

Board of Fire Commissioners Regular Meeting
Commissioners' Conference Room
at Fire Headquarters
72 New Haven Avenue, Milford, CT
Tuesday, September 19, 2017

1. **Call to Order:** Chairman McGrath called the meeting to order at 19:15 hours. A quorum was present.

Roll Call: In addition to the Chairman, Commissioners Smith, Stein, Stanford, Riso and Brennan were present. Commissioner Weber was unable to attend, however, was briefed by the Commissioner. Also, present was Chief Douglas Edo, Assistant Chiefs Gary Baker and Assistant Chief Bernie Begley. Also, present representing the Union was Union Secretary Murphy.

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

None.

3. **Consideration of Minutes:**

Regular Meeting – August 15, 2017.

Commissioners Stanford and Brennan made and seconded a motion to accept the minutes of the August 15, 2017, Regular Meeting as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

4. **Communications:**

Commissioner Smith reported that the Department received the following communications:

- i) Thank you letter from the Jenn McCulloch, Festival Coordinator of the North Branford Potato and Corn Festival, to Chief Edo for the fire department's donation of light towers for the 2017 Festival.
- ii) Thank you card from Barbara Lewis to the department expressing her sincere thanks to the EMT crew for their kind, calm and reassuring manner in a recent medical emergency.
- iii) Letter to the Chief from Stephen Scafariello, Chief of the West Shore Fire Department, for the department's assistance with the August 26, 2017 boating accident on Long Island Sound which turned into a long search and rescue mission. The incident required dive teams from the Milford Fire Department and the CT State Police.
- iv) Chief Edo reported that the department received a plaque with a mounted copy of an article authored by Asst. Chief Baker and Lieutenant Hansen that was published in the August addition of *Fire Rescue Magazine*.

5. **Chairman's Report:**

Chairman McGrath expressed thanks to the department for their efforts in and out of the water over the past few months.

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:**

- i) Jet-ski training – Second round of training has been completed. All crews of Engine companies 3, 4 and 7 are fully functional now. We hosted a Safe Boaters course 30 participants including 9 of our members.
- ii) Burn Trailer – The burn trailer is currently at Seamans Lane property. The trailer is part of the Regional Assets regularly housed in New Haven. It is temporarily here for our crews to simulate live burns required as part of Live fire training. The Chief indicated he would provide a training schedule to Commissioners if any wanted to stop by and observe.
- iii) Oyster Festival – The Oyster Festival went off without a hitch. It was well organized. Having the Milford Public Library as a home base with the air conditioning was great. Only a few incidents.
- iv) Survey Walnut Beach area – A property survey is going to be done down at Walnut Beach in an effort to create better access for large Department vehicle to a Jet Skis in Storage at the beach. Presently, it's too tight for vehicles to turn around. Additionally, summer beach parking makes it worse especially when illegal parking blocks access to the storage shed. Signs have been posted warning against illegal parking.
- v) Milford Yacht Club – Additional discussions have occurred recently regarding moving the Fireboat to the Yacht Club at the mouth of the harbor. This would facilitate faster response time by Marine Units to the Sound in Emergencies. The Yacht Club leadership has resisted this in the past. There have been overtures from the Yacht Club that new incoming leadership may favor a change in that position reflecting the important public safety benefit to relocating Marine 1. Chairman McGrath noted that he has received complaints from boaters angry with the department because Marine 1 responding to emergencies has left wakes in the harbor that has rattled their boats. Chairman McGrath noted to these people that unfortunately when dealing with life safety issues, seconds matter. The Chairman noted that if Marine 1 were relocated to the Yacht Club, this issue would be eliminated. Commissioner Smith asked if Coast Guard Aux. 73 was still taking a slip at the Yacht Club noting that they hardly ever go out. The Chairman indicated they were still there.

8. **New Business:**

i. Union Grievances 17-008

Lt. A.J. Murphy, Secretary of the Union, presented the Grievance to the Board wherein it was alleged that the Department violated the Collective Bargaining Agreement (Article XXI, Section 9) in that: “the educational stipends for Fiscal Year 2017-2018 were paid on August 25, 2016 (Sic) were incorrectly based on the qualification and positions held in FY16-17. Stipends are paid and based on qualification and positions held for the current Fiscal Year.” Hand-outs of CBA pass and present CBA contract provision as well as other documents in support of the Union’s position were provided to the Commissioners.

Following the presentation, Commissioner Brennan asked if a person retires mid-year, what would happen to the educational stipend paid in advance by the City (as the Union suggests) to that person? Would the retiree have to pay the money back? Lt. Murphy indicated that the Union’s position is that they would not.

Executive Session:

a) Grievance 17-008

Commissioners Stein and Stanford made and seconded a motion to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing strategies and negotiations regarding pending claims and litigation pertaining to the foregoing Grievances presented to the Board. Motion carried unanimously.

The Chairman requested that the Chiefs and Union Secretary Arthur Murphy remain in the building as the Board may wish testimony or opinion.

The Board went into Executive Session at 19:35 hours.

The Board invited Chief Edo and Assistant Chiefs Baker and Begley into Executive Session at 19:45 hours.

Chief Edo and Assistant Chiefs Baker and Begley exited Executive Session at 20:10 hours.

The Board of Fire Commissioners exited from Executive Session at 20:19 hours.

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

New Business Cont.:

- a) Commissioners Stein and Brennan made and seconded a Motion to Deny Grievances 17-008. Motion carried unanimously.

9. **Unfinished Business:**

None.

10. **New Equipment:**

None.

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

Commissioner Brennan asked the Chief if he could explain the new shift time schedules and the new internet concept - Fire Manager program that he read about in one of the reports. The Chairman suggested that those issues could be added to the Agenda of our next regularly scheduled meeting under New Business to allow for a full presentation.

12. **Adjournment:**

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

Prepared by Recording Secretary Diane Stein