

**CITY OF NORWALK
FIRE DEPARTMENT**



BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

**MAYOR HARRY W. RILLING
COMMISSIONER/PASTOR OSCAR DESTRUGE
COMMISSIONER RABBI ITA PASKIND
COMMISSIONER HOWARD DIXON
COMMISSIONER STEVE FERGUSON**

**FIRE COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
JULY 15, 2025**

Via Zoom/Teleconference

ATTENDANCE: Commissioner Oscar Destruge; Commissioner Howard Dixon; Mayor Harry Rilling

STAFF: Fire Chief Gino Gatto; Assistant Fire Chief Mark Conte; Assistant Fire Chief Edward McCabe; Michele DeLuca, Emergency Management; Deputy Fire Chief Joseph Coppola; Fire Marshal Troy Donohue, Linda Shields

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Rilling called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Mayor Rilling called the roll. A quorum was present.

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no Public Participation at this time.

IV. ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES

A. Regular Meeting: June 17, 2025

**** COMMISSIONER DESTRUGE MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE JUNE 17, 2025, MINUTES.
THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

V. REPORTS

A. Fire Chief's Report

Chief Gatto reported the department closed the prior fiscal year with expenditures at 90.4% of the budget. He highlighted surpluses in the Fire Suppression and Fire Marshal divisions due to unfilled positions, and noted the Mechanics Division was at 53% spending for similar reasons. Mr. Destruge requested a final year-end budget closeout at the next meeting, which Chief Gatto agreed to prepare.

B. Assistant Fire Chief of Administration

Assistant Fire Chief Conte provided updates on building projects and equipment. He stated the Station 1 apparatus floor project is approved, with a contractor meeting scheduled and work beginning within about two to three weeks. Truck 1 will be relocated to Station 6 for the duration of approximately two months. Renovation planning for Station 4 will proceed to architectural bid this summer, with presentation to Council expected in September. Overhead door installations are complete at Stations 4 and 5; Station 6 is next. Orders for SCBA compliance upgrades have been placed, with delivery anticipated in 10–20 weeks.

C. Assistant Fire Chief of Operations

Assistant Fire Chief McCabe reported there were 796 incidents in June, averaging 26.5 calls per day, including fires, rescues, EMS, hazardous conditions, service calls, fire alarms, and good intent calls. Year-to-date totals are 4,114 incidents and 6,608 overall responses. New recruits will begin academy training August 11 at Fairfield Regional Fire School, in partnership with Bridgeport and Fairfield departments. The new fireboat is in the process of being outfitted and will be operational before the end of summer. Delivery of the new heavy rescue truck is now set for March 2027. Assistant Fire Chief McCabe also reviewed two significant structure fire responses during extreme heat, both effectively managed and under investigation.

D. Fire Marshal's Report

Assistant Fire Marshal McDonald presented his report. He reported 175 inspections in June, accounting for 2,089 units, including 30 plan reviews and several fire and hazard investigations. Ten mega multi-unit inspections covered 1,480 units. Three new deputy fire marshals are scheduled for State Fire Marshal School in September. New inspection software has been implemented, significantly improving productivity for both commercial and residential inspections.

E. Emergency Management

Ms. DeLuca highlighted the department's ongoing response to heat emergencies, regular public information outreach, and coordination with state authorities. An Emergency Operations Center technology upgrade is underway with vendor meetings held. Needs assessment software is being explored with Community Services. The department's Open House is scheduled for September 27.

F. Training Division Report

Deputy Fire Chief Joseph Coppola reported on the continued use of vacant structures on Renzulli Road for training exercises, including non-destructive and, soon, destructive drills, coordinated with the Police Department. Operator, apparatus, and boat familiarization training are ongoing. Rapid intervention training, probationary task book completion, and site tours of new construction were conducted. Joint training with Norwalk EMS on vehicle extrication and stabilization was also completed. Upcoming activities include a Fire Officer II certification course and planning for confined space and collapse rescue training. The regional recruit academy will allow recruits to return home each night, offering more hands-on training.

G. Local 830 Reports

There were no items to consider at this time.

H. Correspondence

Chief Gatto read two letters of appreciation. One commended Ms. DeLuca for swift action in relocating shelter residents following a power outage. Another, from a resident, expressed gratitude for the department's safe rescue of her dog from a locked car during a hot day.

I. Personnel

1. Drop Pension 7/1/25 for Lieutenant William Firsin

**** COMMISSIONER FERGUSON MOVED TO APPROVE THE REQUEST, SUBJECT TO RECEIPT OF ALL REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

VI. OLD BUSINESS

A. Update on MU-229

Chief Gatto provided an update on the new fireboat (MU 229), reporting that fit-out work is nearly complete and that a launch ceremony will be scheduled. The vessel will be named in honor of a deceased firefighter. Once operational, the existing fireboat will be repaired and retained for future service.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

There were no items to consider at this time.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

**** COMMISSIONER DESTRUGE MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 3:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Courtney Baldwin