

Board of Fire Commissioners Regular Meeting
Commissioners Conference Room at Fire Headquarters
72 New Haven Avenue, Milford, CT
Tuesday, May 20, 2014

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, Joseph Weber, Howard Stein, Aaron Sanner, and William A. Brennan. Also present were Chief Douglas Edo and Assistant Chief Gary Baker.

Chairman Riso was excused.

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

3. Consideration of Minutes:
Regular Meeting – April 15, 2014

Commissioner Weber noted his name was missing from the roll call of the minutes.

Commissioners Stein and Smith made and seconded a motion to accept the minutes of the April 15, 2014, Regular Meeting, as corrected. Motion carried unanimously.

4. Communications:

- a. From the Boston Police Department, a letter thanking the Department for the recent letter commending the Police Department's assistance during the firefighter's funeral; signed, Police Commissioner William B. Evans.
- b. Thank-you card from fire prevention poster winner Georgia, thanking the Department for "the best day ever" and "yummy pizza".
- c. Thank-you card from the Connecticut Center for Child Development, thanking the Department for their "Touch-a-Truck" event they held at the Center on May 3rd.
- d. Thank-you letter from the Orange Volunteer Fire Department, thanking the Department for sending apparatus to assist in a mulch fire on April 24th. Firefighter Lisa Kaplan noted the Orange and Milford Departments' collaborative agreement has proven an asset to the town.
- e. Thank-you letter from the Orange Volunteer Fire Department, thanking the Department for sending the canteen truck for the firefighters on April 24th. The food and beverages were much appreciated for such a long day. Enclosed was a \$250 donation check.

Commissioner Stein inquired where the Dinosaur's budget originates. Chief Edo explained their budget is contained within the Civil Preparedness section, where a specific account is set up. Chief Baker added it is a checking account and statements are received.

Commissioners Stein and Smith made and seconded a motion to accept the \$250 donation check and deposit it into the designated canteen account. Motion carried unanimously.

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5. Committee Reports

East Side Fire Station

Commissioner Brennan reminded the Commissioners he reported last month the City and the contractor had reached an agreement on every issue except for the HVAC system. He noted the station does not have its Permanent Certificate of Occupancy; Commissioner Brennan said this issue is being worked on.

Commissioner Brennan stated the City sent out a ten-item question list from the consultant that was brought in by the City to the contractor and engineer to answer. He noted that at 2:00 in the afternoon, the question list was answered, but not sufficiently. Outside counsel has responded they are turning the reply over to the hired consultant for review. Commissioner Brennan said there is a real problem with the HVAC system not working properly. He said the cooling system will likely have the same issues. Commissioner Brennan reported the remainder of the systems in the station are fine and working well.

Chief Edo inquired if the access panels were installed. Commissioner Brennan stated they have not. He explained to the Commissioners why access panels are required for maintenance and service.

Commissioner Brennan commented it might be a good idea in the future to install a fuel pump at the East Side Fire Station. A 4500-gallon fuel tank already resides at the station. He said the apparatus at the station could fill up right there.

Commissioner McGrath inquired how the tank was installed without the pump; Commissioner Brennan said the fuel tank runs the generator as well. Chief Edo added the tank was one that was installed at Headquarters and was moved to the East Side Fire Station.

Commissioner McGrath inquired if the Building Committee was still holding meetings. Commissioner Brennan said the Committee disbanded in April and held their final meeting. Chief Edo said the Department will coordinate issues with the City Attorney's Office from this point forward. Commissioner Brennan stated he will continue to monitor the station from the Commission.

Commissioner Stein commented the cooling system should be tested as soon as possible, rather than waiting until not having the cooling system operational becomes a real problem in the summertime. He said if the City will have to bring in an outside contractor to do repair work, why wait.

Commissioner Brennan explained the questions posed to the contractor and engineer handle both the heating and air conditioning. Outside counsel took the necessary steps to move the process along in order to hire an outside contractor earlier that afternoon. Commissioner Brennan stated as soon as the report comes back from the consultants, they will be in a better position to hire an outside contractor to correct the problems.

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6. Chief's Report

Chief Edo informed the Commissioners he presented the budget to the Board of Alderman the previous Tuesday. He said it went through with excellence, due to the fact the Department "held the line", as requested by the Mayor earlier in the year. The Chief said the new Quint purchased is a demo model; the Department will look into purchasing demo models in the future for cost-savings. Chief Edo said he brought back essentially the same budget, with maybe a 1 percent total increase overall, including the 2.25 percent raise on wages and benefits. The Chief said the Board of Alderman commended the Department for stepping up to the challenge of keeping a steady budget. Commissioner McGrath inquired if the Commissioners could receive a copy of the Board of Aldermen's final votes on all City budgets at the next meeting.

Chief Edo explained the antennae and police equipment from Station 6 has been moved to Station 5. The Borough of Woodmont has not closed on the sale of Station 5; the Department continues to own the property. The City held an auction for Station 6 recently in which no bids were lodged; the Department continues to own the property and is paying utilities. The gas has been shut off and UI will be shut off at Station 6.

Commissioner McGrath inquired if the utility payments for Stations 5 and 6 are included in the newly-presented budget. Chief Edo said they were not accounted for. The East Side Fire Station currently uses \$200 more a month on electric than Stations 5 and 6 did combined; he noted this is partially due to the fact the firefighters had to use electric heaters to make up for the faulty heating system.

Commissioner McGrath noted the Chief may need an action from the Board in order to shut electricity off at Station 6. He added with no electricity, no alarm system would be operational.

Commissioners Brennan and Smith made and seconded a motion to permit the Department to shut off electricity at Station 6. Motion carried unanimously.

Chief Edo reported the generator at Station 6 will be removed and brought over to Station 5.

The Chief informed the Commissioners the Locution Alerting System was the final bid for the new alerting system, which will begin to be implemented within the next couple of months.

Chief Edo said the itineraries for the 375th Celebration are posted online. He reminded the Commissioners they had decided last month to reduce the amount of fire hydrants to be painted from 99 to 20, located along the parade route. The Chief said he received requests to open the potential hydrants back up to the 99, as the 20 hydrants allowed have already been painted.

Commissioner Sanner inquired if the water company will need to grant permission for the additional hydrants. Chief Edo said they have already been contacted and permission has been granted; Public Works will repaint the hydrants after the celebration concludes at no cost to the Department.

Commissioner Stein inquired after the reason why the hydrants were reduced from 99 to 20. Chief Edo explained there wasn't expected to be this much interest in this particular

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project. Commissioner Stein asked why if there was no downside to the Department from the beginning, why was it decided to modify the amount painted originally. Chief Edo further explained he had discussions with the Fine Arts Council, who felt there were a number of other events going on at the same time, and didn't feel there would be this many people signing up for this particular event. It was decided to concentrate on the hydrants along the parade route where they could best be enjoyed. Commissioner McGrath reiterated the water company has given permission for all 99 hydrants to be painted, and Public Works has agreed to repaint the hydrants at no cost to the Department.

Commissioners Stein and Weber made and seconded a motion to return to the original 99 hydrants to be painted for the 375th Celebration. Motion carried unanimously.

Chief Edo said the Department would like to place a newspaper ad in June stating that the Department will be running a test in June of 2015. He said the ad will give the candidates a year's notice to obtain their CPAT and EMT certifications prior to applying for the test. He added to have those requirements prior to the testing itself, it will downsize the test.

Assistant Chief Baker explained it does not make sense for the Department to absorb the cost of testing individuals who have not qualified for the CPAT.

Commissioner McGrath said the ad will include the requirements that will be discussed later in the meeting under New Business. Assistant Chief Baker said he has a sample of the ad for the Commissioners to review.

Commissioner McGrath suggested leaving this topic for the moment and taking it up under New Business later.

Chief Edo reported on the EMS billing process. He stated they have reached out to AMR and have yet to hear back from them regarding a bundle billing agreement. Through the City Attorney's Office, the Department will continue to reach out to AMR and will give a June 3rd deadline for a response and discussions. The Chief said about \$7000 has been collected to-date.

Commissioner Brennan inquired when the new law for billing goes into effect; Chief Edo said October.

Commissioner McGrath asked if someone gets a bill from the City of Milford for the services rendered, is there a number that appears on the bill for that person to discuss the bill. Chief Edo explained that was discussed early on in the process; the Mayor's Office has implemented some verbiage the Department may utilize in the event a citizen calls inquiring about the bill. He added the billing company the City is using can and will address all questions regarding bills. The Department will provide the billing company's number for any inquiries.

Commissioner Brennan asked if billing includes only paramedic transport. Chief Edo said the billing encompasses the ALS portion of the call and no transport.

Commissioner McGrath asked the Chief to explain to the Commissioners how the new law which will be implemented in October works. The Chief explained it gives the City the option of collecting money through billing and not the commercial ambulance

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companies. Assistant Chief Baker explained the current contract language; he further explained the contract does not allow this issue to go out to bid.

Commissioner Brennan commented the Mayor did a great job testifying in this matter, leading to passage of the new law. Chief Edo said there was a tremendous amount of support from Gayle Slossberg as well.

Assistant Chief Baker informed the Commissioners Marine 1 is in the water and fully functional. Refresher training has been held. A night session was scheduled but canceled due to weather; it will be rescheduled soon.

7. New Business

Firefighter Test/Firefighter Agility Test

Chief Edo said although the test is a year away, the intention is to give potential candidates time to obtain their CPAT and EMT certifications. To require these certifications prior to testing will help cut down on the Milford agility and swim test costs.

Commissioner Stein noted it is his understanding that the candidates remaining from the current list, the top contenders do not meet the current requirements to be hired by the Department. Chief Edo confirmed candidates one, three, and five did not meet the qualifications required at the time the job offers were extended.

Commissioner McGrath inquired if any other candidates fall into that category currently. Chief Edo said it will be unknown until the phone calls are made to make the job offers. Assistant Chief Baker commented the Firefighters would like to see the reimplementation of the Milford agility test with the modified stair climb with weights. Commissioner Stein noted the Milford agility test was foregone last testing round because of the lack of an appropriate administrator of the test. Assistant Chief Baker added the consensus of the Firefighters is to have the agility test re-implemented and would like it scored, along with the scoring of the written portion of the test.

Commissioner Brennan asked how to word the requirement of having the CPAT and EMT certifications in the ad. Assistant Chief Baker suggested determining what order the Milford agility test and swim test are administered in to be done by cost.

Commissioner Stein asked if there was a reason that this issue requires a vote at this meeting, or could a subcommittee be put together to look at the cost factors and collateral factors. He added it shouldn't look like the Department is changing their requirements from test to test.

Assistant Chief Baker suggested the subcommittee look at the requirement for candidates to obtain the CPAT and EMT certifications prior to turning in applications, and then the other details could be worked out.

Commissioner Stein suggested tabling the issue until the next meeting, creating a subcommittee to investigate the issue and report at the next meeting. Assistant Chief Baker explained the EMT certification takes almost a year to complete, so putting off the discussion until the June meeting might make it too late for candidates to fulfill the requirements in time for the 2015 test. He added CPAT runs classes two times a year, spring and fall; the spring, 2015, class would be too late; fall, 2014 classes fill up quickly

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Commissioner Weber commented the ad would allow candidates to satisfy the requirements, allowing them to join the fall CPAT class and start the EMT course. Commissioner Stein stressed this ad would not just be a notice to potential candidates, it would in effect be change of policy. He stated the policy was changed for the prior test. Commissioner McGrath said a vote is needed tonight to bring the issue to center stage. He said the legal issues should be reviewed by the City Attorney to confidently come back in the June meeting and give the go-ahead to place the ad.

Commissioners Brennan and Weber made and seconded a motion to discuss the CPAT and EMT certification requirements prior to testing for the Fire Department with the Milford City Attorney, to be discussed further at the next Regular Meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

8. Unfinished Business:

Chaplain

Commissioner Weber made a motion to appoint Father Aiden Donohue of St. Mary's Parish to Chaplain of the Milford Fire Department.

Commissioner McGrath noted he and Chief Edo discussed this yesterday. He noted once this is approved, a letter should come from the Commission formally stating he has been approved.

Commissioner Sanner inquired if Father Donohue needs to be sworn in. Commissioner McGrath said he will find out.

Commissioner Stein seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Fire Hydrants Update

*Discussed in Chief's Report

9. Comments and Concerns of the Commissioners:

Commissioner McGrath inquired if the 911 texting feature is available in Milford. Assistant Chief Baker stated he does not know.

Commissioner McGrath inquired on the map layers for SunGard. He said he knows the SunGard system is up and running, but wanted to know if the map layer issue has been resolved.

Assistant Chief Baker explained it has been resolved. The last issue with SunGard was the firehouse data software getting out to the MDTs, but that has been resolved as of this week.

Commissioner McGrath commented that it has been a full month in the City of Milford. He noted that the Milford Fire Department has been highly regarded and should be commended for their hard work thus far. He said it is a job well done by the Department in a tough situation.

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10. Adjournment

*Commissioners Smith and Weber made and seconded a motion to adjourn at 1949 hours.
Motion carried unanimously.*

Recorded by C. Birney