

**Board of Fire Commissioners Special Meeting
Commissioner's Conference Room
At Fire Headquarters
72 New Haven Avenue, Milford, CT
Thursday, April 19, 2018**

1. **Call to Order:** Chairman McGrath called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. A quorum was present.

Roll Call: In addition to the Chairman, Commissioners Smith, Stein, Brennan, Stanford, Riso and Weber were present. Also, present was Chief Douglas Edo and Assistant Chiefs Gary Baker and Bernie Begley.

Also present were Asst. City Attorney Debra Kelly, Union V.P. Heenan, Asst. Superintendent of Apparatus Matt LaVecchia and Attorney John Walsh.

2. **Personnel Matter – In Re: Asst. Superintendent of Apparatus Matthew LaVecchia**

Chairman McGrath indicated that the Board was prepared to hold a hearing with regard to a personnel matter pertaining to Asst. Superintendent of Apparatus Matthew LaVecchia ("LaVecchia").

The Chairman asked Chief Edo if he was ready to proceed with his presentation?

Attorney John Walsh interjected that he was the Attorney for LaVecchia and he requested that the Commission go into Executive Session.

Chairman McGrath asked for a recess at 7:32 p.m.

Chairman McGrath recalled the meeting to order at 7:40 p.m.

Chairman McGrath asked Chief Edo if he was ready to proceed with his presentation?

At 7:40 p.m., Chief Edo made a presentation to the Commission pertaining to a personnel matter involving LaVecchia. Chief Edo concluded his remarks at 7:55 p.m. by stating to the Commission that based on his investigation of the matter, it was his conclusion that LaVecchia had violated Milford Fire Department General Rules and Regulations #20, #36, #49 and #38. Further, he indicated that since LaVecchia had previously been found to be in violation of Milford Fire Department General Rules and Regulations #20, #36, #49 on a previous occasion in 2010, this was a repeat offense and therefore he believes that just cause exists to terminate the employment of LaVecchia as a member of the City of Milford Fire Department.

Chairman McGrath asked if Assistant Chiefs Baker and Begley joined in the conclusions reached and recommendations made by Chief Edo. Both indicated that they did.

Chairman McGrath recognized Attorney John Walsh on behalf of LaVecchia at 7:55 p.m. Attorney Walsh made a presentation to the Commission pertaining to a personnel matter involving LaVecchia. Attorney Walsh concluded his remarks at 8:05 p.m. by indicating to the Board that the investigation performed by the Department does not even come close to providing just cause to warrant the termination of the employment of LaVecchia.

Chief Edo made brief rebuttal comments followed by Attorney Walsh.

Commissioners Stein and Smith made and seconded a motion to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing a personnel matter. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Stein requested that Chief's Edo, Baker and Begley as well as Assistant City Attorney Debra Kelly and Attorney John Walsh remain in the building as the Commission may require their testimony or opinion.

The Commission went into Executive Session at 8:09 p.m.

The Commission invited Assistant City Attorney Debra Kelly into Executive Session at 8:49 p.m.

Assistant City Attorney Debra Kelly exited from Executive Session at 8:54 p.m.

Commissioners Riso and Smith made and seconded a motion to exit from Executive Session for the purpose of discussing a personnel matter. Motion carried unanimously.

The Commission came out of Executive Session at 9:12 p.m.

Chairman McGrath indicated that the issue before the Commission is whether just cause exists for the termination of Assistant Superintendent of Apparatus/City of Milford Firefighter Matthew LaVecchia. Based upon the presentations and documents provided by the parties including:

- The Arrest Warrant dated February 8, 2018 wherein Judge John Ronin found probable cause that Matthew LaVecchia committed a Felony Assault in the 2nd Degree as well as Breach of Peace 2nd degree based on the sworn statements of eyewitnesses and the investigation performed by the Milford Police.
- Milford Fire Department Communications Event Report dated February 3, 2018.
- Timeline events documents produced and presented by Chief Edo and Asst. Chief's Baker and Begley.
- Report by Asst. Chief Robert Healey dated August 10, 2010 outlining his conclusions that Department rule and regulations had been violated by LaVecchia as a result of a prior incident of misconduct. Included in his findings was the discipline imposed as well as a

warning that any subsequent violation of departmental rules could result in additional discipline including termination.

Commissioners Brennan and Stanford made and seconded a motion to terminate Assistant Superintendent of Apparatus Matthew LaVecchia as a member of the City of Milford Fire Department.

Commissioner Stein added after a finding by the Commission that just cause exists.

Motion carried unanimously.

Chairman McGrath asked if there was any other business to come before the Commission? Members of the board indicated nothing further.

Adjournment:

Commissioners Smith and Weber made and seconded a motion to adjourn at 9:15 p.m.
Motion carried unanimously.

Recorded by Diane Stein