

**Board of Fire Commissioners Regular Meeting
Commissioners' Conference Room at Fire Headquarters
72 New Haven Avenue, Milford, CT
Tuesday, September 17, 2013**

Call to Order: Chairman Riso called the meeting to order at 1900 hours. A quorum was present.

1. Roll Call

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

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

None.

3. Swearing In

None.

Chairman Riso thanked Commissioner McGrath for emceeding the swearing-in ceremony for Chief Edo. He said he had heard from several Fire Department members and Milford citizens regarding how nice the ceremony was.

4. Consideration of Minutes:

Regular Meeting – June 26, 2013

Special Meeting - July 1, 2013

Special Meeting - July 22, 2013

Commissioners McGrath and Smith made and seconded a motion to accept the minutes of the June 26, 2013, Regular Meeting, the July 1, 2013, Special Meeting, and the July 22, 2013, Special Meeting as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Stein abstained from voting on the June 26, 2013, minutes as he was not present at that meeting.

5. Communications:

- a. Thank-you card to the Department for their response to save the home of the Datsun family.
- b. Letter from Orange Avenue School to Union President Dunn thanking him for coordinating the breakfast at the Fire Department, tour, and various activities, including a ride back to the school in a fire truck. The school enclosed photos.
- c. Letter to the Fire Department Interview Board from Jeremiah Sotherland, thanking the Board for meeting with him regarding a position at the Department. He said he would like the opportunity to become part of the team.
- d. Letter from the Orange Volunteer Fire Department thanking the Milford Fire Department for the assistance during their radio failure. They stated the relationship with the Milford Fire Department has proven to be an asset to the Town of Orange.
- e. Letter from the New London Fire Department to the Milford Fire Department sending their thanks for the generous donation.

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6. Committee Reports

East Side Fire Station

Commissioner Brennan reported the East Side Fire Station is up and running. He explained the final checklist is getting smaller. There are a few things to straighten out, but things are in good shape.

Chairman Riso said he was informed a member of the Maintenance Department visited the station to see how he could help out. Commissioner Brennan said Director of Maintenance Ron Veary has done a wonderful job helping out at the new station.

Chairman Riso said he is very happy to hear that. Commissioner Brennan said all communication is done through the attorneys at this point.

Chairman Riso thanked Commissioner Brennan and the Committee for sticking it out through this arduous task.

7. Chief's Report

Chief Edo reported Marine 1 is still in the shop. He explained there were significant delays in ordering of required parts. In the process of preparing Marine 1 for the water, it was found that there were significant wiring issues, which have been addressed and rectified. He noted all the piping was tested while in the shop as well. Commissioner McGrath inquired when Marine 1 is usually removed from the water; Chief Edo said December.

Chief Edo added that during the summer, there are quite a few boats in the sound that are willing to help when needed. He said there was a call of a flipped raft earlier in the day, and West Haven Fire Department's boat came to assist in the call.

Commissioner McGrath inquired if the additional fixes needed on Marine 1 will be going beyond the grant afforded the Department in the spring. The Chief said the grant was expended back in May; the batteries that were required to be ordered recently came out of the Marine account. He added that the fiscal year just began, so the account is in good standing.

Chief Edo informed the Commissioners that the new engine that was ordered is in the process spec review.

The Chief explained the State approached the Department offering an NOA flood gauge for the City's use for free for one year. He said it will cost \$10,000 per year for maintenance thereafter. Chief Edo said the City has four operational gauges currently that cost \$5,000 per year to maintain. He said he opted out of the NOA gauge.

Chief Edo reported the Department is working on administering a new lieutenant's class in-house. He said the State will give a price quote. Assistant Chief Baker explained it is possible to run the class now, but would not be able to administer the test until January; he said it is best for the Department to wait until January to run the class.

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The Chief said he attended a Connecticut Career Chief's Association Meeting where he was informed they are developing a new officers program. The Chief also has been recently appointed Emergency Management Director of the City.

Chief Edo explained that there are status boards in Dispatch that give live updates on all apparatus. He said it was suggested by Chief Chapman to have a status board in each station; the Department ordered four. Assistant Chief Baker said the last board in Station 8 was activated earlier in the day.

The Chief informed the Commissioners that there might be a need to run another Inspector test. He said one out of three candidates accepted the position. He added that the Department had many retirements in the past year and it has become a very young department.

Commissioner Brennan suggested offering the test and position to non-firefighters to increase the pool of candidates. Chief Edo says he still hopes someone from the Department will step up to the plate. Commissioner McGrath inquired when he expects to administer the test. Chief Edo said with posting requirements, the test would be a couple of months out.

Commissioners McGrath and Smith made and seconded a motion that the Board approve a Fire Inspector test to be administered, subject to the Chief's discretion. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Brennan inquired on the status of EMS. Chief Edo said the contract language is currently at the City Attorney's office for approval. Commissioner Brennan expressed his concern that the contract will be signed without either Board or Department approval, leaving the Department without ample time to prepare for the new procedures. Chief Edo explained the EMS changes have to do more with transportation and billing. Commissioner Brennan said he would not like to see changes without the Department having a proper chance to prepare. Commissioner McGrath inquired if the billing aspect will come to the Commission for approval prior to being signed off with AMR; the Chief said it will.

Assistant Chief Baker informed the Commissioners that dispatch has been switched over to the SunGard system. He said bugs are still being worked out, but dispatch is up and running. He added that while the upgrade was being performed, it was discovered that not all the computers in the apparatus had the proper updates; that issue was remedied. Assistant Chief Baker also noted that with the PSAP funds, five new toughbooks have been purchased for the apparatus. He said with the new system, response times will be faster. The next step will be to tie in the Fire Department record system with SunGard so all building data will be available to firefighters.

Commissioner McGrath inquired if all equipment that requires upgrading will be taken care of with the PSAP funds; Assistant Chief Baker said yes.

Commissioner Brennan said the SunGard system is impressive and is complementary of Assistant Chief Baker's assistance with the switch.

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8. New Business

New Ordinance

Assistant Chief Baker explained there are certain areas of town where there is no radio service. He said a new ordinance will be proposed to improve communications. There is not much that can be done with existing buildings, so the ordinance will deal mostly with new construction. He said he obtained copies of similar ordinances from other towns in the state. The ordinance states that any building 10,000 square feet and above needs to ensure 100 percent radio coverage; if not, then a bidirectional amplifier will need to be installed. Assistant Chief Baker said this ordinance will benefit both the Police and Fire Departments.

Commissioner McGrath said the ordinance will have to be approved first by the Fire Commission and then move onto the City's Legal Department, then to the Ordinance Committee of the Board of Aldermen. He said the entire process will take about two months. Chairman Riso noted the Ordinance Committee requires a public posting and hearing.

Commissioner McGrath said the new ordinance will also affect Planning & Zoning. He said he supports the ordinance.

Commissioner McGrath made a motion to accept the draft ordinance presented by Assistant Chief Baker to be passed onto the Legal Department.

Commissioner Stein suggested tabling this issue to the next meeting to review it carefully as it was just presented.

Commissioner McGrath rescinded the motion.

Commissioners Stein and Smith made and seconded a motion to table the new ordinance for further discussion at the next regular meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Firefighter Grants

Chief Edo informed the Commissioners the Fire Department will be applying for firefighter grants. He said the Planning Chief would like to move forward with application, pending the Commission's approval.

Commissioners Stein and McGrath made and seconded a motion to allow and support the Chief to make application for grants as may be available to the City. Motion carried unanimously.

9. Unfinished Business:

None.

10. Comments and Concerns of the Commissioners:

Commissioner McGrath complimented the administration and chiefs involved in the changes in the Department. He said there has been a lot of progress and he thanked them for their hard work and effort.

Commissioner Brennan suggested designating liaisons within the Commission to discuss items with the Chief prior to coming to the Board for approval so important issues will not have to wait for the regular monthly meeting. Commissioner Stein said the practice

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at this time is that the Chief approaches the Chairman or Vice-Chairman if issues arise that require immediate attention. Commissioner Brennan reiterated that this would help expedite business.

Commissioner McGrath inquired on the status of the On Sandy Ground playground project. Union President Dunn stated the project is moving forward and the Department has been working on fundraising. He said the playground is slated to be installed at the old Milford Academy site, hopefully at the end of October or early part of November.

11. Adjournment

Commissioners Smith and McGrath made and seconded a motion to adjourn at 1945 hours. Motion carried unanimously.

Recorded by C. Birney