

Board of Fire Commissioners Regular Meeting
Commissioners' Conference Room at Fire Headquarters
72 New Haven Avenue, Milford, CT
Tuesday, April 15, 2014

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

1. Roll Call

Commissioners Thomas Riso, 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.

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

None.

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

Commissioners McGrath and Stein made and seconded a motion to accept the minutes of the March 18, 2014, Regular Meeting, as presented.

Commissioner Brennan noted his comment regarding accident reports at the last meeting should say that the report should indicate either that there was an accident and include the accident report, or the item should be taken out of the report completely for consistency.

Motion carried.

4. Communications:

- a. Thank-you card from the Beth El Center thanking the Department for their donation of 20 packages of rolls.
- b. Thank-you card from Lucille Whitman and Family thanking the Department for their beautiful tribute to Dave.
- c. Letter from Assistant Chief Fire Marshal Robert J. Healey to Chief Edo requesting to carry over 15 vacation days and 258 hours of comp time, as has been granted in the past, noting such time may be less as he may be able to use the time prior to the end of the fiscal year. He adds the amount of time is substantially reduced from previous requests.

Commissioners McGrath and Weber made and seconded a motion to discuss the request letter under New Business. Motion carried unanimously.

5. Committee Reports

East Side Fire Station

Commissioner Brennan reported an alleged tentative agreement for settlement is in the works. The Committee will be meeting on April 29th with the Milford City Attorney and corporation counsel to discuss said settlement.

Commissioner Brennan informed the Commissioners the heating system is still not operational; it will be withdrawn from any warranty. An outside consultant evaluated the system and asked ten questions of the designer and contractor regarding the system, which have yet to be answered.

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Commissioner Brennan noted the overhead doors have been repaired. The building currently does not have a Certificate of Occupancy and still holds a Temporary Certificate of Occupancy.

Commissioner Smith inquired if the cooling system works; Commissioner Brennan said the cooling and heating systems are tied together and the cooling system cannot be tested at this time. Commissioner Brennan believes the Committee will turn the heating issue over to the City at the next meeting.

Chairman Riso inquired about the overhead doors and if they are working properly.

Commissioner Brennan said the doors have been fixed. A representative from the factory came to the station to look at the doors and fixed them. He noted one of the doors was hit which was part of the problem. Commissioner Smith asked about how the door was hit.

Commissioner Brennan explained one of the doors was hit and was attempted to be fixed; the damage was not done during construction. He noted the door that was hit was not the door that had been causing the issues stated in previous meetings. That door had not been wired properly and caused the keypad to burn out. He added there is no certification the doors have low-E glass.

6. Chief's Report

Chief Edo reported the individual who passed the Inspector test is currently in school.

The Chief informed the Commissioners as a follow-up on the playground seal. He said the City Clerk is the keeper of the seal; the use of the patch and seal were approved by the City and have been placed on the playground in the noted location.

Chief Edo explained he, along with Assistant Chief Baker and Battalion Chief Wassmer, will be presenting the budget to the Board of Aldermen on April 28th.

Chief Edo informed Commissioner Brennan a new battery was purchased for the current Engine 9, not an old apparatus.

The Chief reported there remains a vacancy for a dispatcher; there are currently three applicants in the process of background checks. They will then be sent to the Police Department for their background check as well.

Chief Edo confirmed all the Commissioners received two letters from Former Chief LaVecchia regarding the Milford 375th Celebration. He apologized for the letters not being presented until this meeting, as the letters were submitted to the Department in a timely fashion. The Chief investigated the proposal of the painting of the fire hydrants. The water company has no issue with them being painted, and Milford Public Works has volunteered to repaint the hydrants after the celebration is complete. Former Chief LaVecchia proposed painting the 99 hydrants contained within the original stockade borders of Milford; Chief Edo met with Julie Nash to downsize the number of painted hydrants. They propose painting the hydrants located within the Milford parade route, which includes 20 hydrants.

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Marine 1 is currently in-service and is in the water. Assistant Chief Baker reported it has been in the water for approximately two weeks. Some minor work is being completed on Marine 1 while it is in the water, i.e., installing chart storage tubes. He noted all the electronics, motors, and pumps are all working well. He added some refresher training is needed for current coxswains; new coxswains will also need to be qualified as they are currently short on qualified members. The training session will be scheduled in the near future. He added Coxswain Ricci is assisting Assistant Chief Baker and will be running the training sessions for Marine 1.

Commissioner McGrath inquired if the budget remains on the same level as previous years or if the amount requested is higher. Chief Edo said it remains the same level as previous years.

Commissioner McGrath inquired if a vote is needed regarding the painting of the hydrants in town as to whether the Board would approve the painting of 99 versus 20 hydrants. Chief Edo reiterated the 20 proposed hydrants are located along the parade route in Downtown Milford. Commissioner Stein noted the item is on the agenda under Unfinished Business.

Commissioner Weber inquired how many people can fit on Marine 1. Assistant Chief Baker informed him ten people can fit easily. Commissioner Weber asked how many men are usually stationed to operate Marine 1. Assistant Chief Baker explained it depends on the type of call: A rescue would require three people; a medical emergency requires five people; a fire call requires six people; hazmat calls require even more people. He said the number really varies.

Commissioner Weber asked if four civilians could fit on the vessel with the Department members. Assistant Chief Baker explained Marine 1 carries an inflatable rescue sled that can hold up to 30 people. The sled is pulled behind Marine 1.

Commissioner Smith inquired if the booms needed for hazmat calls are stored on Marine 1 at all times; Assistant Chief Baker said they are stored in a container at Station 7. He said the State maintains the trailer at Station 7 containing all the absorbent booms.

Commissioner Sanner inquired if the Zodiac will now go out of service with Marine 1 in service. Assistant Chief Baker stated the Zodiac will stay in service, to be used mostly for sonar missions and to hold divers.

Commissioner Brennan commented it might make sense to put a paramedic on the Police Department emergency boat for medical emergencies. Chief Edo said in most emergencies, the Police Department and Fire Department respond together, and the Fire Department would have a paramedic on their team. Commissioner Stein noted they are trained first responders; Commissioner Brennan said they are not required to re-certify.

Chairman Riso commented it is nice to hear Marine 1 is in the water and in service, especially because the season has already begun; the Department has already performed a water rescue in 2014.

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Chairman Riso inquired if the Milford Hazmat Team responded to the recent hazmat situation in Fairfield. Chief Edo said they did not.

7. New Business

Chaplain

Chief Edo reported Father Cronin of St. Mary's had passed away and a new chaplain is needed. He said a chaplain is needed for the awards ceremony the following week.

Commissioner Stein inquired if anyone has shown interest in the position. Commissioner Weber suggested contacting Father Donahue of St. Mary's. Chief Edo asked to be put in contact with Father Donahue.

Chairman Riso noted Father Cronin was involved with the Department for a number of years; he said he had been involved with a fire team years before. The Chairman suggested discussing this further once contacts had been made.

Commissioners Stein and McGrath made and seconded a motion to table the issue of a Department Chaplain to the next Regular Meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioners McGrath and Smith made and seconded a motion to add Vacation Time Carry-Over to the Agenda. Motion carried unanimously.

Vacation Time Carry-Over

Commissioner McGrath said the fact that under the City ordinances, putting the vacation time aside, it cannot be carried forward. Those will have to be utilized effective immediately. It will then be at the discretion of the Board to allow the 15 vacation days to move into next fiscal year starting July 1st. He said this is based on the fact that the administration through the Chief has determined that those are valid hours entitled to Assistant Chief Healey.

Commissioner McGrath made a motion to require the immediate utilization of the 258 comp time hours requested by Assistant Chief Healey, and allow the 15 vacation days to be carried over into the next fiscal year.

Commissioner Stein inquired if the 258 comp time hours is Assistant Chief Healey's total amount of comp time hours or if that is the amount he is seeking to carry over. Chairman Riso confirmed the 258 hours is just the time he is seeking to carry over. Commissioner Stein said because the City allows 30 days of comp time to be carried over and Assistant Chief Healey is requesting an additional 258 hours of comp time be carried over.

Commissioner Smith seconded the motion.

Commissioner McGrath confirmed through Chief Edo that the requested time has been confirmed through time records.

Commissioner McGrath reiterated the motion to utilize effective immediately the 258 hours of comp time. Commissioner Stein stated the City ordinance does not allow for the carry-over of comp time; the issue is regarding the 15 vacation days only.

Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner McGrath asked Chief Edo what effect the carried motion will have regarding manpower in the Fire Marshal's Office. Chief Edo explained that Assistant Chief Healey is the current Fire Marshal working in that office, but he himself and

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Assistant Chief Baker are both certified Marshals and will have to step up and take on some of that work if needed. He added that having said that, he believes Assistant Chief Baker will need to go to the City Clerk's Office to be sworn in as a Deputy Fire Marshal.

8. Unfinished Business:

375th Celebration

Commissioners Stein and McGrath made and seconded a motion that, based on earlier discussion regarding the celebration, the 20 fire hydrants located on the Milford parade route be authorized to be painted for the 375th Celebration. Motion carried unanimously.

Awards

Commissioner McGrath thanked the members that met earlier in the day to get the ball rolling. He said the goal is to have this be a permanent committee going forward. He said Commissioners Sanner and Weber will be the representatives from the Board; the Union will be choosing three representatives to join the committee as well, to make a committee of five to meet three or four times per year. Commissioner McGrath informed the Commissioners the last time an awards ceremony was held was in 2010. He said there are actually nine awards.

This year's ceremony will take place on Tuesday the 22nd at City Hall. A meeting was held earlier in the day to go through the recommendations of award recipients. Chief Edo has sent out invitations to the Department and other city officials for the event. He believes it is good to have the ceremony back on track.

Commissioner McGrath noted he asked for input from a number of people within the Department; they believe the ceremony had lost its luster. He said kudos to the Department for bringing this issue forward and he believes the new ceremony will be a nice evening. He said the ceremony will also include the swearing-in of several firefighters.

Chief Edo said there are six new firefighters to be sworn in, along with two new Lieutenants and the new Fire Inspector.

Chief Edo requested the Board return to discussion regarding the 375th Celebration. He explained he will be meeting May 8th with the Volunteer Departments regarding setting up a Fire Department area on June 6th. He will report to the Board regarding final plans. He said Milford Bank is going to allow the Department the use of their parking lot. Commissioner Smith inquired if this event will be in conjunction with the annual June memorial ceremony held by the Department. Chief Edo said it will be.

9. Comments and Concerns of the Commissioners:

Commissioner Brennan asked for a report on the EMS billing. Chief Edo explained he met with City Management and Union and an SOP was put in writing for immediate EMS billing. The program is currently up and running, but because it is still in the beginning stages, he does not have any concrete numbers to present to the Board. He will report further at the next meeting.

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10. Adjournment

Commissioners Smith and McGrath made and seconded a motion to adjourn at 1936 hours. Motion carried unanimously.

Recorded by C. Birney