

**Board of Fire Commissioners Regular Meeting  
Commissioners' Conference Room at Fire Headquarters  
72 New Haven Avenue, Milford, CT  
Tuesday, October 15, 2013**

**Call to Order:** Chairman Riso called the meeting to order at 1909 hours. A quorum was present.

**1. Roll Call**

Commissioners Thomas Riso, Kevin McGrath, Howard Stein, Richard Smith, Joseph Weber, Aaron Sanner, and William A. Brennan. Also present were Chief Douglas Edo and Assistant Chief Gary Baker.

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

None.

**3. Consideration of Minutes:  
Regular Meeting – September 17, 2013**

*Commissioners McGrath and Smith made and seconded a motion to accept the minutes of the September 17, 2013, Regular Meeting, as presented. Motion carried unanimously.*

**4. Communications:**

- a. Thank-you card to the Department from Susan Jerue thanking the first responders to her home on September 26<sup>th</sup> when her mother suffered a fall. She reported her mother is recovering nicely. She extended a special thank you to the Lieutenant she spoke on the phone with while she was at work.
- b. Thank-you letter from Roberta Monty thanking the responders to her home on June 29<sup>th</sup> after she had suffered a fall the day before. She was assured she was in good hands and the firemen transferred her to the ambulance with very little discomfort.

**5. Committee Reports**

East Side Fire Station

Commissioner Brennan reported there are few items left to be completed. He said each issue has been addressed, and all that is left are minor fixes.

Commissioner Brennan informed the Commissioners a mediator has been selected for the project to go for mediation with the contractor. He explained the contractor first submits its claim, then the City will have a chance to respond. He noted the City has all its required paperwork to support their claims and is in good shape.

Chairman Riso inquired if the Building Committee is still holding meetings;

Commissioner Brennan said there had been a meeting two weeks before to discuss the payment of bills, and he anticipates there to be meetings in the future.

Chief Edo inquired if the architect will be involved in the mediation; Commissioner Brennan said the mediation will only involve the contractor at this stage and the contractor will be negotiated with separately.

**6. Chief's Report**

Chief Edo reported he does not believe Marine 1 will be fixed in time to be utilized in the water this year. He noted the project might have become larger than anticipated, but

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many items were repaired in the process. Commissioner Brennan commented once Marine 1 is sea-worthy, it will be in like-new condition; he said they are doing a fantastic job. Commissioner McGrath inquired if Chief Edo had any idea of the final cost of the work; the Chief said they are still working under the initial \$30,000 grant received in May.

Chief Edo said the specs for the new engine have been received and are being reviewed. He informed the Commissioners he has a long-term plan that he will present to the Mayor regarding acquiring an additional Sutphin Quint and stationing it at the East Side Fire Station. The Chief explained the Quint allows access to the elevated houses that line the Milford shoreline, which have become too high for ladder access. The Chief noted that a new engine costs about \$691,000, which had been approved already by the City. Commissioner McGrath said it might be worth looking into if the approved funds could be used for a new Quint rather than an engine. The Chief said the Department owns a second Quint they could possibly put back into service. Commissioner McGrath inquired as to the age of the second Quint; Chief Edo said it is 18 years old. Commissioner McGrath inquired if a new Quint is not approved for purchase, would the Department still purchase the new engine; Chief Edo said it will.

The Chief reported the flood gauges have been serviced: heights were adjusted and batteries were replaced. He said the work was done well by Public Works. The Chief said he has been attending meetings as EMD (Emergency Management Director) and he has become aware of funds and grants that might be available to the Department and he will investigate further. He added he was recently officially sworn in as EMD of Milford.

Chief Edo added at the recent EMD meetings, VEOCI, an emergency management software, was discussed. He explained it will help the Department track events throughout the city, as well as provide citywide response during events like a hurricane or snowstorm.

Chief Edo informed the Commissioners the roof on Headquarters has been repaired. The Department requested \$30,000 from the City for the work, and the repair was actually done for much cheaper. The Chief said the HVAC system in Headquarters needs replacing. The City has a contract with a servicing company for maintenance, but replacement of the system will go out to bid. Chairman Riso said a new system will most likely be more energy efficient than what is already installed, and the Chief agreed with him.

The Chief said the new Car 4 has arrived and the radio and computer systems are being installed. He reminded the Commissioners a pickup truck was recently purchased for the Department.

Chief Edo explained he is looking into obtaining surplus army equipment and will discuss this option with the State. He said pay loaders will help tremendously in getting to the shoreline during big snowstorms like the one in February.

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Chairman Riso said the equipment could be stored at Seamans Lane, and inquired of the status of the property. Chief Edo said the transfer is not yet official.

Chief Edo reported the Department has continued to pay the utility bills of Stations 5 and 6; he said he will investigate.

Greenwich EMS donated to the Department a 1979 Horton Rescue Truck to be refurbished. The hope is that it can be used by the Dinosaurs and will provide a climate-controlled area for city events. Commissioner Stein suggested calculating the cost of retrofitting the truck for its intended use, along with any incidental costs, prior to making any decisions as a board. Chairman Riso suggested addressing this item at the next meeting.

The Chief informed the Commissioners the Department will run an ad in the paper for the next Department entry test, which will be in 2015. The ad will specify that the applicant must hold their EMT and CPAP cards upon application pickup. Assistant Chief Baker said the ad will run a year from this coming January. Chairman Riso commented there will plenty of time to discuss this further.

Chairman Riso inquired how the new combined dispatch center is working. Assistant Chief Baker responded that some glitches are being worked out; the center is currently at 95 percent functionality. He added there have been some issues with the mobile data terminals in the apparatus. This problem is being investigated, but it is thought that when the systems are rebooted on Sunday mornings, the cache in the terminals will need to be deleted, etc. He said IT is working on the procedure. Commissioner McGrath inquired how long the terminals will be offline during the reboot; Assistant Chief Baker said it is momentarily, but then all terminals need to be logged into again. Commissioner Weber inquired if the issue is happening to all mobile terminals or just a few. Assistant Chief Baker explained it has happened to every terminal, but randomly throughout the week. Commissioner Brennan confirmed that the Police Department funded the computers at the dispatch center.

Assistant Chief Baker said the new mapping system through SunGard is now much cleaner and easier to use.

Chief Edo reported a recruit twisted an ankle earlier in the day. He said he will be on light duty for at least the week. Assistant Chief Baker confirmed this and said the recruit will be on light duty to Friday. He will be able to participate in the classroom work until then.

Chairman Riso asked if the candidates are doing well so far; Chief Edo said they are. The graduation will be held in December, and this year it will be at the Parson's Auditorium in Milford. Chairman Riso commented he believes it would be great if the Commissioners attended the graduation.

**7. New Business**  
**Fire Inspectors Exam**

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Chief Edo explained to the Commissioners one person responded to the re-post of the Inspector's exam, so it was decided the exam would be postponed for the time being. He noted with Milford being a "young department", the prospect of an administrative-type position so early in a career hasn't been very popular. The Chief said the Department is exploring options to make the position more attractive to more employees, like a "modified work week", and the possibility of the use of a Department vehicle. Commissioner Brennan inquired if it would be possible to enlist retired Department members for the position in the interim, or if that would become an issue with the Union. Chief Edo said he believes it would be a pension problem.

Vehicle Trade-In -- Other Department Use

Chief Edo informed the Commissioners the old Engine 8 might be accepted as a trade-in and garner up to a couple thousand dollars off the price of the new engine. Commissioner Smith inquired if the old equipment could be sold privately by the Department; Chief Edo said equipment must go out to bid. The Chief added that the Milford Rec Department contacted the Fire Department requesting any vehicles that that Fire Department would be willing to donate. Commissioner Brennan inquired if the old Car 10 has four-wheel drive; Chief Edo said Assistant Chief Healey suggested using the old Car 10 at the East Side Fire Station. Commissioner McGrath asked if a replacement rescue vehicle is possible under the current budget; Chief Edo said that will be addressed in the next budget.

Board of Fire Commissioners Meeting Schedule for 2014

Chairman Riso said the Board has historically held 10 meetings a year, and if necessary, extra meetings are called. Commissioner Brennan said he believes the Fire Department runs 12 months a year, so the Commission should hold meetings 12 months a year as well.

Commissioners Stein and Brennan made and seconded a motion that the Board of Fire Commissioners adopt a monthly meeting schedule for 2014, allowing Chief Edo to bring the July and August agendas to the Board for discussion on the necessity of those two meetings only. Motion carried unanimously.

**8. Unfinished Business:**

Commissioner Stein stated Assistant Chief Baker submitted a proposed ordinance regarding the owners of buildings 10,000 square feet or larger to ensure adequate radio coverage for emergency personnel. Commissioner Stein noted the failure of bidirectional antennae at the Post Mall led to the creation of this ordinance. He added he asked at the last meeting to postpone decision on the ordinance until he could study the proposal carefully. He noted that although there are typos present, the ordinance gives Milford the mechanism to put onus on owners of buildings that large to provide adequate radio coverage. He said it also allows for landlords or building owners exemptions from the rule if they can show a special hardship. Commissioner Stein commented he believes he now has a full understanding of the proposed ordinance.

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Commissioners Stein and McGrath made and seconded a motion for the Board of Fire Commissioners to support the proposed radio amplification system ordinance for forwarding to the City Attorney's Office.

Commissioner McGrath inquired if there would still exist communication "dead zones" with this new ordinance in place. Assistant Chief Baker explained there will be testing completed in November over two days in schools and public buildings, and it will be clearer at that time where and if any dead zones exist. Commissioner Stein explained the new radio system that is now being utilized has eliminated prior known dead zones, but some unknown zones might now exist.

Motion carried unanimously.

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

Commissioner McGrath inquired when the last time the Department fee schedule was examined. Chief Edo explained he has been looking into that. He has discovered Milford's fee schedule is much lower than the surrounding towns. He added the Department is currently reaching 30 to 35 percent in annual inspections. He commented the system needs to be fixed.

Commissioner Stein commented the fees should offset the costs of running the operation. Commissioner Brennan asked how the EMS billing is progressing; Chief Edo said the issue is with the City Attorney, but he will get an update as soon as possible.

**10. Adjournment**

Commissioners Smith and McGrath made and seconded a motion to adjourn at 2004 hours. Motion carried unanimously.

Recorded by C. Birney