

Board of Fire Commissioners Regular Meeting

72 New Haven Avenue, Milford, CT
Tuesday, November 21, 2023

- I. **Call to Order:** Chairman McGrath called the meeting to order at 18:29 hours. A quorum was present.

Roll Call: In addition to the Chairman, Commissioners Richard Smith, William Brennan, Peter Smith and Cynthia Twiss were present. Also, present were Chief Anthony Fabrizi, Assistant Chief Christopher Waiksnoris, Assistant Chief Stephen Rabel and Battalion Chief AJ Murphy

Absent: Commissioner Howard Stein and Commissioner Thomas Riso

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

None

- III. **Consideration of Minutes:**

Regular Meeting Minutes – October 17, 2023

Commissioners P. Smith and R. Smith made and second a motion to accept the Regular Meeting Minutes of October 17, 2023. Motion carries unanimously.

- IV. **Communications:**

Commissioner R. Smith read an email from Elaine Ryan to Chief Fabrizi. Thanking the department members for the quick calm response that saved a visitor to her home during a medical emergency. He also read a thank you card from Liz Chakraborty and Janine Secondi of the Academy and class. Thanking firefighters for the informative visit they had at headquarters on November 10, 2023. There was also a note from Local 944 regarding Toys for Tots donations. Chairman McGrath stated this could be added under new business.

Commissioners Brennan and R. Smith made and second a motion to amend the agenda to include New Business a) Local 944 Toys for Tots. Motion carried unanimously.

- V. **Chairman's Report:**

Chairman McGrath welcomed Commissioner Twiss. He urged committee members to watch the Channel 8 piece on bus safety done by Battalion Chief Adam Hansen. Chairman McGrath indicated the busy month thanking members for the efficient response to the house on Pond Point Ave. that was knocked off the foundation. He thanked all the veterans who served and are serving in the department. He noted Casey's Pub raised just shy of \$21,000 for Toys for Tots, Citrus has multiple bikes to donate, and Mr. Mac's is also collecting. Chairman McGrath feels the program will do well this year. He wanted to highlight the house fire on Robins Court, as lives and pets were saved. A letter will go out to Alderman Liaison Michele Parente thanking her for her service

in the time she served. Congratulations to the new mayor who also served as a fire commission liaison. He will also send a letter to Mayor Smith for his support while he served as mayor. Chairman McGrath wished all department and commission members a happy safe and health Thanksgivings holiday. He thanked Chief Fabrizi, Waiksnoris, Rabel and Battalion Chief Murphy for their work involved in the budget process.

VI. **Committee Reports:**

- a) Personnel Committee: None
- b) Maintenance Committee: Commissioner Brennan stated the city is about two months away from hiring a mechanic to help the department.
- c) Safety Committee Liaison: Commissioner Brennan stated the committee works very well. Items being addressed are new gear and bail out equipment. He noted that little things that may fall under the radar are addressed.
- d) Education Committee – Commissioner P. Smith stated he had a meeting with the Chief's regarding educating new alderman and the public. This will allow people to see the complexity and call volume of the department and its needs. Potential open houses were discussed as more information is provided, it will help to inform the public and the people making the financial decisions of the department. From an educational perspective, Battalion Chief Hansen is doing a great job, the social media presence is wonderful. He believes the more information provided the more support will be received.

VII. **Chiefs Report:**

Chief Fabrizi stated at the time of his report the budget was twenty weeks in, the payroll accounts are on track, as the budget is closely monitored. The chiefs meet almost daily to make sure all are on the same page with priorities, spending, and strategizing. He noted the EMS collections and comparative figures from this time last year. The new recruits are doing well, and progress reports were provided to the commission. Commissioner P. Smith stated the reports are informative. Commissioner Twiss agreed, she appreciates the information and the improvements made. Chief Fabrizi stated that Battalion Chief Adam Hansen and Captain Jason Dombrowski steadily visit, monitor, and instruct the recruits at the academy. They relay feedback that is provided from the chiefs with positive reinforcement. Graduation is December 8 with a potential three-week training. The goal is to have recruits Milford ready to minimize any potential risks. Once the recruits are on shift this will leave two open vacancies; two spots were reserved for the February class. Commissioner Brennan stated the need to send more as potential retirements are in the future, the department will always be playing catchup. Chief Fabrizi stated that is a fine line as members can pull their papers at any time. Commissioner P. Smith stated in the end it's the Chiefs decision. CAD training was completed with the chiefs and dispatch. Numerous issues were addressed, and prior issues are being resolved. Chief Fabrizi thanked Assistant Chief's Waiksnoris and Rabel as well as dispatchers Patti Clemens, Seth Wilcox and Tom Sicotte for their time and involvement with the training. A couple of calls of note are a 76 y/o male stroke patient. Crews were able to identify a stroke and initiate protocol within less than one minute upon arrival. He also noted the 67 female cardiac arrest from the letter of thanks. Battalion Chief Murphy partnered with Yale medical student to teach hands free CPR at the New England Asian American Center. The class was presented in Mandarin. The capital improvement and 24-25 fiscal budget have been submitted. Increases have been sought in apparatus, training, and overtime to support training. A need has been identified with firefighter training, as the multitude of calls take firefighters away while training on duty. Training is required to keep the ISO Class 1

designation. The younger firefighter needs education and training which will ultimately affect morale if not provided for all. The E-One contract has been signed with a delivery of mid-February. Battalion Chief Hansen conducted thermal imaging drills, working with the maintenance department to create a prop that cost \$300. Saving the department money as having an outside company come in for training would cost thousands. The roof at Seemans Lane is almost complete, Battalion Chief Murphy stated flashing is still needed on the corners. Chairman McGrath requested a rep from the department be on site as rot may be present. HQ will be next, all day staff will need to park behind the library. Station 7 parking lots have been paved. Chief Fabrizi thanked Firefighter Apuzzo who is the lead rep for the department with the Tommy Fund. Commissioner P. Smith gave some background on the organization that supports childhood cancer, as he has supported the organization for ten years. Chief Fabrizi stated multiple fire officers have completed their six month probationary period, he congratulates them all. The Board of Alderman approved the purchase of two 2023 Ford Explorers and accepted the Fire Prevention and Safety Grant. All ground ladder testing has been completed. Tower 1 bid results should be on the agenda for next month, as national exposure is wanted. Commissioner P. Smith stated he appreciated the time and effort that the chief takes to inform the board. There was a brief discussion regarding the hands-free CPR class and outreach.

VIII. New Business:

- a) Local 944 Milford Professional Firefighters Toys for Tots Program –
A letter was received from the Co-Chairs of the Toys for Tots program requesting support for solicitation of donations throughout the area for residents.

Commissioners Brennan and P. Smith make and second a motion to support the solicitation of donations for residents. Motion carried unanimously.

- b) 2024/25 Department Budget preparation & discussion

Chief Fabrizi reiterated the three categories that were significantly increased with an overall increase of 7% to the entire budget. He is not sure where the department will end up with the request, but a realistic, intelligent, and strategic approach went into the submission. He noted historically fire is the lowest paid department in the city. If the department had been allotted more funding previously the request may have been less. Commissioner P. Smith appreciated the work done and thanked the Chief, stating he feels he came in at a reasonable number. As he could have added positions and ambulances as the need of the department is more manpower due to the call volume. Being a shoreline community more funding is needed to be able to assist the community properly. Commissioner Twiss appreciated the thought process to get the budget where it's at. It will be a tough budget season, but it could have easily been increased by 12%. Chief Fabrizi stated he is prepared to explain why the needs are so important. Commissioner Brennan stated there is a need for a second marine 2 as calls are coming from other areas of the town. Chairman McGrath thanked the staff for putting their effort into creating a realistic budget, noting most costs are contractual leaving little to run the department. He is optimistic frontline funding support will be formulated as justification can be made.

IX. **Unfinished Business:**

None.

X. **New Equipment:**

Chief Fabrizi noted the E-One engine should be delivered after some spec features are added. The goal is to have it delivered mid-February and the new Quint 3 is scheduled to arrive late 2025.

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

Commissioner Brennan stated he was driving by Seemans Lane and noticed senior members on duty sweeping trash after the drill. He was impressed by how all the members work together. He stated if you look at the reports the East Side is overworked and there is a need for a station on the north side of Milford. Chairman McGrath stated due to the addition of the mall housing, this may help with the request. Commissioner P. Smith complemented all the reports. He felt Deputy Fire Marshals report was well done and forward thinking. The way the information was broken down by fire activity was helpful. Commissioner R. Smith agreed. Chief Fabrizi stated the fire marshal's division works hard. They are supported and have a voice in the department. The impact they have is equal in weight to any firefighter.

XII. **Adjournment:**

Commissioners R. Smith and P. Smith made and second a motion to adjourn at 19:14.