

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
JUNE 18, 2024

This meeting was conducted by Zoom/Teleconference.

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

STAFF: Fire Chief Gino Gatto; Assistant Fire Marshal Kirk McDonald, Assistant Fire Chief Edward McCabe; Deputy Fire Chief Joseph Coppola; Michele DeLuca, Emergency Management; Linda Shields

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Rilling called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. and noted that there was a quorum present.

ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES

• Regular Meeting on Tuesday, May 21, 2024

**** COMMISSIONER DESTRUGE MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE MAY 21, 2024 MEETING.**

The following correction was noted:

Page 1, under **Call to Order**, Line 2, please change the following from:

“announced that the Mayor was would be joining the meeting shortly.”
To “announced that the Mayor would be joining the meeting shortly.”

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

City of Norwalk
Board of Fire Commissioners
Regular Meeting
June 18, 2024

**** 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.**

**** THE MOTION TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE MAY 21, 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 now that they are 11 months into the year, it appears that they will not have to transfer funds into the salary or overtime accounts. He reviewed the figures and noted that the Department was in the process of purchasing some items but felt that the budget for that would remain under 91%.

The budget for sick time year to year has been lower than last year and the May sick time expenses are lower than that of May 2023.

Commissioner Destruge asked for clarification on the budget items for clothing and uniform purchase. Chief Gatto reviewed the details with the Commissioners.

Commissioner Destruge asked about the annual budget for water and if the Department was the largest water client. Chief Gatto said the figure includes the hydrant rentals and the hydrant painting and maintenance project.

ASSISTANT FIRE CHIEF OF ADMINISTRATION

Chief Gatto explained that Assistant Fire Chief Mark Conte was on vacation and then presented his report.

a. Station Alerting System Upgrade

1. The new station alerting system is now live.
2. Automated dispatch is now being used for NFD, Norwalk EMS, and Rowayton VFD.

b. Buildings

1. **Station 1:** Apparatus Floor

- i. Soil testing and slab inspection to begin in July.
- 2. **Station 3:** Apparatus Floor
 - i. The RFP opening is scheduled for June 13th.
- 3. **Station 4:** Building Renovation
 - i. Cost analysis in process.
 - ii. Guardian will perform minor repairs, as needed.
- 4. **Citywide:** Overhead Door Replacement
 - i. Beginning the approval process of the '25 Capital project.
- c. **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 question

ASSISTANT FIRE CHIEF OF OPERATIONS

Assistant Chief McCabe greeted the Commissioners and presented his report.

- a. **TANKER AND BRIDGE FIRE:** On May 2nd at 5:29 a.m., NFD was dispatched to I-95 South between exits 15-14 for multiple vehicles on fire, including a gasoline tanker under the Fairfield Avenue overpass. First arriving companies confirmed that all drivers were out of the burning vehicles and began extinguishment. The Incident Commander requested a third alarm, secured hydrants for water supply, and ordered water streams directed on the bridge support beams and the burning tanker. A call was placed to King Industries requesting their QRV Foam unit respond, which took up position alongside NFD personnel in front of the burning tanker and assisted in extinguishing the fire. Thanks to the hard work and sound tactics of the NFD personnel on the scene, the incident was mitigated before it became catastrophic, with no civilian injuries and only one firefighter leg injury.
- b. Eight probationary firefighters joined the ranks of the NFD on May 23rd, beginning one week of orientation training. This NFD Academy puts new probies through six intensive skills-building days, which build upon what they learned at the Connecticut Fire Academy. The week culminates in a live-fire scenario. They graduate the week ready to competently fill any riding position when they come on shift.
- c. A meeting was held with Eversource representatives to discuss categorizing priority responses to emergency scenes where utilities such as gas and electricity need to be secured for the safety of civilians and fire personnel.
- d. The new Tactical Rescue support truck build is on schedule. The Freightliner chassis has been completed and is now at Mickey Truck Bodies, which will fabricate the compartments. In the final phase, Gowans-Knight company will fit an air compressor on the truck so that SCBA bottles can be filled at the scene of a fire. Delivery is expected at the end of this year.

Regarding the tanker fire on I-95, Assistant Chief McCabe said that his hat was off to Chief Reardon on a job well done. Mayor Rilling agreed.

Assistant Chief McCabe said for the record that he would like to thank Deputy Chief Markowitz for creating the mini-academy that training new recruits along with the Norwalk firefighters and officers that participate as instructors.

There were 646 incidents, which averaged just under 21 per day. There were 16 fires, including 2 building fires. There were 41 rescues of which 24 were motor vehicle accidents with injuries. The Department responded to 366 EMS calls, 30 hazardous conditions, 23 service calls; 104 fire alarms and 66 good intents.

Mayor Rilling noted that it appears that they are responding to an additional 2 calls per day because the Department had been responding to 19 calls per day for a long time.

Mayor Rilling noted that the Department had been working with the Sixth Taxing District and now there would be more of a routine response for the Sixth Taxing District. He said that they would have to determine how that will impact the budget.

Assistant Chief McCabe said that the Department now sends more than just one truck and crew when Rowayton has a structure fire.

Mayor Rilling said the Sixth Taxing District Commissioners have been briefed that this would be part of a discussion. Chief Gatto said that if Rowayton was not able to staff their house with volunteer, he said he could see Norwalk providing the staff. Mayor Rilling reviewed the budgetary practices regarding the Sixth Taxing District.

Commissioner Dixon asked about the King Foam truck. Assistant Chief McCabe said that the Norwalk Fire trucks have buckets of foam formula but King Industries has a different set up. Discussion followed about the details of the issue.

FIRE MARSHAL'S REPORT

Assistant Fire Marshal McDonald presented his report.

a. Summary of Activities

Assistant Fire Marshal McDonald said that they had performed 148 inspections. The revenue was down because they had completed inspecting the four large multi-unit complexes which included 713 apartments. 42 notifications were sent out and one Public Education Event was held at Ponus Ridge. 31 Plan Reviews have been done and the liquor licenses have remained the same.

b. Fire Reports

There were only 3 fires compared to the 9 last month and there was one code violations.

c. Fire Marshal Fees

Assistant Fire Marshal McDonald reviewed the fees collected during his overall report.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

a. Emergency Management Update

Ms. DeLuca said that the Department participated in the After Action review at the St. Ann's Club that was hosted by the Department of Transportation. There was good representation of Norwalk Fire, Police and DPW. The discussion focused on what worked out well and what could be improved on should something similar happen in the future on State roads.

Firework planning is underway for July 3 or 5th, weather permitting.

Ms. DeLuca said that the heat wave is underway and they are getting the word out to take precautions. The Risk Manager sent out the OSHA safety messaging to departments that have staff working outside.

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

TRAINING DIVISION REPORT

Deputy Fire Chief Coppola presented his report as follows:

a. Current Training Activities

1. Hazmat Operational Refresher Continuing Education Units – Lockout/Tagout
2. Trucks 1 & 2 Operator Training ongoing, with many members approaching final sign-offs.
3. Continuing new member orientation and probationary FF task books
4. Rapid Intervention Team training/RIT Air Pak
5. Ongoing NFPA 1582 Physicals
6. Marine Division Handling Deck Equipment
7. Injury Prevention Program
8. Engine Company Operations – basic & advanced hose deployment

b. Completed Training Activities

1. Pump sign offs for FF Joseph Stacy & Zack Coulombe
2. Aerial (Tiller) Operator Signoffs for FF. Agosto & McDonald
3. Hazmat Operational Refresher CEU's for Research, Metering and L.O.T.O.
4. Rescue Company Operations, rope systems for low angle rescue
5. Many members are just about finished with aerial and pump training and will be signed off.

c. Upcoming/Scheduled Training Activities:

1. Tabletop exercise with King Industries (Tanker vs. Train at Crossing)
2. Fire Officer 1 contract class for our members here in Norwalk confirmed Fall 2024 – 14 NFD personnel enrolled to date.
3. Drafting water from a static water source for Engine Companies (Lakota Oaks Property)

4. Norwalk High School & Wegmans Construction Site Walk-throughs & Preplanning
5. CPR Refresher makeup classes in process
6. Spanish for First Responders, working with BMHS World Language Department to help us with this.

Mayor Rilling suggested that the Commissioners might want to sit in on some of the tabletop exercises. Deputy Fire Chief Coppola said that they would be having one on Thursday, June 20th at King Industries and the Commissioners were welcome to join in.

Commissioner Destruge asked for clarification on the 1582 physicals. Deputy Fire Chief Coppola explained that the physical was the standard for health and wellness and medical surveillance. Discussion followed about the details.

LOCAL 830 REPORT

There were no items to consider at this time.

OLD BUSINESS

There were no items to consider at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

There were no items to consider at this time.

CORRESPONDENCE

- **Thank You letter attached**

Chief Gatto said that was a call about gas at 12 Putnam Avenue on June 2nd. The residents were very thankful and send along the thank you letter.

PERSONNEL

There were no items to consider at this time.

ADJOURNMENT

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 3:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes

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Telesco Secretarial Services