

CITY OF NORWALK
FIRE DEPARTMENT



BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

MAYOR HARRY W. RILLING
COMMISSIONER/PASTOR OSCAR DESTRUGE
COMMISSIONER LARRY L. BENTLEY

REGULAR MEETING
May 19, 2020

ATTENDANCE: Mayor Harry Rilling, Commissioner Larry Bentley, Commissioner Oscar Destruge

STAFF: Fire Chief Gino Gatto; Assistant Chief Chris King; Deputy Chief Michael McCallum; Firefighter Bill Ireland, Jr., Local 830; Michelle DeLuca, Emergency Management, Fire Marshal Broderick Sawyer,

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Rilling called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. A quorum was present.

ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES

Regular Meeting – February 18, 2020.

**** COMMISSIONER BENTLEY MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 18, 2020 AS CORRECTED.**

The following correction was noted:

Page 4, under **Building Repairs**, paragraph 4, line 1: please change the following from:

“Fire Chief Gatto said that the floor was painted”

to: “Fire Chief Gatto said that the apparatus floor was painted”

**** THE MOTION TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 18, 2020**

AS CORRECTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

ACTION ITEMS

There were no action items to consider at this time.

FIRE CHIEF REPORT.

a. Budget Report.

Chief Gatto displayed the budget on screen and reviewed the details. He said that it appears they would end the year with a surplus. He said that some of the budget surplus was due to projects that were delayed because of COVID-19.

ASSISTANT FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT

a. Operations Report.

Assistant Chief King reviewed the various fire call categories. There were over 550 calls, which were about 18 per day. He reviewed the various categories fire calls along with EMS calls.

Commissioner Destruge asked how often they were testing the firefighters for COVID-19. Assistant Chief King said that if one of the firefighters come in feeling ill, they test. There has only been one positive test result.

Mayor Rilling said that he would like to thank the firefighters and their families during this challenging time.

FIRE MARSHAL'S REPORT

a. Summary of Activities.

b. Fire Reports.

c. Fire Marshal Fees.

Chief Gatto said that Fire Marshal Sawyer was having technical difficulties and would be sending a written report to the Commissioners.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT.

Emergency Management Update.

Ms. DeLuca presented her report. It has been a busy couple of months due to the COVID outbreak. There have been regular phone calls with the various non-profit agencies to update the status on homelessness and food shortages. She gave a brief overview of the

recent food distribution at Veteran's Park. There are also "Blessing Boxes" that have been distributed through some churches and non-profit partners.

Ms. DeLuca said that they were now working with the CAP organization Alliance for Community Empowerment (ACE), formerly know as ABCD, regarding providing services to Norwalk residents. The State of CT is doing a program with small businesses involving masks and thermometers.

Ms. DeLuca said that they have been working with the hospitals on testing. Stamford and Bridgeport are launching their programs this week and hopefully Norwalk will be launching their program the following week. She reviewed the details with the Commissioners.

Mayor Rilling thanked Ms. DeLuca for all her hard work. He said that bringing the different organizations to the table through the EOC was very important.

TRAINING REPORT

Company Training Objectives

- a. New Check In Procedure**
- b. PPE Updates and Procedures Level B&C**
- c. Response to Calls Update (Medical, Alarms and Fires**
- d. Haz-Mat Decon Trailer.**
- e. Portable Radio Overview for New Radios**
- f. Engine Company Operations**

Chief McCallum reviewed the Training Division Report with the Commissioners. He said that due to COVID, they had to start from scratch with the check in procedure, which now includes the firefighters having their temperatures taken and wearing masks during their shifts.

The new portable radios arrived and they should be online next week.

Commissioner Destruge asked about the exam status for the new recruits. Chief Gatto said that they would be discussing that shortly.

Mayor Rilling thanked Chief McCallum for all the hard work. He said that the City was writing the manual on this because no one has experienced this before.

LOCAL 830 REPORT

Firefighter Ireland said that they would be rescheduling the golf tournament, the retirement breakfasts and the Firefighter's Ball to next year.

OLD BUSINESS

a. Update on Regional Entry Exam

Chief Gatto said that there was a total of 683 applicants for the entry exam and the written portion was given on March 14th at Norwalk High School to 318 of those applicants in two separate sessions.

A total of 583 applicants passed the written exam and they will be taking an oral on line on May 22nd. A final list of the applicants is expected to be received in June. The Commission will then have the opportunity to decide if they wish to hire anyone to attend the Academy in the fall if it is opened.

There are currently four vacancies and two firefighters out with long term injuries, but there are also 18 retirements on the horizon starting in December of 2022. Chief Gatto suggested that the Commission consider hiring 4 new trainees. Discussion followed.

Assistant Chief King said that there were 63 Norwalk residents took the exam and 52 passed – 49 males and 3 females. He then provided the Commissioners with the details.

FIRE MARSHAL'S REPORT CONT'D

Fire Marshal Sawyer said that he was able to overcome the technical difficulties. He then presented his report.

Commissioner Destruge asked about the number of inspections that had not been done yet. Fire Marshal Sawyer said that there was a 90 extension granted by the State, which will end on June 16th.

b. Update on Building Repairs.

Chief Gatto said that they were able to get back on track on some of the remodeling projects.

Broad River – Remodeling will be underway in the near future. One company will be relocated during the work, but a four man crew will remain at the station.

Station 5- Meadow Street – The kitchen was gutted and abatement has taken place. New cabinets, faucets, counter tops, tile and appliances were installed. The bunk room has been basically completed with HVAC work.

NEW BUSINESS.

a. Update on Lieutenants Exam

Chief Gatto said that they have to give a test every two years by contract. The old list has expired and 22 people have signed up. The written test will be given at Connecticut Avenue on May 28th by Resource Management Associates and between June 1st and 3rd they will give the oral portion of the exam. Resource Management Associates was selected through a bid.

The Captain's promotional exam will be given in August and Deputy Chief's promotional test will be given in November.

b. Grant Application for PPE

Chief Gatto said that FEMA had sent out a notification about COVID-19 PPE grant funding specifically for firefighters. An applicant was sent out \$14,000 for the gear. They should hear in about a month about if they are awarded the funding.

CORRESPONDENCE

a. Letter

Chief Gatto reviewed a letter received by Norwalk Hospital that mentions the Fire Department helping with a medical call.

An additional letter was received from Sgt. Lapak thanking the Department for the cooperation between the Police and Fire Marine Unit Divisions.

PERSONNEL

a. Assistant Mechanic Position

Chief Gatto gave the Commission an update on the position. There are nine outside applications but only a few have the necessary qualifications. The posting will remain open until June and then a new mechanic will be selected.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COMMISSIONER BENTLEY MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

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