

Board of Fire Commissioners Regular Meeting

Classroom at Fire Headquarters

72 New Haven Avenue, Milford, CT

Tuesday, March 19, 2013

Call to Order: Vice-Chairman McGrath called the meeting to order at 1900 hours. A quorum was present.

1. Roll Call

Commissioners Kevin McGrath, Richard Smith, Howard Stein, Joseph Weber, Aaron Sanner, and William A. Brennan. Also present were Acting Chief Robert Healey and Union President Michael Dunn.

Chairman Thomas Riso was excused.

2. Public Statements limited to the function of the Board of Fire Commissioners: None.

3. Swearing In: Firefighter Thomas Hope was sworn in.

4. Consideration of Minutes:

Regular Meeting - February 19, 2013

Commissioners Smith and Brennan made and seconded a motion to accept the minutes of the February 19, 2013, Regular Meeting, as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Stein abstained from voting as he was not present at the last meeting.

5. Communications:

- a. Thank-you letter from Jillian Sugrue, thanking the firefighters for having their truck washed at a Guatemala fundraiser. She said the school in Guatemala has been finished.
- b. Thank-you letter from Paula Mitchell to the Fire Department thanking them for their assistance on February 13th.
- c. Letter from a Roberts Service Center employee thanking the Department, especially the medics, for their assistance on March 2nd with his father who was experiencing chest pains.
- d. Thank-you card from Jerry Poppell, thanking the Department for clearing snow off heating vents. Included was a check for \$25.

Commissioners Smith and Stein made and seconded a motion to accept the \$25 donation and deposit it into the Good & Welfare fund. Motion carried unanimously.

Board of Fire Commissioners Regular Meeting

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Tuesday, March 19, 2013

- e. Invitation from the East Side Fire Station Building Committee inviting the Commissioners to the dedication of the East Side Fire Station on April 13th at 10 am.

6. Committee Reports

East Side Fire Station

Commissioner Brennan reported the East Side Fire Station is in operation and has been for the past two weeks. He said there are minor glitches in the building, but they are being worked out. He added that a private commissioning agent is reviewing the building systems. Commissioner Brennan said although the Committee is not happy with everything, the building is under budget.

Fire Chief Selection Committee Report

Commissioner McGrath reported the application process is complete. He said the cutoff for applications was on March 15th. Commissioner McGrath said 31 applications have been received, 8 from within the Department, 7 from within the state, and 16 from out-of state. He added that the Committee will meet next week to discuss the applications. He said the process is running on-schedule.

7. Chief's Report

Acting Chief Healey reported that Inspector Geanacopoulos has been promoted to Lieutenant. He said there will be a new lieutenant's test in the near future.

The Acting Chief said the Department applied for and received a \$30,000 grant to fix Marine 1, with the caveat all work must be completed and the boat must be in operation by May 1st.

Acting Chief Healey said he will have a meeting with Mayor Blake on March 20th regarding the decommissioned Station 5. He reminded the Commissioners that they had previously voted to turn the building back over to the City at the right time.

The Acting Chief reported that Seemans Lane is developing. He said the Department has suggested making the space an emergency management headquarters.

Acting Chief Healey reported the PSAP consolidation is moving forward. He said Utility Communications will be on-site March 20th to help with the process.

Commissioner McGrath inquired if the work that will be done on Marine 1 will be done in-house. Acting Chief Healey said the Department has talked to Twin Lights and a shop in Essex. He added that the communications board in the boat will need to be upgraded.

Commissioner McGrath inquired after the timeline of the consolidated PSAP center.

Acting Chief Healey said the Police Department has given a timeline of May 7th. He added that the Fire Department is doing their part to expedite the process.

8. New Business

Board of Fire Commissioners Regular Meeting

Classroom at Fire Headquarters

72 New Haven Avenue, Milford, CT

Tuesday, March 19, 2013

Commissioner McGrath said at the last meeting there was some discussion about having the Commission meeting at the East Side Fire Station. He inquired if the Commissioners would be interested in having the next meeting there.

Commissioners Brennan and Smith made and seconded a motion to hold the April Fire Commission meeting, April 16, at the East Side Fire Station. Motion carried unanimously.

9. **Unfinished Business:**

Rules for establishing an Eligibility List

Acting Chief Healey noted they have been waiting to hear back from the City Attorney regarding several issues. He said it has been recommended that anyone with a felony in their background be excluded from the list. He noted that as Milford would be the only Department to have an age restriction, the City Attorney was hesitant to include that requirement.

The Acting Chief informed the Commissioners that someone is willing to administer the existing Milford physical ability test. He added that this might be a good option for the next list.

Acting Chief Healey said the next recruit class will begin on August 26th. He said the testing will have to occur in May or June. He noted that he will need further clarification if the hiring freeze currently in effect will apply to the Fire Department.

Commissioner McGrath inquired if the Commission discusses and finalizes the list requirement issues at the April meeting, if that would still be within the timeframe the Department needs. Acting Chief Healey said it will be tight, but the spring CPAT test registration has already been closed out.

Commissioner Weber inquired as to how many departments in the state require both the CPAT physical ability test and their own city physical ability test. Acting Chief Healey stated that most towns rely on the CPAT testing, although New Haven does not use CPAT at all. Commissioner Weber inquired if any other departments use both the CPAT test along with a separate swim test like Milford; Acting Chief Healey said no other department that he knows of administers tests like Milford. He reiterated he believes Milford needs a swim test at a minimum.

Union President Dunn stated the union members are not in favor of eliminating the Milford-administered physical ability test. He said Milford is known as having a tough test and the union members do not want the standards to be dropped. He noted that all members of the union have passed this Milford test in the past and they are proud to have done so.

Acting Chief Healey recommended that any EMT candidates should have their EMT card at the time of their appointment. He said he is of the belief that anyone looking to be hired by the Department should be ready when the time comes.

Commissioner Stein summarized the remaining eligibility list requirement issues. He stated for this list compilation, the Milford physical ability test would not be administered, as was already voted upon by the Commissioners. He said the swim test

Board of Fire Commissioners Regular Meeting

Classroom at Fire Headquarters

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Tuesday, March 19, 2013

will be administered in Milford, however. He said the EMT card issue has already been voted on, and as it stands, the card will have to be possessed at the time of appointment. Commissioner Stein noted the Commission can call a special meeting to discuss any legal issues.

Acting Chief Healey said another problem is that the Department used to hold the physical ability test at Foran High; he said Seemans Lane might be a possibility for future testing.

Commissioner Brennan commented he had an informal discussion with the City Attorney; the City Attorney has not formally answered the inquiry of Chairman Riso regarding the remaining list requirement issues, but he did mention to Commissioner Brennan felons should be excluded, and there should be no age limit requirement. Commissioner McGrath suggested the Commissioners vote on all issues as a package at the April 16th meeting.

Commissioner Stein said the Commission should take a serious look at how funds are being allocated for the testing process in the future.

10. Comments and Concerns of the Commissioners:

Commissioner Sanner inquired what the repercussions are of ironing out all remaining issues in the April timeline. Acting Chief Healey said it will be really tight to get new recruits into the next class. He noted any open spots in the Department will be filled as necessary until the new class starts. He informed the Commissioners the Academy runs new classes in the spring and fall; having an established list will take a lot of pressure off.

Commissioner Brennan inquired if a list could be generated listing all the cars and vehicles of the Department, along with their uses, for the new Commissioners. Acting Chief Healey said one could be compiled.

Commissioner Brennan commented the Commissioners used to get copies of any press releases from the Department, and he inquired if the Commissioners could start receiving them again once the Department's management positions have been permanently filled.

Commissioner McGrath informed the Commissioners he contacted the Milford Rotary and Kiwanis regarding beginning an awards process. He said both organizations are willing to assist and also buy the awards. Acting Chief Healey said there is a budget for awards within the Department. Commissioner McGrath inquired as to the special award; Acting Chief Healey said he spoke with the citizens and they would be satisfied with some recognition. Commissioner McGrath stated he believes this can be discussed further at the next meeting.

Acting Chief Healey commented there have been numerous code saves (three to four since the February meeting). He said a LUCAS machine is very helpful in these types of saves and hopes to have one on every apparatus in the Department. He added although the

Board of Fire Commissioners Regular Meeting

Classroom at Fire Headquarters

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Tuesday, March 19, 2013

machines will be helpful, it is the medics' quick response times that make all the difference.

Commissioner Brennan inquired of the status of EMS billing. Acting Chief Healey said RFPs have been requested; he said they will have their direction soon. He noted that this will not produce a significant income for at least a year. Commissioner McGrath asked if this process has been clarified with the City Attorney or the Mayor that the funds will not just be going to the City's general fund; Acting Chief Healey said he is not sure at this point.

11. Adjournment

Commissioners Smith and Stein made and seconded a motion to adjourn at 1930 hours.
Motion carried unanimously.

Recorded by C. Birney