

Board of Fire Commissioners Regular Meeting
72 New Haven Avenue, Milford, CT
Tuesday, August 17, 2021

- I. **Call to Order:** Chairman McGrath called the meeting to order at 18:05 hours. A quorum was present.

Roll Call: In addition to the Chairman, Commissioners Stein, Smith, Brennan, Weber and Riso were present. Also, present were Chief Edo, Assistant Chief Begley, Assistant Chief Fabrizi and Training Captain Martin Halprin.

Absent: Commissioner Stanford.

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

None

- III. **Consideration of Minutes:**

Regular Meeting July 20, 2021

Commissioners Riso and Weber made and second a motion to accept the minutes of July 20, 2021. Motions carried unanimously.

- IV. **Communications:**

Chief Edo indicated a letter was received from retired firefighter LaPlante's wife. Thanking the department for the heartfelt expression of comradery during their difficult time.

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

Chairman McGrath expressed sympathy to the department and family of the fallen firefighter from Burlington. He also thanked the department for their efforts during the Charles Island music festival last month. Chairman McGrath also affirmed the board's confidence in the department for the upcoming Oyster festival.

VI. Committees Report:

- a) Personnel Committee: None
- b) Maintenance & Equipment: None
- c) Safety Committee Liaison: Commissioner Brennan stated there was a meeting in July that he was unaware of. He also stated he is an official member of the City Safety Committee and the August meeting was informative.

VII. Chief's Report:

Testing Update – The MPAT results have been received and posted online. After 91 applications 11 people have passed the physical agility test and will go on to the oral board portion of the test. Commissioner Riso expressed his concern for the low number of candidates. Chief Edo stated that percent wise this is right on target with past tests. He also stated another test can be administer and the oral interviews will begin within the next two weeks. Background checks would follow and then the Commissioner interview. Commissioner Stein stated the intent is to interview in the order of placement of testing. Commissioner Weber asked how many vacancies the department currently has. Chief Edo stated there are currently 12 openings.

Engine 4 in Milford – The new Engine 4 is currently waiting for a CMED radio and computer installation. Chief Edo explained that Assistant Chief Fabrizi will later speak on MDT/computer business. The crews are currently labeling where they would like equipment mounted. It should be in service within the next few weeks.

New Ambulance later in fall – Although the Chief has seen the ambulance in production it does not have a delivery date until late October.

New Chief's Car in Milford – Car 1 is currently waiting for radio and lights to be installed.

CBA update – Chief Edo believes the Union Executive Board will be presenting the contract as a Tentative Agreement.

Lateral Testing – The Chief informed the board that two firefighters have currently resigned and are excepting positions in another town. The town they will now be working for hired 12 active firefighters negating the fees and training associated with new hires.

Loss of use check – After Tower 1 was in an accident and repaired the department received a loss of use check. The Chief suggested it go into the Good & Welfare account as it cannot be deposited into the city's general fund. Commissioner Stein inquired about the amount and how the value was determined. He questioned whether the amount was adequate and requested the Chief inquire to see if the claim is closed before any endorsement is made. Chairman McGrath questioned when the check was received. Chief Edo indicated the check had a July 15 date.

Commissioners Stein and Smith made and second a motion to authorize the Chief to deposit the loss of use check to the Good and Welfare fund after conducting the necessary due diligence. Motion carries unanimously.

MDT/Computer – Assistant Chief Fabrizi stated when he was promoted to Assistant Chief it became one of his top priorities to obtain new reliable equipment to mitigate the safety concerns and provide connectivity and functionality for the department. Although it has been a long arduous task due to budget and system restrictions delaying the process, the department is currently able to receive new MDT's, antennas and mounts with a sizeable grant funded through the city. This will not only help with life safety concerns but meet the needs of the department and allow for growth. The equipment will be aligned with what the police department operate and will help the MIS department with issues as it coincides with equipment that is already used.

VIII. New Business:

- a) **Recruit Testing:** Chief Edo explained that the Captain of Training Martin Halprin was present and the Training and EMS divisions were discussing in house training for recruits. He stated that when the Fire Academy has a class of 72 very few individuals get the one on one instruction that is needed. The in house training would take approximately 10 – 12 weeks with the biggest benefit being you would be training recruits in Milford who would then understand the needs of the city and its visitors. The cost savings would be another factor as the fee for the academy is pricey. A negative would be the lack of continuity from instructors when promotions or retirements occur. The Chief further explain the curriculum would be the same as the state fire academy and recruits would be tested by the state. He noted that with such high rates of attendance recruits are not getting the full training experience. In public attendance was Firefighter Kerry Warren whom Chief Edo asked if his experience was what he spoke on. Firefighter Warren stated he could not speak on other people's experience but as someone who has attended the academy twice, both times were manageable attendance wise with hands on training. He noted he has heard of other experiences. Commissioner Stein questioned the location of the intended training. Chief Edo stated all of the logistics are not in place but the majority would be at the MFD Training & Regional Distribution Facility located at Seemans Lane. Chairman McGrath asked the Chief to bring the commission up to date on the call back situation. Chief Edo stated there are 10 vacancies which puts a strain on the department financially and pressures on staff, as staff usually are required to stay to maintain the manpower. Commissioner Stein noted that other departments do train their own personnel and the cost savings is obvious. He also stated based on the vacancies high overtime budgets are not unique. What is needed is a safe/sane and fiscally responsible solution. He suggested a laid out pros and cons list, opinion of others and a greater detailed plan would allow the board to make a more informed decision. Commissioner Brennan commented on getting to know recruits physical ability based on one day of testing, noting that a six week course would show more capabilities. He also noted the concern of the 24 hour shift. Captain Halprin expressed his excitement over the possibility of creating and maintaining a robust recruit training program. He stated that he and Training Battalion Chief Christopher Zak have created a small bullet points list with the outline of the program. He also stated the program would follow the same Jones and Bartlett educational lesson program as the state fire academy. He spoke of costs from outside training vendors and purchases for Seemans Lane but stated it would be considerably lower than what would be spent for the academy. He also noted the cost savings from recruit night training. What Captain Halprin has understood from feedback from department members have been mixed reactions. Commissioner Weber

expressed liability concerns for trainers. Commissioner Stein stated any injuries should be covered under workers compensation. Commissioner Brennan commented on his experience with a class for high-rises in Shelton and how it would benefit the department. Assistant Chief Fabrizi noted that having in house training would benefit the department by identifying any possible candidates who would be unfit as a firefighter. He stated that the suggested programs strong points will outweigh any logistical issues. Commissioner Stein noted that the Fire Department is shifting to an EMS department with Fire aspects. The commission discussed potential requirements for future tests. Chairman McGrath stated the dialogue that has been started has been beneficial. A more detailed presentation should be created and recruit training should go on the September agenda as unfinished business.

IX. **Unfinished Business:**

None

X. **New Equipment:**

None

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

Chairman McGrath noted his hope for the continued dialogue that was started regarding recruit training, he informed the Commission if they had any questions or concerns they should contact Chief Edo. Commissioner Brennan stated he would like to see in the monthly reports how many calls required Tower 1. Chief Edo stated the number would be very low.

XII. **Adjournment:**

Commissioners Smith and Riso made and seconded a motion to adjourn at 19:20 Motion carried unanimously.