

**Board of Fire Commissioners Regular Meeting**  
**Fire Commissioners Conference Room at Fire Headquarters**  
**72 New Haven Avenue, Milford, CT**  
**Tuesday, November 27, 2012**

**Call to Order:** Chairman Riso called the meeting to order at 1902 hours. A quorum was present.

**1. Roll Call**

Commissioners Thomas Riso, John Healy, Karen Craig, Kevin McGrath, Howard Stein, Richard Smith, and William A. Brennan. Also present were Acting Chief Robert Healey, Assistant Chief Douglas Edo, and Union President Michael Dunn.

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

None.

**3. Swearing In:**

None.

**4. Consideration of Minutes:**  
**Regular Meeting - October 16, 2012**  
**Special Meeting - October 24, 2012**

*Commissioners Healy and McGrath made and seconded a motion to accept the minutes of the October 16, 2012, regular meeting and the October 24, 2012, special meeting as presented. Motion carried unanimously.*

**5. Communications:**

- a. Thank-you card from Paula and Steve Schaffer of Hyannis, MA, thanking the Department for their assistance during an accident on August 26, 2012; included was a donation check of \$100.

*Commissioners McGrath and Smith made and seconded a motion to accept the \$100 donation and deposit it into the Good and Welfare Fund. Motion carried unanimously.*

- b. Letter to Mayor Blake from Christine Schreiber of 195 Broadway in Milford thanking the Fire Department, Police Department, and Public Works for their actions during and after Hurricane Sandy.

- c. Letter from the Milford Professional Firefighters indicating the Toys for Tots program is starting, and they ask permission to conduct solicitation for funds in the area.

*Commissioners Brennan and McGrath made and seconded a motion to permit the Milford Professional Firefighters to conduct fund solicitation for Toys for Tots. Motion carried unanimously.*

**6. Committee Reports**

East Side Fire Station

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Commissioner Healy reported the Committee would be having a meeting on November 28<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm. He said the project is at a critical stage now. The Certificate of Occupancy (CO) needs to be issued by the City. The Building Inspector was at the site on November 9<sup>th</sup> for his initial inspection. Commissioner Healy said he is in contact with the Milford City Attorney.

Commissioner Healy explained that Substantial Completion is pending. He said Substantial Completion means the building may be used for its intended purpose. He reported several things are not yet completed, for example, the “house lights”, which are the lights that illuminate inside the building when the alarm is tripped. Commissioner Healy said he is in contact with the attorney hired by the City, Attorney Jeff Donofrio, and he anticipates a directive will have to be issued to complete these items.

Commissioner Healy said he met at the site with Ret. Battalion Chief Bill Healey and Salce Contracting, and representatives from CES and IES would be on-site on the 28<sup>th</sup> to discuss the list of pending items. He added that items such as radiant heater clearance and access platforms are items that demand written reports from engineers.

Commissioner Healy reported the building furniture is in place, and he stated that Ret. Battalion Chief Healey has been working hard on the project.

The building IP work still needs to be completed; once it is issued, the computer system will be set up and testing of the HVAC system will begin.

Commissioner Healy said the project is under budget, but there are still a couple pending change orders.

The overhead door was fixed earlier in the day.

Commissioner Brennan mentioned the Zetron system transfer might be holding up the “house lights” completion. Commissioner Healy said the Zetron system can be transferred over in one day, but the house lights are crucial to the building’s use.

Commissioner Healy stressed the project is making progress and the Committee is doing everything they can to ensure the building is handed over to the Department with all systems in proper working order. He added that the Committee will not accept Substantial Completion until the building is completely ready.

Chairman Riso noted that once Substantial Completion is reached, an amount of money is then released to the contractor. Commissioner Healy stated he is advocating for the City. Commissioner Healy opened the floor to questions.

**7. Chief’s Report**

Acting Chief Healey introduced to the Commissioners Assistant Chief Douglas Edo.

The Acting Chief reported that Quint 9 was involved in a motor vehicle accident. It has been sent out to have its systems tested.

Marine 1 is currently 17 years old. There have been concerns while pricing out a new metal bumper, which is showing fatigue. Firefighters Baker and Eisenhower suggested replacing the bumper now will most likely extend the life of Marine 1 for another 17 years.

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The Dive truck was “dead-lined” due to exposure from the hurricane surge. Acting Chief Healey explained there is possible FEMA reimbursement for this issue.

The Acting Chief commended the Department for the work performed during the hurricane. He said there were no injuries during the hurricane, but a rescue was made the day before out by Charles Island and there was an unfortunate drowning that same day. Commissioner Brennan inquired if the Quint accident report will be reviewed by a Safety Committee and presented as a “lesson learned”. Acting Chief Healey explained the accident report is sent to the risk manager and he is unclear how it is used after the review. He noted the firefighter involved in the accident feels terrible for his error. Commissioner Brennan commented that most accidents are made by good guys. Acting Chief Healey added the accident report is reviewed at different levels but he does not know if the Safety Committee reviews it. Commissioner Brennan said the Safety Committee review is worthwhile for insurance purposes.

Commissioner McGrath extended his thanks to the Department for their work in the past 60 days with the hurricane and snow storm. He inquired if there is any type of equipment or accessory that could have helped in the storms that the Department should acquire. Acting Chief Healey said an inventory is being compiled currently and the Department has been proactive in maintenance of their equipment. He said they have everything they need.

**8. New Business**

**Grievance 12-006**

Union President Dunn presented Grievance 12-006 regarding the change to the use of city vehicles policy. He said the vehicles were allowed for take-home for the past 17 years. Several members of the Department took promotions thinking this was part of the job due to past practice.

Union President Dunn said inspectors are called in frequently and having to change vehicles at a station is costing time. He added this is creating a negative financial impact on them.

Union President Dunn said the Union is willing to work with the Commissioners to come to an agreement and the Union does not want to bring this issue to the State level, as the monetary reimbursement is likely to be a burden to the City.

Union President Dunn stated the grievance is based upon past practice and the financial burden the new policy poses on the Department members. He added this new policy was not discussed with the Union.

**Commissioners Healy and Brennan made and seconded a motion to deny Grievance 12-006.**

Commissioner Stein inquired if the collective bargaining agreement makes mention of the use of city vehicles. Acting Chief Healey said it does not, but there is a City policy that was implemented in 1990 and 2003 stating the use of city vehicles. The policy in 1990 states the requirement of some Department members to be provided a W2 form for the use of the vehicles; the policy in 2003 allows some Department members personal use

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of the city vehicles. Commissioner Stein inquired if the 2003 policy the Acting Chief references is the Mayor's Memo; Acting Chief Healey said it is, and the memo is not limited to the Fire Department as it also includes personal use of vehicles to members of the Police Department, Health Department, and Public Works. Commissioner Stein inquired if some of the vehicles delineated in the Mayor's memo in 2003 were impacted by the policy change; Acting Chief Healey said they were.

Acting Chief Healey stated he understands both sides of the issue; in the interest of economy, he understands limiting the use of city vehicles, but the inspectors are called back to scenes frequently and he understands the financial impact to the Department members.

Commissioner Stein asked Union President Dunn if the grievance is based on a past practice claim. Union President Dunn said it is; he added the Union is amenable to working with the Commission and setting strict rules on the use of city vehicles.

Commissioner Stein asked if the Union has a set of proposed restrictions the Union can agree to; Union President Dunn stated the Union cannot make policy.

Commissioner Stein suggested tabling the decision on Grievance 12-006 to have further discussions with the Union and to contemplate the various options.

Commissioner Healy stated this issue has already been discussed and decided-upon. He said the decision was made in the interest of city economy. The Board of Fire Commissioners has the ability to institute new policies. He said the Commission knew this was not included in the collective bargaining agreement. He stated he would like to move the motion he instituted.

Commissioner Stein noted that at the meeting where the policy change was voted upon, he inquired if the Union anticipated filing a grievance due to past practice; he said the Union remained silent at that time.

Commissioner Healy restated this issue had been voted on previously to make the change to the policy and it was approved by the Commissioners. He said everyone is well-informed on this issue.

Commissioner Stein added this policy change was pushed by Commissioners Healy and Brennan. He said at this time, the Board is dealing with a different issue now, which is the filing of a grievance regarding past practice of the Department. He reiterated it is in the Board's best interest to table the issue to explore further before coming to a final decision.

Commissioner Stein made a motion to table the motion made by Commissioner Healy to deny Grievance 12-006 for 30 days to allow Acting Chief Healey and the Union to discuss remedies.

Commissioner Stein confirmed with Union President Dunn the Board has the Union's approval to table the motion at this time.

Commissioner Smith seconded the motion.

Commissioners Riso, Craig, Smith, and Stein voted in the affirmative.

Commissioners Healy, Brennan, and McGrath voted in the negative.

Motion to table Commissioner Healy's motion carried.

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Appointment of Fire Marshal

Acting Chief Healey explained that by statute, every City must have a Fire Marshal appointed by the Board of Fire Commissioners.

Commissioners Brennan and McGrath made and seconded a motion to appoint Acting Chief Healey as Fire Marshal. Motion carried unanimously.

Fire Chief Search Committee

Chairman Riso selected members of the Board to serve on the Fire Chief Search Committee: Commissioners McGrath and Stein and Chairman Riso will serve on the Committee. The Chairman said the Committee will set up an initial meeting as soon as possible.

Acting Chief Healey noted the Department is running short and there is a need for assistant chiefs and closure in the upper ranks. He requested the Committee work expeditiously.

**9. Unfinished Business:**

Public Safety Answering Point 911 Center Consolidation

Acting Chief Healey reported the Police Department is in the process of installing furniture. He said OSET will decide when to move the 911 center.

Chairman Riso inquired if the number of consoles has been resolved. Acting Chief Healey said the Fire Department and Police Department each will have two consoles, with one console as a spare. He commented that during the hurricane there was six people working and there seemed to be a need for more. He said there is a meeting with the Mayor to discuss all issues next week.

Acting Chief Healey added that the unsung heroes during the storm were the dispatchers who kept things going. He said the Dinosaurs were manning the storm hotline and did a wonderful job, and Public Works did excellent clean-up work.

Rules and Regulations, Revision and Update

Acting Chief Healey requested this item of the agenda be removed and visited at a later date as he feels it is inappropriate for him to revise rules and regulations as Acting Chief.

Commissioners McGrath and Craig made and seconded a motion to remove Rules and Regulations, Revision and Update, from the agenda. Motion carried unanimously.

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

Commissioner Stein welcomed Commissioner Smith back to the Board meeting.

Commissioner McGrath inquired whether the position of Emergency Management Director will remain within the purview of the Fire Department. Acting Chief Healey stated he feels it should remain within the Fire Department but the decision still has to be

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made. Former Chief LaVecchia is currently acting as the Emergency Management Director.

Commissioners McGrath and Brennan made and seconded a motion for the Board of Fire Commissioners to support having the Emergency Services Director remain within the purview of the Fire Department. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Stein suggested having the Chief's Office write a letter to the Mayor stating the Commission's intention and support.

Commissioner Brennan asked that the Commissioners receive any press releases from the Department. He said they had in the past but it has stopped.

**11. Adjournment**

Commissioners Smith and Stein made and seconded a motion to adjourn at 1956 hours. Motion carried unanimously.

Recorded by C. Birney