

Board of Fire Commissioners Regular Meeting
Commissioners Conference Room at Fire Headquarters
72 New Haven Avenue, Milford, CT
Tuesday, April 17, 2012

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

1. Roll Call

Commissioners Thomas Riso, John Healy, Karen Craig, Kevin McGrath, Richard Smith, Howard Stein, and William A. Brennan. Also present were Chief Louis A. LaVecchia, Assistant Chief Robert Healey, and Union President Michael Dunn.

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

None.

3. Swearing In:

None.

4. Consideration of Minutes:

Regular Meeting - March 20, 2012

Commissioners Healy and McGrath made and seconded a motion to accept the minutes of the March 20, 2012, regular meeting as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Stein abstained from voting as he was not present at the last meeting. Commissioner Craig was not yet present for voting on the motion.

5. Committee Reports

Apparatus

Chief LaVecchia reported Engine 3's (Quint) throttle is being replaced in-house. He noted there had been problems with the throttle in the past, and he was optimistic this replacement would solve the problem.

The Chief informed the Commissioners the new Quint is about 50 percent complete. Chief LaVecchia said the Superintendent and the Assistant Superintendent are in Florida reviewing the repairs being done on Rescue 2. He said they reported it all seems to be going well.

East Side Fire Station Building Committee

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Commissioner Healy reported that a lot had been completed on the site since the last Commissioners meeting. The roof has been completed, except for some counter-flashing, the sprinkler system installation has begun, and plumbing and electrical are on their way. Commissioner Healy stated no updated schedule for completion had been provided by the contractor. He added he hoped to be provided one at the job site meeting that would be held on Thursday.

He informed the Commissioners the windows had been delivered to the site, but nine windows had been incorrectly measured by Rings End Lumber. He commented the windows are not in the critical path of the project and so would not hold up the completion date. The windows have a two-week lead time.

Commissioner Healy said they are waiting for the overhead doors for the apparatus bay. Chairman Riso commented the new station looks nice with the windows installed on the west end.

Commissioners McGrath and Stein made and seconded a motion to return to Item V on the agenda, Communications. Motion carried unanimously.

6. Communications:

- a. Letter from Ann Crolla of the Foundation School to Chief LaVecchia, thanking the Department for the tour of the station for the students and the time spent with the Leos Club.
- b. Thank-you letter from Ms. Ewen's 2nd grade class at JFK School to Chief LaVecchia, thanking him for his assistance during read-aloud day.

7. Chief's Report

Chief LaVecchia explained to the Commissioners the discussions the Fire Department has been having with the Police Department regarding the use of the Police Department's CAD system. The Chief said the Fire Department's needs for the CAD system involve the use of a link system versus a string system in order to facilitate the needs of dispatch. He added that although it would be more efficient for both the Fire Department and the Police Department to use the same CAD system, if the CAD system does not provide the link function then the system will not meet the Fire Department's needs.

The Chief stated Mayor Blake had a meeting regarding choosing the best location for the 911 center; the Mayor has not expressed an interest in one location over another. The Chief noted that the Kimball report commissioned by the City conflicts with the Kimball report commissioned by the State.

Commissioner Brennan commented that EMS operations are missing from all discussions regarding the CAD system. He stated that there is no set rule for response time in either the Fire Department or the Police Department, but ambulance response has a set time limit. He suggested EMS should have a separate CAD system than the Police

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Department as EMS services are not the Police Department's primary function. He said the Commission would be remiss to overlook this issue.

Chairman Riso agreed with Commissioner Brennan, stating there have been a number of discussions about this issue. He said a subcommittee is very much in order to govern the needs and concerns of what might happen with combined CAD service. The Chairman asked Commissioners Brennan and McGrath to sit on the subcommittee, with the Chairman sitting in for information. He stated he would try and obtain a meeting with Mayor Blake to get the issues of the subcommittee heard.

Commissioner McGrath inquired when the Department would know if the Police Department's CAD system would meet their needs; Chief LaVecchia stated it has already been determined that the Police CAD system will not meet the Department's needs. He added that funds had been set aside for the Fire Department to obtain a new CAD system. The Commissioners discussed items in the Kimball report commissioned by the State regarding the combination of 911 centers throughout the state.

Commissioner Brennan presented an email he had received presumably in error on November 25, 2011, copied to Mayor Richetelli and Chief Mello from Lisa Dillilo asking what language in the final PSA report should be altered per Chief Mello's request.

Commissioner Brennan stated he believes the report was tainted and the Fire Department should have received an email in this regard as well.

Chairman Riso said these are all issues that can be discussed by the subcommittee.

8. New Business

Chief LaVecchia informed the Commissioners that Senior Fire Inspector Vargo has put in for retirement. The Department will administer a test for the ten applicants for the position. He added with the retirement of Battalion Chief Healey, a lieutenant's test must also be administered. He stated the inspector test would be given first. Commissioner Healy asked about the timeline of the testing. Chief LaVecchia said by contract both tests must have a 15-day posting and a 45-day study period. He said the inspector test would most likely be given on June 7th, with the lieutenant's test subsequent to that. Commissioner Brennan inquired if the positions were appointed by score; the Chief said seniority points are factored in as well (one point given for every year up to ten years). The Chief added the test is a written test only.

Commissioner Healy noted the report regarding the Department's vehicle inventory and assignments. He asked Chief LaVecchia if the Department's policy on take-home cars is consistent with the City's policy. The Chief stated the City has a policy, but he is unaware of what it states. Commissioner Brennan said the policy as he knows it allows for both the Fire and Police Departments' Chief, two Assistant Chiefs, the Superintendent of Schools, and the Public Works Director are allowed take-home vehicles.

Commissioner Healy commented with the gas prices as they are presently, it is time to reexamine the number of take-home cars by the Fire Department. He stated some

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members of the Fire Department have been using the Department vehicles for personal business, and he believes this is inappropriate. Chief LaVecchia stated there are no other 24/7 take-home vehicles besides the Chief and two Assistant Chiefs, and stated the benefit to the City of the use of the take-home vehicles is because of a lack of parking. Commissioner Healy stated the lack of parking is not a good reason.

Commissioner Healy made a motion to suspend the use of take-home vehicles for all members of the Fire Department, excluding the Chief and two Assistant Chiefs.

Commissioner Stein suggested tabling this motion to the next meeting to allow Chief LaVecchia the opportunity to give a well thought-out response.

Commissioners Brennan and Smith made and seconded a motion to table this issue to the next meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Healy inquired if any other non-union members of the Department had put in for retirement. Chief LaVecchia said Administrative Assistant Pat Hoppes will be retiring on June 30th. Commissioner Healy suggested that assistant position not be filled. The Chief commented the Department has funding for the position, and the office cannot function without someone filling the position. He explained the functions of the three administrative assistants in the office, and commented the office will slow down and not meet the needs of the Department or the public without that position filled. He added that the Board of Finance had cut the position in the past, and the Board of Aldermen reinstated it. Commissioner Stein inquired about the salary of the disputed position; the Chief estimated around \$40,000 a year.

9. Unfinished Business:

Scheduling Software

None.

10. Comments and Concerns of the Commissioners:

Commissioners McGrath and Healy made and seconded a motion to send a thank-you letter to Battalion Chief Healey thanking him for his years of service to the Department. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Brennan inquired if Battalion Chiefs were visiting the firehouses on each shift. The Chief informed him they do make every effort to accomplish that on each shift. Assistant Chief Healey added that with daily drills and general scheduling, they make every effort to visit all the firehouses, but sometimes it is just not possible.

Commissioner McGrath gave kudos to the Department for their efforts during the brush fire in Milford the week prior. Chairman Riso echoed this sentiment.

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11. Adjournment

Commissioners Smith and Healy made and seconded a motion to adjourn at 1957 hours.
Motion carried unanimously.

Recorded by C. Birney