

Board of Fire Commissioners Regular Meeting
72 New Haven Avenue, Milford, CT
Tuesday, January 16, 2024

- I. **Call to Order:** Chief Fabrizi called the meeting to order at 18:40 hours. A quorum was present.

Roll Call: In addition to the Chief, Chairman McGrath, Commissioners Stein, Riso, R. Smith, Brennan, P. Smith, and Twiss were present. Also, present were Alderman Liaisons Jason Jenkins and Paul Healy, Chief Fabrizi, Assistant Chief Waiksnoris and Assistant Chief Rabel

Absent: none

- II. **Election of Officers:**

Chief Fabrizi asked if there were any nominations for Board Officers.

Commissioners Riso and P. Smith made and seconded a motion to nominate Commissioner McGrath as Board Chairman, Commissioner Stein as Board Vice-Chairman and Commissioner R. Smith as Board Secretary. Motion carried unanimously.

Chairman McGrath took control of the meeting at 18:43. He stated he was deeply humbled to accept the chair once again and expressed his sincere gratitude.

Commissioners Stein and Riso made and seconded a motion to amend and reorder the agenda to move item XII. Comments and Concerns of the Commissioners prior to III. Public Statements limited to the function of the Board of Fire commissioners. Motion carried unanimously.

- XII. **Comments and Concerns of the Commissioners:**

Commissioner Stein welcomed the two newly elected Board of Alderman members and newly appointed Fire Department Liaisons Healy and Jenkins. He introduced himself and stated he has been on this board for 17 years and was appointed by Mayor Richetelli as a republican board member. Commissioner Stien stated he has never had to voice his political affiliation as politics never entered into what this board is about. He pointed out each members affiliation and time served on the commission. Commissioner Riso's (R) 25 years on the board, Commissioner Brennan's (U) 18 years on the board, and Commissioner R. Smith (R) 20 years on the board. Chairman McGrath (D) has 12 years on the board, Commissioner P. Smith (D) 2 years and Commissioner Twiss (D) is new member. This board just nominated and reappointed unanimously as its chairman Kevin McGrath based on the 3 republicans, 2 democrats and 1 independent. He noted the reappointments were not ratified by the board of alderman. It is important to acknowledge the time each member has served

because of the amount of dedication, knowledge of the institution and familiarity with players and issues. Commissioner Stein expressed his respect and understanding for new blood and new ideas but losing vested people who have familiarity with the important issues of the department would be an incredible loss to this board. He spoke of Chairman McGrath's dedication and time regarding board functions, which is well beyond the call of duty. Commissioner Stein speaks for the entire board regarding the renomination of Kevin McGrath, he urged the liaisons to hear his words and support the renomination of Chairman McGrath as commissioner. Commissioner P. Smith stated he spoke at the Board of Aldermen meeting and offered his seat to keep Chairman McGrath. He noted his dedication and the personal time that Chairman McGrath dedicates on behalf of the board is commendable. He believes in new blood and moving along but taking out the head of an organization that does a phenomenal job is a mistake. Commissioner Riso stated his nomination speaks for itself. Commissioner Brennan reiterated the need for another station on the north end of the city.

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

Alderman Liaison Paul Healy introduced himself and stated his credentials related to public safety and emergency management. He stated he acknowledged the mayor served for 16 years on the Board of Aldermen with distinction. Alderman Liaison Healy explained he has respect for the mayor when it comes to appointments of officials. Additionally, he understands the position of institutional knowledge and the length of service of many fire commission members. This is why the Board of Aldermen majority voted against appointing a new member to the commission replacing the existing Chairman. Alderman Healy appreciates the board's comments, the commissions reelection of the Chairman and looks forward to working with the board.

IV. **Consideration of Minutes:**

Commissioners Riso and R. Smith made and second a motion to accept the minutes of December 19, 2023. Motions carried unanimously.

V. **Communications:**

Commissioner R. Smith read a letter to Chief Fabrizi from Lance Edwards Acting Fire Chief of Bridgeport. Thanking the department for the mutual aid received on December 29, 2023. He also read a holiday card from Deborah DeCarvalho and family with a donation of \$35.

Commissioner Stein and R. Smith made and second a motion to place the donate of \$35 to the Good and Welfare Fund. Motion carries unanimously.

VI. **Chairman's Report:**

Chairman McGrath hoped everyone had a safe holiday. He would like to recognize the department and its members for all the work during the recent floodings. The PSA with the Christmas tress was well received. He noted the hazmat incident, stating that's what training is about, knowing what to do when needed. Chairman McGrath followed up on the new hire

language, which is still being worked on at the city attorney's office. He will provide information to the board at the next meeting.

VII. Committee Reports:

- a) Personnel Committee: Nothing to report.
- b) Maintenance & Equipment Committee: Commissioner Brennan stated trucks are a constant battle, as the department plays catch up with outside vendors. The new truck that is expected in the next few months will hopefully alleviate pressure. Assistant Chief Rabel stated an outside vendor the department is using is very knowledgeable and has fair pricing. Issues that are arising could have been found if the trucks were regularly serviced. All apparatus is currently being serviced for preventative maintenance, and DOT testing. Chairman McGrath would like a meeting with the vendor for the next meeting to fully inform the board on findings/status. Chief Fabrizi stated previously the department would have an issue, fix it and get the truck back on the road. The current vendor is starting to understand the apparatus which may take longer and cost more but, for the safety and security of the fleet and personnel there should be no compromise. Chief Fabrizi explained gas meters and expenses related to purchasing new ones. The department currently is in a meter renting program that Battalion Chief Murphy is heading and will gain a meter for each truck. Commissioner Brennan noted the almost 9,000 calls the department went to in 2023, stating that the response number should be greater because the amount of apparatus that respond to each call. This creates a lot of wear and tear on equipment and should be further investigated.
- c) Safety Committee Liaison: Commissioner Brennan stated the safety committee meets once a month at Fire HQ. It is comprised of 3 firefighters, a city rep and a union rep and himself as the liaison. He noted someone from the city does not always attend the meetings but should as most issues are in relation to insurance.
- d) Education Committee: Commissioner P. Smith noted that Battalion Chief Adam Hansen is doing a great job with public relations and keeping the public informed on calls. He is working on dates for a meeting with alderman to see the operations of the department. Commissioner P. Smith stated the people who make the budgetary decisions for the department should have a line of sight into what the department does and needs.

VIII. Chiefs Report:

Chief Fabrizi stated the budget is closely monitored and no wasteful spending is made. He noted that the percentage used has increased due to a multitude of factors. He noted the EMS revenue increase. Assistant Chief Waiksnoris explained the increase is due to the cost savings with the new vendor and the vendor doing better at billing and collections. Chief Fabrizi stated that the amount can fluctuate due to insurances submitting payments. The recruits graduated and have been assigned to their shifts. He offered 2 candidates a job, securing their placement in the spring class #73. This will bring the department up to full manpower. Assistant Chief Waiksnoris noted that the marine trailer blew a hub

due to rust which has been repaired. It was found that all 3 axles have corrosion, this will need to be fixed within the next year. The boat is currently at Seemans Lane but can be launched into the water. Chief Fabrizi explained PFAS chemical foam, and the fines related to using them. He stated Assistant Chief Rabel is heading the remediation of all PFAS from apparatus. The department will keep 5-gallon buckets on trucks and rely on mutual aid for foam if needed. The risk greatly outweighs the benefits of carrying foam on apparatus. The Assistance to Firefighters Grant opened and the department will seek assistance with purchasing SCBA equipment and the firefighter cancer bill. The new hire language at the city attorney's office has fostered a deeper discussion and may have hurdles to oversee. Congratulations to crew members Capt. Luciano, Lieutenant Garcia, Firefighter Prajer, Firefighter Colucci and Firefighter Long for the cardiac save on 12/2. A job well done. Chief Fabrizi also congratulated the recent promotions of Anthony Vitale to Battalion Chief, Robert Buch to Captain and Joshua Stanton to Lieutenant. Chief Fabrizi explained his report will now include items related to emergency management as he is the Emergency Management Director for the city. He noted Deputy Emergency Director Bill Richards and the valuable work he does on behalf of the city.

IX. New Business:

- a) Grievance 23-01 Step 2: Lieutenant Douglas Hannigan was presenting for the union and grievance committee. He stated the grievance is regarding the department being in violation but not limited Article VI Section 1 Discipline.
- b) Grievance 23-02 Step 2: Lieutenant Douglas Hannigan was presenting for the union and grievance committee. He stated the grievance is regarding the department being in violation but not limited to Article VI Section 1 Discipline.

Commissioner Stein asked Lieutenant Hannigan if this was a matter that should be heard in executive session due to the fact that it was expected to discuss a personnel and or labor matter. Lieutenant Hannigan did not disagree.

Commissioner Stein and Brennan made and second a motion to go into executive session for the board to consider presentations from the Chief and Local 944 representation regarding Grievances 23-01 and 23-02. Motion carries unanimously.

Commissioner Stein requested that Lieutenant Hannigan and the Chiefs of the department remain for the purpose of offering opinions or testimony.

The full board, Chief Fabrizi, Assistant Chief Waiksnoris, Assistant Chief Rabel and Union Rep Lieutenant Hannigan enter executive session at 19:36.

Commissioner Stein exits executive session at 19:38 due to conflicts regarding the matter.

The chiefs and union rep exit executive session at 20:00 for the board to discuss.

The board exits the executive session at 20:16.

Commissioner P. Smith and R. Smith made and second a motion to return to public session. Motion carries unanimously.

Commissioner P. Smith noted no votes were taken during the executive session.

Commissioner P. Smith and Brennan made and second a motion to deny Grievance 23-01. Motion carries unanimously with the abstention of Commissioner Stein as he was not present during presentation.

Commissioner P. Smith and Riso made and second a motion to deny Grievance 23-02. Motion carries unanimously with the abstention of Commissioner Stein as he was not present during presentation.

X. **Unfinished Business:**

- a) Tower 1 Update – Assistant Chief Rabel stated that the sealed bids for Tower 1 were received. The department received approval from the city to list with Brindlee Mountain allowing the department to obtain the best price for the equipment. It is now listed with 2 fire engine brokers. Chairman McGrath stated due to the unknown offers Tower 1 will remain unfinished.

XI. **New Equipment:**

Assistant Chief Rabel stated the E-One that was ordered has a completed model and members will be going to view the completed piece. This will allow a better understand of what may be needed for customization.

XIII. **Adjournment:**

Commissioners R. Smith and Riso made and seconded a motion to adjourn at 20:23 Motion carried unanimously.