

**BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
MILFORD, CONNECTICUT
JUNE 19, 2007**

A meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners was held on June 19, 2007 at Fire Headquarters. Chairman Riso called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

Chief LaVecchia asked for a moment of silence as the entire country would be observing a moment of silence for the 9 firefighters in Charleston, South Carolina who tragically lost their lives battling a structure fire.

1. Roll Call

Present at the meeting were Commissioners Thomas Riso, Karen Craig, Richard Smith, Jr., John Healy and William Brennan. Also present was Chief Louis LaVecchia and Assistant James P. Wilkinson.

Excused: Commissioners' Corvino and Stein.

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

Battalion Chief William Healey all those Commissioners who attended the Sick Benefits Breakfast on June 2, 2007. He reported they received the bugler, however, retired Firefighter M. Hudd was at the ceremony and played Taps live. Battalion Chief Healey reiterated his thanks to the Board.

3. Approval of the Minutes of the May 15, 2007 meeting.

Commissioners' Smith and Healey moved to approve the minutes of the May 15, 2007 as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

4. Communications

Commissioner Craig reported the following correspondence had been received:

1. A memo dated May 31, 2007 from Chief LaVecchia to Captain G. Baker and Lieutenant M. McDaniel thanking them for stepping up and taking over the duties as the department officers overseeing the operations of Marine 1 and Marine 2.
2. A memo to Firefighter T. Ricci from Chief LaVecchia thanking him for pursuing the goal of achieving a Boat Captain license and an understanding he will assist as an advisory to the officers in charge of the Marine Division.

3. A memo to Lieutenant W. Holveck from Chief LaVecchia thanking him for also stepping up and applying for the duties overseeing the Marine Division. It was noted his name would be kept on file in the event an officer is needed.
4. A letter from the staff at the Orchards Golf Course to Chief LaVecchia dated May 9, 2007 extending thanks to Captain R. Mohr and Firefighter C. Brown for their expert presentation on CPR and AED training. She staff expressed appreciation, as they now feel better prepared for any emergencies on the golf course.
5. A letter to Lieutenant Holveck from the resident on Berwyn Street thanking him and Firefighters A. Fabrizzi, J. Edmonds, A. Hanson and C. Brown for their skill and compassion during a very difficult time. The writer went on to say she herself is an RN and in our capacity in her job has often utilized the 911 system and the services of the Milford Fire Department. She stated when it was actually her that required care the department demonstrated their impressive skill and professionalism as well as compassion and support for her children who were home with her at the time of the incident.
6. A letter dated March 24, 2007 to the members of the Milford Fire Department from Ms. J. Honek-Lombard thanking them for their efforts in saving her home from a house fire.
7. A letter dated June 14, 2007 to Chief MacLennan, Metro North Commuter Railroad from Assistant Chief James Wilkinson thanking him for his assistance in providing the recently completed Rail Equipment Familiarization Training for the Officers and Firefighters of the Milford Fire Department. Assistant Chief Wilkinson noted he received overwhelming positive feedback from the department's personnel and the training was just another example of the outstanding relationship between Metro North and the Milford Fire Department.
8. A letter to Chief LaVecchia dated June 7, 2007 commending the efforts of Firefighter Luther Clarke for the courtesy and compassion he extended at a call on Sparrowbush Lane June 6, 2007. The writer reported when she first arrived on scene at the home of her mother she was anxious and nervous to know what was going on. She stated in her letter it was Firefighter Clarke that eased her nervousness and calmly explained the situation to her. On behalf of herself and her family she expressed her gratitude for the services the department provides and that of Firefighter Clarke.
9. A thank you to Chief LaVecchia from the students at Calf Pen Meadow (Room 30 and Room 1) thanking the Chief for attending their Read Aloud Program.
10. A card of thanks to Chief LaVecchia from Peggy Pisano, Executive Director of the Rape Crisis Center thanking the Chief for participating in their "Walk A Mile in Her Shoes" event.

5. **Committee Reports**

None.

6. **Chief's Report**

Grievance #07-005

Firefighter M. Dunn representing Local 944 stated they have had discussion regarding the "Touch A Truck Event" which is for a private organization. He stated this is a violation of their contract. He went on to say they try not to discriminate and say something is not worthwhile, but the basis for this grievance is it violates their contract. He stated there has always been an agreement they would not do these types of events for private organizations. He stated it was a problem last year and again this year.

Commissioner Craig asked if these organizations are charged for the department's services.

Firefighter Dunn spoke as to extra duty hiring which he explained is hired from a separate list. He stated events such as this type drop them under manpower and that basically they are taken out of service. He pointed out the articles of the contract this violates.

Chief LaVecchia stated the discussions held were limited only to the hours of the event and did not have anything to do with charging. He also spoke regarding his discussions with the police department and that he had a discussion with the Chief that they would discuss each event. Chief LaVecchia stated he did not agree there was a violation of the contract and that there are a number of things he could list. He stated it is a management decision. He also commented he did not know there was a charge and reiterated this was a management prerogative. He also commented whether it was a fundraiser or not is irrelevant.

Commissioners' Brennan and Healy made and seconded a motion to deny the grievance.

Firefighter Dunn asked if all the Commissioners have the contract. He read the language from the contract. He also stated he disagrees the Chief's Office did not know it was a fundraiser.

Commissioner Brennan commented it was important the department understand who is actively paying their wages. He also stated something like this is good public relations.

Chief LaVecchia added no protection was provided. He also stated he has denied as many as he has accepted.

Commissioner Healy commented company strengthens should not be reduced. He also commented the truck was not there to provide protection and that the truck could get out.

Firefighter Dunn stated there would be a delay to get the truck out of there, as they would have to move the kids and other participants out of the way.

Commissioner Healy commented he would think as professionals they would situate the truck in a manor to get it out quickly.

Firefighter Dunn stated it was their position this was a private organization that was making money. He stated it was a fundraiser for a private organization.

Commissioners' Craig and Healy made and seconded a motion to move the question. Motion carried unanimously.

On the main motion, motion carries unanimously.

Grievance #07-006

Chief LaVecchia provided the Board with a copy a letter from the City Attorney dated June 19, 2007.

Firefighter Dunn stated this grievance is filed regarding this person's pension. He stated the Board sent Captain Gray to a fitness evaluation exam. He explained the exam is similar to a CPAT test and since doing this exam he has been caused further injury. Firefighter Dunn explained this individual was hurt on the job year and years ago and had surgery, but has since been re-injured. He stated this individual is being asked to job through hoop instead of seeing a doctor. Firefighter Dunn stated they were questioning what right the Board had in sending to a fitness test. Firefighter Dunn stated the individual went to this testing thinking it was part of the pension agreement.

Chairman Riso interjected stating it was not this Board and that he wished to clarify that it was not this Board.

Firefighter Dunn stated yes, it was the Pension Board. He pointed out page 26, Article 23 of the Pension Contract.

Commissioner Brennan commented any workers compensation is subject to a medical evaluation and that it is to determine the scope of work the individual can do.

Firefighter Dunn explained he was attempting to Pension out and was put through a fitness test.

Commissioner Brennan stated in the industry this is common and in accordance with workers compensation rules.

Commissioner Healy commented it feels as though they are only receiving part of this and that it does not appear this was done with malice. He stated what he is hearing is that this individual was sent to have some type of test and that he aggravated a condition which seems he is unable to work.

Firefighter Dunn pointed out the Pension Contract states an individual will be evaluated by two doctors.

Commissioner Healy commented they are going to do it.

Firefighter Dunn stated this was not part of the process and that he has not seen a doctor yet.

Commissioner Brennan commented it determines the severity of the injury.

Firefighter Dunn stated they have come here as part of the grievance process.

Commissioner Healy stated what he is hearing is that this individual was put through a test for evaluation.

Firefighter Dunn reiterated it was done without a doctor's request.

Chief LaVecchia stated what the union is grieving is that it was three (3) tests and according to the City Attorney it was a workers compensation matter. He stated he did not know who ordered this test and whether it was under the auspicious of doctor or workers compensation.

Battalion Chief W. Healey stated he served on the Pension Commission for a number of years. He explained the procedure is that two independent physicians conduct an evaluation. He continued if it is determined an individual needs further testing it is then ordered. In this instance he explained, the individual went for the testing assuming it was part of his pension. Battalion Chief W. Healey stated by this letter from the City Attorney it shows this was workers compensation, but the individual thought this was part of his pension procedure. He stated the grievance was filed because he still has to see two doctors for the Pension Board and this test, which is a third exam. He stated the question is, was he sent to more than two doctors and did the employee go to this test not knowing it was a workers compensation matter.

Chief LaVecchia stated it is no uncommon for the Pension Board physician to order a test.

Firefighter Dunn stated it was the Pension Board that sent him for this test and that no doctor ordered it.

Battalion Chief W. Healey added it would be unusual for a doctor to order a test before even seeing the individual.

Firefighter Dunn stated the test this individual went to is for people to come back to work. He stated this grievance is for the third doctor visit and that this is covered in the collective bargaining agreement.

Commissioner Healy stated he did not feel there was enough information and that something is missing.

Commissioner Craig added this really should not come through this Board.

Firefighter Dunn stated this is part of the process and they work for this Board and therefore brought it to this Board's attention.

Commissioner Healy asked if the City Attorney know what type of test this was.

Firefighter Dunn responded yes, he believed she does.

Chief LaVecchia pointed out the City Attorney states in her letter it is workers compensation.

Commissioner Brennan stated workers compensation has nothing to do with Pension and that workers compensation falls under State rules.

Commissioner Craig asked if there a concern he will be denied his pension.

Firefighter Dunn responded no. He stated this is setting a precedent. He commented he is now being forced to wait and while doing so loses money. In addition, he stated he still has not seen the two doctors are required by the pension contract.

Commissioner Healy stated he believes this is a comp issue.

Commissioner Brennan commented this is an add-on because of the comp. He also commented he would receive additional benefits because of workers compensation.

Battalion Chief W. Healey stated workers compensation is separate. He stated this is a Pension matter.

Firefighter Dunn reiterated this is the Pension Board sending him for an exam.

Commissioner Healy asked what correspondence this individual received to go to this asking if there was a letter or something.

Chairman Riso called for a 5-minute recess at 8:00 p.m.

Chairman Riso reconvened the Board at 8:05 p.m. He commented they just don't have all the answers to this and recommended the Board deny this grievance for lack of information and allow it to take its course.

Commissioners' Brennan and Craig made and seconded a motion to deny Grievance #07-006. Motion carried unanimously.

Chief LaVecchia continued with his report. He stated the dispatchers signed a contract. He commented it was not what he would have liked, but it had been a two-year delay. He explained there would be a trial basis of a full week work schedule. He stated the contract calls for two dispatchers on at all times. He stated they would record the number of times when they don't have two dispatchers on. He stated one of the issues they had was they didn't want to be forced back. Chief LaVecchia also reported as to the standard of coverage and normal response of apparatus. He stated there are buildings in town that far exceed that. He stated they would be looking at individual buildings to see if they need a larger response. He also noted this year's building surveys would include "Standard of Coverage". Chief LaVecchia also reported with regard to the incident in Waterbury there would be a "zero tolerance" as to speed, safety and seat belts. He spoke as to the practice of seat belts and air packs when responding to a call. Chief LaVecchia also reported he spoke with the Mayor and the department would be receiving funding for a much needed new inflatable rescue boat.

Commissioners' Smith and Craig made and seconded a motion to suspend the July and August meetings unless a matter arises requiring the Board's attention. Motion carried unanimously.

Being no further business to discuss, Commissioners' Healy and Smith moved to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously.

The Board adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen K. Huber
Board Secretary

TO: BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

FROM: KATHLEEN K. HUBER

DATE: JUNE 22, 2007

SUBJECT: SECRETARIAL SERVICES

For secretarial services provided to the Board of Fire Commissioners at a Regular Meeting held on June 19, 2007.

Services Rendered: \$75.00