

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 MINUTES
OCTOBER 21, 2025 – 3:00 P.M.
VIA ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING**

ATTENDEES: Mayor Harry Rilling, Commissioner Oscar Destruge, Commissioner Steve Ferguson, Commissioner Rabbi Ita Paskind, Commissioner Howard Dixon.

STAFF: Chief Edward McCabe, Assistant Chief Mark Conte, Assistant Chief Timothy Reardon, Fire Marshal Troy Donohue, Michele DeLuca, Deputy Chief Roy Gagne, Sharon Torres, Chief of Human Resource Officer, Linda Shields

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Rilling called the regular meeting of the Fire Commission to order at 3:01 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Mayor Rilling conducted the roll call. A quorum was present.

III. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

Mayor Rilling presented the minutes of the regular meeting held on Tuesday, September 16, 2025.

Corrections noted by Chief McCabe included: under staff, Mark Conte should be listed as Assistant Fire Chief of Administration instead of Operations; under item 2, Roll Call, Mayor Rilling's last name was misspelled; under item 4, public participation, Fire Marshal Donohue's last name was misspelled and should be D-O-N-O-H-U-E; the same misspelling of Fire Marshal Donohue's name under item D, Fire Marshal's Report; under item F, Training Division Report, letter H, where it says Ground Ladders for Entry and Vent, Renzulli is misspelled; and on the last page, under Commissioner Ferguson moved to promote, it says Deputy Assistant Chief Reardon, which should say Assistant Chief Reardon, and his last name is also misspelled and should be R-E-A-R-D-O-N.

****COMMISSIONER DESTRUGE MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 16, 2025 REGULAR MEETING AS CORRECTED.
THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. THE MINUTES WERE APPROVED AS CORRECTED.

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No public participation.

V. REPORTS

A. FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT

1. Budget Report

Chief McCabe presented the budget report, noting that the department is now a quarter of the way through the budget year. For salaries, the department is at 18.66% of the budget utilized, putting it under budget by 6.34%. For overtime, the department is at 20.47% of the budget used, putting it under by 4.53%. Under attendance, there are no personnel out from injuries on duty, and for sick time, the department is projected to be down about 24% from last year.

B. ASSISTANT FIRE CHIEF OF ADMINISTRATION

1. Buildings

a. Station 1: Apparatus Floor Replacement—Progress Report

Assistant Chief Conte reported that the apparatus floor replacement at Station 1 is almost complete, with the floor in place and only punch list items remaining. Truck 1 is slated to move back on Saturday and the project finished ahead of schedule by a couple of weeks. Assistant Chief Conte noted that the company did a very good job and was very efficient.

b. Station 4: Building Renovation—Progress Report

The department finalized conceptual drawings with the architects for the Station 4 building renovation, and the architects are now working on the full set of drawings. The department has bi-monthly meetings with the architects, with the next meeting the following week to review progress. The RFP for construction management firms resulted in invitations to two firms for interviews on Monday, after which the bid will be awarded. The goal from Mr. Alan Lowe is to go to contract by the end of the year, with the aim to secure a contractor and begin work in late spring or early summer.

c. Citywide: Overhead Door Replacement—Progress Report

The citywide overhead door replacement is nearly finished, with all doors that needed replacement completed except for one special door that broke during the process, which is an outlier, and a couple at Station 6 on Fairfield Avenue that do not get as much use and are not a priority.

SCBA Upgrade—Progress Report

Assistant Chief Conte reported great news on the SCBA upgrade, with replacement harnesses received last month, earlier than anticipated at the end of this year or beginning of next year. The department beat the rush, as projections are now up to 20 months. A few more regulators are awaited, after which firefighters will be trained, and the new packs will be in service as soon as possible.

C. ASSISTANT FIRE CHIEF OF OPERATIONS

1. 665 Calls in September 2025

Assistant Chief Reardon reported 665 calls in September 2025.

2. Summary Calls Year to Date

Assistant Chief Reardon reported a year-to-date average of 222.2 calls per day, which is a little less than previously but up to about 19 incidents per day. Mayor Rilling confirmed that was correct.

3. Fire Apparatus

a. Upgraded Mutual Aid Tanker Response Plan

Assistant Chief Reardon reported that a tanker task force mutual aid plan was put together over about six months and finally executed, upgrading response for non-hydrant areas in Norwalk, affecting about 54 streets, including West Norwalk and Silvermine Cranberry Districts. It includes automatic dispatch of tankers from mutual aid partners in Stamford, New Canaan, Darien, and Wilton.

b. Tactical Rescue 2 near completion

Tactical Unit 2 is nearing completion to accompany Rescue 2, equipped with special rescue equipment for those types of incidents.

4. Operations

a. Revised SOP for Tanker Response and training drill with Mutual Aid Partners

Assistant Chief Reardon reported that backing up the mutual aid anchor plan, the SOP was revised, and an exercise took place on October 11th at the community college with all mutual aid partners and Norwalk command staff present.

b. Revised SOP for Active Threat and upcoming joint training with PD and EMS

A revised SOP for active threat incidents that aligns with current practices and terminology, developed collaboratively with EMS and the police department, emphasizing joint agency training with rescue task force teams. Deputy Chief Gagne will elaborate further.

c. Implementation of Station Captain positions

Assistant Chief Reardon reported the successful implementation of station captains, supported by the Commission, establishing leadership at Westport Avenue, East Norwalk, and South Norwalk stations. Each station is now led by a captain overseeing three lieutenants and 12 firefighters, enhancing operating efficiency and internal coordination. Fire administration receives weekly reports showing it has been very effective.

5. Notable Incidents

a. I-95 MVA with Heavy Entrapment

Assistant Chief Reardon reported a serious accident on October 9th on I-95 involving a pickup truck that under rode the backside of a tractor-trailer, requiring a complex extrication where the truck was disentangled and the tractor-trailer lifted to free the driver.

b. I-95 MVA with Entrapment (private company Attenuator Vehicle struck)

On October 14th, an incident occurred on I-95 involving a construction vehicle and a privately owned attenuator vehicle. This underscored the importance of the attenuator vehicle in the Norwalk Fire Department's service, as it was in the proper position and prevented the construction vehicle from colliding into the construction site, avoiding a worse scene.

c. Rt-7 MVA with Entrapment

Assistant Chief Reardon reported a single vehicle accident on October 4th on Route 7 versus a tree with heavy front-end damage and entrapment, taking crews about 25 minutes to extricate the driver.

d. East Avenue Structure Fire

A structure fire on East Avenue where companies encountered heavy smoke, with fire located in the basement and quickly extinguished by the first alarm assignment. It is currently under investigation by the Fire Marshal's Division.

D. FIRE MARSHAL'S REPORT

1. Summary of Activities

Fire Marshall Donohue presented the Fire Marshal's Office activity summary for September, including 258 properties inspected with four mega multi-sites for a total of 684 units, two smoke detector installations, review of 24 fire and life safety plans for \$1,400, renewal of three liquor licenses for \$195, and total income of \$1,595. The office had nine investigations, seven fires and two code hazard-related issues. The office held two fire and life safety public education events: on September 26th, Assistant Fire Marshal McDonald and Deputy Fire Marshal Kelly, along with Adjutant 5, assisted New Canaan Elementary School with its first scheduled fire drill, which went well with full participation; and on September 29th, Deputy Fire Marshal Kelly assisted Happy Times Nursery School, serving infants to age four, with a fire drill that also went well. On September 5th, the office assisted the State Fire Marshal's Office with inspection of carnival rides at the Oyster Festival, as well as commercial cooking stations, tents, and trucks; despite weather closing the event on Saturday the 6th, Sunday had a good turnout and went well. On September 8th, the three newly promoted deputy fire marshals started school at the State Fire Marshal's Office for fire code, going well except for the commute. On September 12th, the office assisted the State Fire Marshal's Office with inspection of carnival rides at the St. George's Greek Festival, as well as commercial cooking stations and tents, which went well. On September 27th, the division

supported DPW's Touch a Truck event, which was a huge success with beautiful weather and large community turnout.

2. Fire Marshal Fees

Fire Marshall Donohue reported fire marshal fees as part of the September summary, including review of 24 fire and life safety plans for \$1,400 and renewal of three liquor licenses for \$195, for total income of \$1,595.

3. Fire Marshal's Office Calls

Nine investigations were reported in September, seven fires and two code hazard-related issues.

E. EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

1. Emergency Management Update

Ms. DeLuca reported on recent activities, including support for the Rowayton Beach Association's sand replenishment project on September 20th and 21st, where fire department members assisted with loading and unloading 250 tons of sand using front-end loaders and dump trucks. The fire department participated in the South Norwalk Halloween street fair for young children who may not handle the full downtown Halloween event. Upcoming activities include winter weather safety and holiday safety briefings for the emergency management team on snow and extreme cold in early December. The EOC upgrade capital project is ongoing and expected to wrap up by the first week or two in December, by the end of the calendar year. On a regional and state basis, the department is monitoring current events and potential impacts on vulnerable residents amid the shutdown and political activities, planning ahead for support needs in mass care, sheltering, and feeding projects.

F. TRAINING DIVISION REPORT

1. Current Training Activities

a. Truck Company Operations (Renzulli Rd Vacant)

Deputy Chief Gagne reported current training at Renzulli Road as long as possible, including truck company operations with roof ventilation on flat roofs and pitched roofs.

b. Rescue Company Operations (Renzulli Rd Vacant)

Rescue companies are working on all types of search and rescue and other operations at Renzulli Road.

c. Engine Company Operations (Renzulli Rd Vacant)

Deputy Chief Gagne reported engine companies stretching lines and partaking in ventilation opportunities at Renzulli Road, including roll-up doors for good training in access to buildings around the city. This will continue through the end of the month, depending on how much longer the structures are available.

d. Academy Cadets Live Fire Training

Academy cadets completed live fire training last week and are starting hazardous materials training this week, with raving reviews from the Bridgeport Academy on all seven recruits, who are shining.

e. Marine Division (Marine 229)

The Marine Division is continuing training on Long Island Sound in Marine 229, as it is a different boat than the previous one, through the end of the month and possibly into early November, along with other training.

2. Completed Training Activities

a. Shoring Class (Classroom)

Deputy Chief Gagne reported completion of the shoring class conducted at Renzulli Road, with both classroom at the station and practical there, receiving raving reviews from members who feel prepared for structural collapse.

b. Shoring Class (Practical)

He noted the practical shoring class at Renzulli Road was a great opportunity.

3. Upcoming Training Activities

a. Company Operations Training

Deputy Chief Gagne reported continuation of company operations training, securing Norwalk Hospital and the section being torn down to start standpipe operations training in stairwells, with more possible as demolition nears.

b. First Due Program (Updates and Refresher)

He reported planning an in-house classroom class for First Due programming software, changing from NFIRS to NERIS, a national changeover, for an update and refresher for the department.

c. Tanker Task Force

Deputy Chief Gagne reported, including the tanker task force that Assistant Chief Reardon mentioned, with a quick review for members and implementation.

d. Stop the Bleed/Active Threat (Classroom refresher and joint practical with PD and EMS)

Starting in November, Stop the Bleed and Active Threat training will occur all month: first week as an in-house classroom refresher with EMS handling the medical side and Mr. Gagne the command structure side; then on November 14th, 17th, and 21st, joint training operations with PD and EMS at 78 Glover Avenue in a vacant from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. each day, running full scenarios, forming rescue task forces, treating and bringing out people in full-scale drills; observers are welcome.

e. Marine Division (Marine 229)

The Marine Division will continue through November.

Mayor Rilling suggested notifying Commissioners of opportunities to observe training at locations like 78 Glover or Renzulli Road for greater understanding.

G. LOCAL 830 REPORTS

1. There are no items

No report from Local 830.

H. CORRESPONDENCE

1. Letter (Attached)

Chief McCabe presented a letter received regarding Firefighter Joe Bicocchi and Firefighter Sean Wieck, who attended training at FDTN (Fire Department Training Network) in Indianapolis, Indiana, a rigorous, realistic, hands-on fire school attended by firefighters from all 50 states and around the world. Chief McCabe read the body of the letter from Captain Brendan Montgomery of St. Matthews Fire and EMS, who served as battalion chief for the fire combat class and was assigned to the two firefighters for the four-day course. The letter stated that throughout the extremely challenging and exhausting class, they maintained a positive attitude and consistent effort, with their dedication and skill impressive. Firefighter Joe Bicocchi excelled as company officer, and Firefighter Sean Wieck gave 100% from start to finish; they did an outstanding job representing the Norwalk Fire Department.

Commissioner Ferguson asked to send a letter to both employees. Chief McCabe agreed to draft something and forward for approval. Commissioner Destruge noted the Commission has letterhead to use. Commissioner Ferguson appreciated it, noting it is good to be represented outside the state. Chief McCabe added that the firefighters took this upon themselves, going above and beyond for additional training.

I. PERSONNEL

1. Executive Session: Discuss pension for two personnel

Mayor Rilling stated a motion was needed to go into executive session to discuss pension for two personnel.

****COMMISSIONER PASKIND MOVED TO ENTER EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS PENSION FOR TWO PERSONNEL.**

****COMMISSIONER FERGUSON SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mayor Rilling introduced Ms. Sharon Torres as the new human resources person, to be invited into executive session. The time was 3:29 p.m., and the Commission entered executive session, to return to public session after.

Upon return from executive session at 3:40 p.m., Mayor Rilling reported no motions were made and no votes were taken during executive session.

****COMMISSIONER DESTRUGE MOVED TO APPROVE THE REQUEST BY CAPTAINS MARK FRANZEN AND ANTHONY MATERA TO MODIFY THEIR DROP DATE FROM OCTOBER 1 TO NOVEMBER 1, 2024.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

VI. OLD BUSINESS

A. There are no items

No old business.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. There are no items

No new business.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Rilling noted the next meeting is November 18, 2025, at 3:00 p.m.

****COMMISSIONER DIXON MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 3:42 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Courtney Baldwin
Recording Secretary