

**Board of Fire Commissioners Regular Meeting
Commissioners' Conference Room
at Fire Headquarters
72 New Haven Avenue, Milford, CT
Tuesday, August 15, 2017**

1. **Call to Order:** Chairman McGrath called the meeting to order at 19:21 hours. A quorum was present.

Roll Call: In addition to the Chairman, Commissioners Smith, Stein, Stanford and Brennan were present. Also, present was Chief Douglas Edo, Assistant Chiefs Gary Baker and Assistant Chief Bernie Begley. Also present representing the Union was Lt. Gavin O'Brien.

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

LT. Gavin O'Brien indicated that he had 2 union grievances that he wished to file with the Board and to be heard on. Commissioner Stein indicated that those matters should be taken up under new business.

3. **Consideration of Minutes:**

Regular Meeting – June 20, 2017.

Commissioners Stanford and Brennan made and seconded a motion to accept the minutes of the June 20, 2017, Regular Meeting as presented. Motion carried unanimously with Chairman McGrath abstaining.

4. **Communications:**

Commissioner Smith reported that the Department received the following communications:

- i) Thank you letter from the Boys & Girls Club of Milford for bringing down a fire truck and setting up the most amazing start line for their 2017 Walnut Beach Ice Cream 5K.
- ii) Thank you card from June Chaffin to Chief Edo and the department expressing her thanks in a recent incident at her home.
- iii) Letter to the Milford Fire Dept. from Catherine Ellison expressing her gratitude to the MFD EMS, namely, Jeffrey Platek and John Lazante while assisting her as a patient in a time of need.
- iv) Thank you letter from the Milford Bank to the Fire Department for participating in the third annual Milford Moves 5k which was a huge success.
- v) Two thank you letters from retired former Firefighter Frank Rohrig for the departments quick response to his home on 2 separate occasions.

He was truly grateful for the tremendous advances that have been made on the rescue truck since his days on the rescue truck in the decades past.

5. **Chairman's Report:**

Chairman McGrath on behalf of himself and the Commission expressed condolences to the families of Chief Edo on the loss of his father and to Assistant Chief Begley on the loss of his mother.

Chairman McGrath noted all of the interesting calls the department received over the last 30 days and appreciated the fine work done by the department.

6. **Committees Reports:**

a) Personnel Committee: Commissioner Stein had nothing to report.

b) Maintenance & Equipment Committee: Commissioner Brennan had nothing to report.

7. **Chief's Report:**

The Chief thanked the Board for their thoughts and prayers for the loss of his father.

- i) Squad 1 - Is in service The Chief has been told it is particularly quiet and everyone seems to be enjoying it. There is still some tweaking going on pertaining to on-board equipment and location.
- ii) New Engine/Ambulance bond package – The Chief indicated that the department is preparing requests to the City to include a new Engine and Ambulance in the next bond package.
- iii) Fire Inspectors – Three new Inspectors are enrolled in Code School and expect to complete the class by the 3rd week of November. The Chief indicated that he was pleased that all 3 Inspectors were in the class at the same time.
- iv) Events - The Chief noted that the Department has been busy providing support for community functions and outreach. He noted recent participation in the Fireworks display, Swim across the Sound and the upcoming Oyster Festival which includes the Union Dunk Tank. The Chief pointed out that the Department has developed an action plan for ensuring public safety during the Oyster Festival which includes extra manpower and equipment. Additionally, the department participated and trained in a Mass Causality Drill based on the recently reoccurring world phenomenon where vehicles are driven into large groups of people.
- v) Budget – With the State budget still undecided, the Chiefs are closely monitoring and tracking the department's budget. The Chief indicated that the alternative budgets (that were submitted to the City) reflecting loss of State funds are still possible.

- vi) EMS – Things still seem to be working out very well. The Chief noted that the department is trying to acquire IPADS or tablets for the Medic Units to make report writing easier and more time effective.
- vii) Alternative Work Schedule - The Chief reported that the new work schedule is in effect and that there are no issues. All seems to be working well. The department is down to single list hiring which should help cut down on overtime. The department is tracking how this will impact the department's budget. We should have a 3 month snapshot to report but will have a much better picture of where we are at after 6 months.

8. **New Business:**

Commissioners Stein and Brennan made and seconded a motion to add Union Grievances 17-006 and 17-007 to the Agenda under New Business. Motion carried unanimously.

i. Union Grievances 17-006 and 17-007

Lt. Gavin O'Brien representing the Union Grievance Committee addressed the Board. He indicated that both Grievances allege that the Chief violated the employee rights of FF Layne Manginelli (17-006) and FF Ryan Laguardia (17-007) by taking one vacation day from each firefighter unjustly and without notification. Each Grievance (which Lt. O'Brien provided to the Commissioners) cited Article VII, Section 5-B as the sections alleged to have been violated by the Chief and each Grievance had an excerpt from the Contract containing this Section.

In summary Lt. O'Brien alleged that 1) vacation days were unjustly taken from each firefighter and 2) discipline to these Firefighters were not provided in writing pursuant to the Contract.

Commissioner Stein asked Lt. O'Brien where in the Grievances the Union alleges that these firefighter were disciplined without notice and what provision of the Contract was purported violated? Commissioner Stein noted that the only portion of the Contract cited by the Union in the 1st Step of the Grievance to the Chief referenced only Article VII, Section 5-B pertaining to sick leave.

LT. O'Brien indicated that he thought all the alleged contractual violations were cited in the Grievances.

Following Lt. O'Brien's presentation, Chairman McGrath asked if any Commissioners had any questions for the Lt.

Commissioners Stanford and Smith made and seconded a motion to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing a pending claim and litigation pertaining to Union Grievances 17-006 and 17-007. Motion carried unanimously.

Chairman McGrath requested that Lt. O'Brien, Chief Edo, and Asst. Chief's Baker and Begley remain in the building in case the Board desired their testimony or opinion were necessary.

The Board went into Executive Session at 19:46.

Chief Edo and Asst. Chief Baker were invited into Executive Session at 19:53. The Chief and Asst. Chief exited Executive Session at 20:11.

The Board came out of Executive Session at 20:19.

Commissioner Stein noted for the record that no votes were taken by the Board while in Executive Session.

Commissioners Brennan and Smith made and seconded a motion to Deny Union Grievances 17-006 and 17-007. Motion carried unanimously.

Lt. O'Brien asked for an explanation. The Chairman indicated that no further explanation was necessary following the vote.

9. **Unfinished Business:**

None.

10. **New Equipment:**

None.

11. **Comments and Concerns of the Commissioners:**

Commissioner Stein noted that he and Commissioner Brennan were both present for the auto scrap yard fire last month. He indicated that the Department performed very well under very difficult circumstances. He noted that it was a very hot humid day. The smoke from the stacks of burning cars and tires made fire suppression difficult and dangerous. He thought all hands did a great job and wanted to note and thank all of Milford's personnel as well as the mutual aid received from Stratford and West Haven as well as foam assistance from other area departments. Finally he indicated that another fine job was done by the Dinosaurs whose canteen truck provided rehabilitation for hot and tired crews during the fire.

Adjournment:

Commissioners Smith and Brennan made and seconded a motion to adjourn at 20:23 hours. Motion carried unanimously.

Prepared by Recording Secretary Diane Stein