

CITY OF NORWALK
FIRE DEPARTMENT



BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

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

FIRE COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
JULY 16, 2024

This meeting was conducted by Zoom/Teleconference.

ATTENDANCE: Mayor Harry Rilling, Chair; Commissioner/Pastor Oscar Destruge;
Commissioner Howard Dixon; Commissioner Rabbi Ita Paskind

STAFF: Fire Chief Gino Gatto; Deputy Fire Chief Joseph Coppola; Assistant Fire
Chief Mark Conte; Acting Fire Marshal Kirk McDonald; Michele DeLuca,
Emergency Management; Assistant Fire Chief Edward McCabe; Linda
Shields; Thomas Reich, Local 830 Representative

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Rilling called the meeting to order at 3:02 p.m. and noted that there was a quorum present.

ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES

- **Regular Meeting on Tuesday, June 18, 2024**

**** COMMISSIONER DESTRUGE MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE JUNE 18, 2024 MEETING.**

The following correction was noted:

Page 2, regarding the correction to the minutes: please make the following change from :

Page 1, under **ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES**, please change the following from:

**** COMMISSIONER DESTRUGE MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE APRIL 16, 2024 MEETING.**
**** COMMISSIONER FINE SECONDED.**

To : **** COMMISSIONER DESTRUGE MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE APRIL 16, 2024 MEETING.**
**** COMMISSIONER DIXON SECONDED.**

TO: Page 1, under **ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES**, please change the following from:

**** COMMISSIONER DESTRUGE MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE APRIL 16, 2024 MEETING.**
**** COMMISSIONER FINE SECONDED.**

To : **** COMMISSIONER DESTRUGE MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE MAY 21, 2024 MEETING.**
**** COMMISSIONER DIXON SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE MAY 21, 2024 MEETING AS CORRECTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Page 4, first paragraph, 2nd line: please change the following from:

“creating the mini-academy that training new recruits”

To: “creating the mini-academy that trained new recruits”

**** THE MOTION TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE JUNE 18, 2024 MEETING AS CORRECTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ACTION ITEMS

There are no items to consider at this time.

FIRE CHIEF’S REPORT

a. Budget Report

Chief Gatto said that the budget report for June shows a surplus in the Salary and Overtime budget lines. However, he reminded everyone that the first two weeks of July are debited from the June budget. The actual report for the figures will appear in next month’s budget. Chief Gatto said that while the surpluses would decrease, he did not expect them to become deficits. None of the other budget lines have exceeded their limits. The sick time is trending in the right direction and gave the details. He repeated that next month, the numbers will provide a more complete financial picture.

ASSISTANT FIRE CHIEF OF ADMINISTRATION

Assistant Fire Chief Conte presented his report.

a. Buildings

1. **Station 1:** Apparatus Floor
 - i. Soil testing completed on 7/8/2024. The Engineer is reviewing the results and will present a report of his recommendations.
2. **Station 3:** Apparatus Floor
 - i. The Purchasing Department is in the process of awarding the project to the lowest responsible bidder.
3. **Station 4:** Building Renovation
 - i. Cost analysis in process.
 - ii. I met with Guardian last month. They have begun working on the punch list that we developed.
4. **Citywide:** Overhead Door Replacement
 - i. Awaiting the final quotes from Overhead Door of Hartford.

b. Records Management Software Upgrade

1. The new software contract has been approved by Common Council and is in Corporation Counsel for finalization.

The Commissioners had no additional questions.

ASSISTANT FIRE CHIEF OF OPERATIONS

Assistant Chief McCabe greeted the Commissioners and presented his report.

- a. Norwalk Fire personnel provided a fire watch with an engine company and the fireboat as part of the citywide Event Action Plan for the annual fireworks show. Our firefighters and marshals on scene reported no issues.
- b. A new Command Car to replace the current Car 2 is being designed and will be ordered in the coming month. The Command Car responds to all fires, full assignments, motor vehicle accidents and special calls. It is staffed by the Deputy Chief (Shift Commander) and his aide. The Car carries mobile and portable radios, a laptop computer, Pre-plan information, and the Incident Command Board, used for fireground accountability and tracking.
- c. Eight firefighters who were hired in June 2023, have finished their probationary period. As per tradition, their orange probationary helmet shields have been replaced with black ones. They are all advancing well in their job skills and taking on additional roles, such as driving apparatus and operating fire pumps, as training and experience allow.

There were 703 incidents, which averaged 23 per day. There were 21 fires, including 1 building fire. There were 52 rescues of which 34 were motor vehicle accidents with injuries. The Department responded to 431 EMS calls; 34 hazardous conditions; 23 service calls; 85 fire alarms and 57 good intents. There was a total of 3,914 incident and 6,132 total responses.

Mayor Rilling noted that the Department had fewer calls than 2023. Assistant Chief McCabe agreed but felt they would end up with approximately the same number as 2023.

FIRE MARSHAL'S REPORT

Acting Fire Marshal McDonald presented his report.

- a. Summary of Activities**
- b. Fire Reports**
- c. Fire Marshal Fees**

Acting Fire Marshal McDonald said that they had performed 174 inspections, which is an increase from 148 inspections done in May. Notifications were down to 19 from the 42 done last month. 35 Plan Reviews were done, which was an increase from last month's 31 reviews. There was a total income of \$4,450.

Acting Fire Marshal McDonald said that the number of fires increased from 3 in May to 5 in June. The Code Hazards remained at 1 for the month and the final total for the month was 6.

Chief Gatto noted that Assistant Fire Marshal McDonald was the Acting Fire Marshal at this time because Fire Marshal Sawyer retired last month. Mayor Rilling asked about the process for filling the position, which Chief Gatto reviewed with him. Discussion about the details followed.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

a. Emergency Management Update

Ms. DeLuca greeted the Commissioners and said the fireworks action plan had worked well and there were no issues. The Oyster Festival Action Plan will have a similar plan. Typically, either the Police Department or EMS will provide an Action Plan for the Boat Show.

The focus now is on Summer Safety and overall heat safety tips messages are going out to the Community partners. Similar messages are being sent for thunder storm and severe safety issues. It is expected that the temperatures will cool down in the next few days.

The switch to Everbridge was made on July 1st and approximately 350 people signed up on the resident portal. During the remaining summer months and hurricane season, the administration will continue to encourage people to sign up.

September 28th will be the Open House at 15 South Smith Street with the Fire Department, Police Department and DPW.

Rabbi Paskind asked for clarification about Everbridge. Ms. DeLuca gave a brief summary of what the service does when there is a need for mass notification. Those residents who have unregistered phones

or prefer to receive messages through texts would have to sign up through the resident portal. They can also receive severe weather warnings from the National Weather Service. She gave the details.

Discussion followed about notifying the residents.

TRAINING DIVISION REPORT

Deputy Fire Chief Coppola presented his report as follows:

a. *Current Training Activities*

1. Marine operations including Zodiac boat deployment and deploying inflatable off of MU238
2. New member orientation continuing with task book signoffs
3. RIT, Removal of Downed Firefighters
4. EVOC Training
5. Ongoing physicals (coming to a close soon)
6. Inside activities during extreme hot weather

Completed Training Activities

1. King Industries Tabletop Tanker Crash with Train at grade crossing
2. Aerial (Tiller) Operator Signoff for K. Gilchrist
3. Foam Operations refreshers
4. Rescue Company Operations, rope systems for confined space incidents
5. Portable ladder deployment drills with all PPE & tools

Upcoming/Scheduled Training Activities:

1. Fire Officer 1 contract class for our members here in Norwalk confirmed Fall 2024
2. Norwalk High School & Wegmans Construction Site Walk-throughs & Preplanning
3. CPR Refresher makeup classes
4. MTA Metro North Railroad Safety Class (September) FREE
5. CT DOT Traffic Incident Management Class (September/October) FREE
6. Eversource Electrical Underground Safety Class (August) FREE

Mayor Rilling commented that many people are unaware of all the aspects of firefighting and think the firefighters only run into burning buildings. Deputy Fire Chief Coppola said that there was a course for elected officials called Fire Ops 101 and he would look into scheduling it for the region.

Deputy Fire Chief Coppola said he had contacted the Norwalk Police Department Training Division along with EMS and offered to include any officers that would be interested in participating with the CT DOT Traffic Incident Management class. Mayor Rilling said that it would be good to have all the First Responders train together.

LOCAL 830 REPORT

Firefighter Reich said there had been a water rescue the previous day where the Fire Department and the Police Department worked together. Firefighter Reich said he wished to acknowledge Firefighter Dave Dustin along with the rescue company for putting themselves at risk during the rescue. Mayor Rilling said that he believed that the Fire Department would find a way to acknowledge the firefighters involved. Chief Gatto said that planning was underway to acknowledge a number of people who were

involved in a variety of different incidents. Mayor Rilling requested that they invite the Fire Commissioners to the award ceremony.

OLD BUSINESS

There were no items to consider at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

There were no items to consider at this time.

CORRESPONDENCE

a. From Norwalk EMS

Chief Gatto said that Mr. Robert Stork from Norwalk Hospital, who was an EMS Educator, had sent an email about the three recent full cardiac arrest saves that the Fire Department, Police Department and EMS had handled. All three of the patients have recovered and been released from the hospital. On June 22nd, during a monthly robotic competition in South Norwalk, the fire watch detail were the first on the scene of one of the cardiac events and administered CPR and used the onsite AED before the EMS and Engine 5 arrived.

PERSONNEL

a. Retirement Letters

Chief Gatto presented the retirement letter from Fire Marshal Broderick Sawyer and noted that the revision date was June 20th.

Chief Gatto said that Captain Thomas Reidy has submitted a resignation letter dated June 18th with an effective retirement date of August 31, 2024. Captain Reidy has served Norwalk for 27 years.

Mayor Rilling offered congratulations to both Fire Marshal Sawyer and Captain Reidy. He noted that they would have to review the active Lieutenant and Captain's list for promotions.

ADJOURNMENT

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 3:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes

Telesco Secretarial Services