

**Board of Fire Commissioners Regular Meeting
Commissioners Conference Room at Fire Headquarters
72 New Haven Avenue, Milford, CT
Tuesday, June 17, 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, Richard Smith, Joseph Weber, Howard Stein, and William A. Brennan. Also present were Chief Douglas Edo and Assistant Chief Gary Baker.

Commissioner Sanner was excused.

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

3. Consideration of Minutes:
Regular Meeting – May 20, 2014

Commissioners McGrath and Smith made and seconded a motion to accept the minutes of the May 20, 2014, Regular Meeting, as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

4. Communications:

a. Donation check from the Fairfield Fire Department to the Milford Canteen.

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

Commissioner Stein noted the donation check originates from the Fairfield Firefighters Local 126, not from the Fairfield Fire Department.

5. Committee Reports

East Side Fire Station

Commissioner Brennan reported the Committee has officially disbanded. All remaining issues have been turned over to outside counsel.

The station still does not hold a permanent Certificate of Occupancy. The overhead doors remain at issue, as they only run about halfway before they stop, which is obviously a big problem. When they are stuck, they can be operated manually, but that creates a large inconvenience to the firefighters going out on a call. The tracks that were installed were not designed for a firehouse it seems, as they cannot handle the load. All specs were approved in the design and construction process by the engineer.

Commissioner Brennan commented if a change needs to be made it should not come out of the Fire Department's budget.

The Commissioner added that about \$28,000 is being held pending the approval of the Certificate of Occupancy, which will not be issued until access panels are installed for building system maintenance. Commissioner Brennan also noted that the windows are not e-rated, and the only way to know for sure is to save any broken windows and have them tested.

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Chief Edo commented it sounds like the building still has a punch list of items; Commissioner McGrath inquired if there is a running checklist of non-working or incomplete items. Commissioner Brennan stated that any information he receives from Battalion Chief Wassmer is forwarded to the City Attorney and outside Counsel.

6. Chief's Report

Chief Edo reported Station 5 is now officially in the possession of the Borough of Woodmont. Station 6 had previously been out to bid, to no success. The Board of Aldermen now has to decide the next step to take regarding Station 6. He reiterated that the Fire Department no longer pays the utilities at Station 6, as of last month's regular meeting. The tenant that was in Station 6, through the Police Department, has been moved to Station 5.

The Chief informed the Commissioners there had been complaints regarding the grass at the Seemans Lane property. There was some miscommunication as to who was responsible for mowing the grass; the Army had been doing the landscaping, then the Fire Department. The Chief said professional services will be investigated to mow the lawn at Seemans Lane weekly after July.

Chief Edo said the Fire Department's involvement with the 375th Celebration went very well. He thanked Jason Sakoff and Jimmy D'Amico for working Saturday's firefighter day. The memorial service for the Volunteer Department went very well. The Fire Department led the parade on Sunday. The fireworks went well.

Chairman Riso inquired if the Fire Department was on-site for the setting off the fireworks. Chief Edo said yes, they were. It was a good learning experience for the Department to go through the steps for the safe setting off the fireworks.

Chairman Riso inquired as the fiscal year is ending, how the budget is holding up. Chief Edo explained the budget is doing excellently. The target amount has been spent to-date. Chairman Riso noted the Chief has been keeping a close eye on the budget.

7. New Business

Summer Monthly Meeting Status

Chairman Riso noted that the Commission has reported an "as-needed" basis for the July and August meetings with the City Attorney's Office. He said he has spoken with Commissioner McGrath, and they both will stay in contact with Chief Edo regarding any issues that might come up during the summer months. If items need to be brought to the Commission's attention, a meeting will be held in July or August or both months.

Commissioner Brennan suggested planning on holding an August meeting.

Commissioner McGrath said that is another option. He said it is the discretion of the Commission to hold the meeting, but it was discussed just skipping the July meeting and keeping the August meeting on the schedule.

Commissioner Brennan inquired if the Commissioners could still receive monthly reports from the Department even if a meeting is not held. Chief Edo said they can do that. He

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added he likes the possibility of having an August meeting, especially considering the next item on the agenda.

Commissioners McGrath and Brennan made and seconded a motion to skip the July meeting and hold the August meeting, unless Chief Edo determines a meeting is not required. Motion carried unanimously.

8. Unfinished Business:

Firefighter Test/ Firefighter Agility Test

Chief Edo reported that he and Commissioner McGrath had a meeting with the City Attorney's Office regarding this issue. It was concluded that it is the discretion of the Department to implement whatever requirements they deem necessary into the application process.

Commissioner McGrath added there was a discussion regarding hardship; it was the feeling of Counsel that is not an issue the Department would have to deal with. They felt comfortable with the way the Commission and the Department were proceeding on this issue.

Chief Edo noted the one-year advance advertising for the test was agreed to. The Milford agility test will be re-implemented; there will be a discussion at a later date regarding the point system.

Assistant Chief Baker commented the age range allowed for applicants stands at 18 to 35.

Chief Edo informed the Commissioners the male and female agility tests will be slightly altered from each other. Female candidates will be allowed to do a modified pushup with different scoring criteria.

There was discussion regarding the current openings; the openings will be filled from the current list and they will attend the September class.

Commissioner McGrath noted there was an open discussion regarding when the list was valid until and what would and would not require a vote by the Commission.

Commissioner Stein said he was under the impression the Commission would break out into a subcommittee to discuss the test requirements. Commissioner McGrath said the meeting's purpose was just to address the general questions that were asked regarding legality on the requirements at the last Commissioners' Meeting. Commissioner McGrath noted there is some confusion both in the Board of Commissioners and the City Attorney's Office about what requirements are approved and what are not approved. He commented these aspects need to be tightened up.

Commissioner Stein said if a subcommittee can be appointed at this meeting, they may be in a position to give a report at the August meeting. He suggested perhaps three Commissioners, Chief Edo, one other Department Chief, and a member of the Union to be members of the subcommittee. He added because the Commission has the authority to make the final decision, the Union delegate serves more as an advisor. Commissioner Stein volunteered to be a part of the subcommittee.

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Chairman Riso asked Commissioner McGrath to be part of the subcommittee; Commissioner McGrath accepted. Chairman Riso asked Commissioner Weber to be part of the subcommittee; Commissioner Weber accepted.

Commissioners Stein and Smith made and seconded a motion that a subcommittee to study and make recommendations to the full Board regarding the next upcoming qualifications and testing procedures for applicants and acceptance into the Milford Fire Department be established, including Commissioner Stein, Commissioner Weber, Commissioner McGrath, Chief Edo, Assistant Chief Baker, and a member of the Union, to be determined. Motion carried unanimously.

Assistant Chief Baker inquired if the advertisement should be placed in the newspaper. His concern is that applicants will not have enough time to obtain their EMS and CPAT certifications. Signups usually have to be done by August for the fall sessions. Commissioner Stein noted the fall sessions are most likely already full. He added there are sessions run in the spring as well.

9. Comments and Concerns of the Commissioners:

Commissioner Stein commented he went to a Department softball game two weeks ago. He noted that although the pitcher gave up many runs early on in the game, the team rallied and the game ended with a mercy win against the Bridgeport Firefighters. He said it was a fun time for all.

Commissioner Brennan inquired if the EMS rates are negotiable. Chief Edo said the rates are set by the State and are not negotiable. Commissioner Brennan said Battalion Chief Wassmer's report indicated negotiating EMS rates.

Commissioner McGrath inquired if the funds collected through the EMS billing will go into the general fund. Chief Edo said there will be a specific account set up for all EMS revenue.

Commissioner Weber commented on a job well done to Chief Edo and Assistant Chief Baker during their year since taking appointment.

Chairman Riso commented it was a pleasure to sit at the parade and watch the Fire Department, along with the apparatus, some antique, go by. He said it was nice to see the Chief leading his men in the parade.

Chief Edo said there was a very good turnout from the Volunteer Organization.

10. Adjournment

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

Recorded by C. Birney