

Board of Fire Commissioners Regular Meeting

Training Room at Fire Headquarters

72 New Haven Avenue, Milford, CT

Tuesday, September 20, 2011

Call to Order: Chairman Riso called the meeting to order at 1904 hours. A quorum was present.

1. Roll Call

Commissioners Thomas Riso, John Healy, Karen Craig, William Brennan, Richard Smith, and Jonathan Berchem. Also present were Chief Louis A. LaVecchia, Assistant Chief Robert J. Healey, Assistant Chief Al Zingaro, Union President Paul Geer, Union Vice President Todd Ricci, and Union Secretary Michael Dunn.

Commissioner Howard Stein was excused.

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

Union President Geer inquired on the status of the electronic swap system. He suggested the Commission add this item to the agenda for their next meeting.

Union President Geer submitted a letter to the Commissioners regarding an item on the agenda.

3. Swearing In:

None.

4. Consideration of Minutes:

Regular Meeting - June 21, 2011

Commissioners Craig and Smith made and seconded a motion to accept the minutes of the June 21, 2011, regular meeting as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

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5. Communications:

- a. Letter from Madeline Clem of the New Haven County Fire Commissioners Association inviting the Commissioners to a meeting on September 21st at 6:30 at Biagetti's in West Haven.
- b. Thank-you letter from Linda Secondi thanking the Department for their assistance in a rescue on August 15th.
- c. Letter from the Stowarski Family thanking Engine 3 for their 911 assistance when their uncle had a stroke.
- d. Letter from Teddy McClellan thanking the paramedics and firefighters for their assistance on August 23rd.
- e. Thank-you note to Captain Wetmore and Chief LaVecchia from Mary Ann Spillane, who recently visited the firehouse with her grandchildren. She included pictures from their visit in the card.
- f. Letter to Chief LaVecchia from Firefighter Ken O'Toole of Waterbury, informing him of the assistance Firefighter Pat McGee gave during his recent cardiac arrest after an event.
- g. Letter dated June 23 thanking Chief LaVecchia for his presence during the annual blessing of the fleet at Milford Yacht Club.
- h. Letter to the Fire Department from Mary Lou Farina thanking the Department for their assistance in her three 911 calls since May. She enclosed a check for \$150.
- i. Letter to Chief LaVecchia from Madeline Clem inviting Monaco Enterprises of Milford to the New Haven County Fire Commissioners Association meeting on September 21st.

6. Committee Reports

Apparatus

Assistant Chief Zingaro reported that Marine 2 is out of service, Engine 5 is currently on the lift for brake maintenance, and Tower 1 had some recent bodywork. He added that Rescue 1 is out of service but will be back on September 21st, and that Rescue 3 would be fixed within the week. He said Engine 3 was out for routine maintenance but is since back in service.

Commissioner Brennan inquired about the bodywork being done on Tower 1 and wanted to know if this was due to an accident. Assistant Chief Healey said yes, it was from an accident that happened a while ago, and that the information is contained in prior reports.

East Side Fire Station Building Committee

Commissioner Healy reported that the project has fallen behind schedule. He said the Committee is doing everything they can to motivate the contractor, and they are taking the appropriate steps.

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Commissioner Healy reported that the structural steel would be placed this week. He stated the rough plumbing is in and all structures are in the ground. Commissioner Brennan commented that once the steel goes up, the project should go fairly quickly. Commissioner Healy said that Commissioner Brennan had been doing a great job keeping an eye on the project and that his knowledge is invaluable. Commissioner Healy opened the floor to questions from the Commissioners.

Chairman Riso inquired when the excavator would be completed with his work on the site. Commissioner Healy explained the excavator would be finished in about a week. Commissioner Brennan added that Salce Contracting had terminated parts of the excavator's contract. Commissioner Healy added that the other subcontractors needed for work have been lined up.

Chairman Riso thanked Commissioners Healy and Brennan for spending so much time on the project.

7. Chief's Reports

Chief LaVecchia stated that the Department operated superbly during Tropical Storm Irene. He applauded the Department's outstanding work both during and after the storm. He added that the post-storm work is still going on. He opened the floor to questions from the Commissioners.

Commissioner Craig thanked the Department for their excellent job. She stated she had heard all good reports. Commissioner Berchem echoed this sentiment. Chairman Riso commented that everyone has stories regarding the excellent job and wonderful response of the Department during and after the storm.

8. Unfinished Business:

Commissioners Brennan and Healy made and seconded a motion to add electronic swap time discussion to the agenda. Motion carried unanimously.

Chief LaVecchia explained that the Department had purchased a subscription to an online scheduling program. Unfortunately, the IT consultant working on this project had since left the Department. Presently, Assistant Chief Healey is working on setting up the system. Assistant Chief Healey stated that they are doing their best, but they have no projected completion date at present.

9. New Business:

FOI Complaint - Paul Geer, Milford Professional Firefighter v Board of Fire Commissioners

Chairman Riso stated he had numerous conversations with Assistant City Attorney Debra Kelly regarding executive session. He read the section regarding executive session from

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the FOI Act to the Commissioners. He added that the Commissioner will adhere to the rules and regulations as printed in the FOI Act, requiring that a person will be invited into executive session with the Commissioners if they are giving testimony pertaining to the issue being discussed during executive session. If more than one person will be giving testimony, all would be invited in separately and their time in executive session would be limited only to the time necessary for them to give their testimony.

Union President Geer commented that he had filed the complaint in regard to the special meeting that was held in May because he felt the Board handled executive session improperly. Commissioner Healy asked him if he was in agreement with the FOI protocol; Union President Geer said yes, but he felt the protocol was not followed at that meeting. Commissioner Healy stated the Commissioners felt they acted appropriately. Union President Geer stated he would withdraw his complaint in writing.

Consideration to enter into a re-hire agreement with Louis A. LaVecchia to serve as Fire Chief

Commissioners Healy and Brennan made and seconded a motion to enter executive session to discuss this item on the agenda. Motion carried unanimously.

The Commissioners entered executive session at 1931 hours.

Commissioners Craig and Healy made and seconded a motion to return to open session. Motion carried unanimously.

The Commissioners returned to open session at 2022 hours.

Commissioners Healy and Craig made and seconded a motion to table this item on the agenda until they have had an opportunity to speak with the Milford City Attorney and call a special meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Union President Geer commented that the firefighters would like to add some input in this process and would like their chance to be heard on where the Department is headed. He said the general consensus is they would like some input in the decision-making process. Commissioner Healy stated the Commissioners are happy to hear what they have to say and welcome their input. He suggested the Union meet again and write letters or a general statement to be submitted at the anticipated special meeting.

10. Comments and Concerns of the Commissioners:

None.

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11. Adjournment

*Commissioners Healy and Smith made and seconded a motion to adjourn at 2029 hours.
Motion carried unanimously.*

Recorded by C. Birney