

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Chief Edo noted there is a vacancy in Dispatch as a dispatcher resigned. He said there are some applications in already, which will be reviewed. The Chief has spoken to Police Chief Mello to see if he would like any input on a new dispatcher. Commissioner McGrath inquired if the dispatch center has enough coverage at the moment; Chief Edo said right now they are covered.

Commissioner McGrath noted the Commission will have to formally make a motion naming the company and the price of the Quint to approve. Chief Edo said the timeframe in which to expect the new Quint will be around 300 days. He noted the Quint will be similar to Engine 4, except for the ladder.

Commissioners McGrath and Smith made and seconded a motion to approve the bid made by Smeal Fire Apparatus Company of Nebraska for the new Quint, totaling \$661,876. Motion carried unanimously.

7. New Business
375th Celebration

Chief Edo asked if correspondence had been received by the Commission regarding the celebration. Commissioner McGrath confirmed the Commission had not been in receipt of such correspondence and so asked to place it on the agenda.

Chief Edo explained Former Chief LaVecchia is on the 375th Celebration Committee, who wanted to host a contest to the high schools in Milford to paint the fire hydrants on the Green; this requires approval by the Commission.

Commissioner Smith inquired how many fire hydrants will be involved; Chief Edo said he will get a firm number.

Commissioner McGrath noted there was public communication that the Fire Commission had already approved the painting of the fire hydrants, with an estimate of 24 to 32 hydrants. He noted he contacted Chairman Riso, who was not aware of such approval, and then contacted Chief Edo to place the item on the agenda for approval by the Board. He reiterated that publically it was noted the Board had already approved the project. Commissioner McGrath said another question that was posed was once the celebration is complete, who would then be responsible for repainting the fire hydrants back to the original paint. Chief Edo said the City pays for all maintenance of fire hydrants through the Regional Water Authority; he noted he is sure once the celebration is complete, the RWA will paint the hydrants back and bill the City.

Commissioner Brennan made a motion to approve the painting of the fire hydrants on the Town Green through the 375th Celebration Committee.

Commissioner Stein inquired if the Committee will reimburse for any costs to the Department for any repainting done by the RWA. Commissioner McGrath reiterated that no formal request has come to either the Department or the Fire Commission regarding this project. Commissioner Stein noted it is the Board's responsibility to investigate any potential liability of such project before approving it, especially given the recent budget memo issued by the Mayor halting spending. He suggested sending a letter to the Committee asking what the cost would be to the Department and if the Committee would reimburse for such costs.

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Chief Edo said he will be in contact with Former Chief LaVecchia and will be able to answer all questions.

Commissioner Brennan withdrew the motion.

Commissioners Stein and Brennan made and seconded a motion to table discussion on the fire hydrant painting project to the next meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Chief Edo added he was approached by the volunteer companies to have a Fire Department Day during the 375th Celebration and will involve the volunteer companies in such day. He noted the volunteer companies do their memorial service in June annually, which is a week or two before the end of the event. He believes that will be a good day to hold the Fire Department Day. He believes it will be good for the Department. He will give a report at the April meeting.

8. Unfinished Business:

Awards (subcommittee)

Commissioner McGrath noted he was not present for the prior meeting but read through the minutes. He noted valid points were made in regards to the award ceremony and combining the Firefighters' awards with civilian awards. He asked if any progress was made with City Hall about a date certain in which to hold the awards. Chief Edo said the date that was requested was in April, but the Commission's regular meeting night was not available. Commissioner Stein said if the ceremony is held on April 22nd, would that be enough time for the Department to organize everything it needs to in order to hold the ceremony. Chief Edo said everything can be completed in time, both awards and swearing-in.

Commissioner Smith inquired how many civilian awards are anticipated to be given out at this time. Chief Edo said he knew of one at the moment; Commissioner Brennan suggested awarding the citizen who called in the sea rescue the previous weekend as well. Commissioner McGrath inquired if the civilian awards should be held separately from the Department awards. Commissioner Stein said it is his feeling they should be held separately. He noted especially because at the moment, one or two civilian awards can be held at a regular Board meeting, and if more are nominated, a separate "civilian night" can be held. Commissioner Stein said the Department deserves to have its own night, as public interest and the press would be drawn to the civilians if combined. Commissioner Sanner agreed with this sentiment.

Commissioner McGrath said the Department and civilian awards will be kept separate, with the Department awards hopefully being held on April 22nd, if available. The civilian awards can be discussed at a later date.

Commissioner Stein inquired if the Commission will be maintaining its regular meeting on April 15th; Commissioner McGrath said it is his understanding that it will.

9. Comments and Concerns of the Commissioners:

Commissioner Stein said it is his understanding that Deputy Chief Butler has retired from the Milford Police Department and Assistant Chief Baker had been working with him on the PSAP Center. He inquired who would be taking over Deputy Chief Butler's responsibilities in that aspect. Assistant Chief Baker informed the Commissioners that no

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official announcement has been made regarding the position, but that all radio issues are going through Todd Richards. Commissioner Stein inquired if there are any immediate concerns. Assistant Chief Baker said no; there are two small issues regarding the MIS Department but those do not relate with the SunGard program itself.

Commissioner Brennan inquired if Engine 9 had been put out of service. Chief Edo said Engines 8 and 9 will be traded in. Commissioner Brennan said he read a new battery was being installed into Engine 9. Assistant Chief Baker said Engine 9 is at Seeman's Lane.

Commissioner Brennan said if there is not an accident during the month, the accident report should be taken out as a matter of consistency instead of reporting zero.

Commissioner McGrath inquired if there was any news on Stations 5 and 6 coming off the budgetary responsibility of the Fire Department. Chief Edo said there has been no change. Commissioner McGrath inquired if the utility bills for those stations are incorporated into the new budget. Chief Edo said the new budget remains to be voted on, but it is anticipated the Department will not be responsible for paying the utilities at Stations 5 and 6.

10. Adjournment

Commissioners Smith and Brennan made and seconded a motion to adjourn at 1948 hours. Motion carried unanimously.

Recorded by C. Birney