

CITY OF NORWALK
FIRE DEPARTMENT



BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

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

REGULAR MEETING
March 19, 2019

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

STAFF: Fire Chief Gino Gatto; Assistant Chief Chris King; Deputy Chief Michael McCallum; Fire Marshal Broderick Sawyer; Michele DeLuca, Deputy Director of Emergency Management; Firefighter Bill Ireland; Mr. Ray Burney, Personnel Director (3:18 p.m.)

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Rilling called the meeting to order at 3:04 p.m. A quorum was present.

ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES

Regular Meeting – February 19, 2019.

**** COMMISSIONER BENTLEY MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 19, 2019.**

**** THE MOTION TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 19, 2019 AS SUBMITTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ACTION ITEMS

There were no action items to consider at this time.

FIRE CHIEF REPORT.

a. Budget Report.

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Chief Gatto said that 75% of the budget year is over and the Department has only spent 67.9% of the budget. There is also a decrease in sick time. The department appears to be doing well. He then reviewed the highlights of the report with the Commissioners.

ASSISTANT FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT

a. Operations Report.

Assistant Chief King reviewed the various categories of fire calls as outlined in his reports for February 2019. He noted that the bulk of the calls were for EMS.

FIRE MARSHAL'S REPORT

a. Summary of Activities.

b. Fire Reports.

c. Fire Marshal Fees.

Fire Marshal Sawyer updated the Commissioners on the amount of revenue that the inspections have generated so far this year as indicated in his report.

There are still some multiple family residences that have not been inspected. 23 registered letters have been sent out to the property owners, which is the first step in the legal process to obtain warrants.

In the next few years, there will be an additional 3,000 residential units and over 1 million square feet in retail coming online. Mayor Rilling said that it would be important to have some type of pre-planning in place to handle the new venues. Chief Gatto said that they were already discussing this, but have not completed a plan yet.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT.

Emergency Management Update.

Ms. DeLuca reported that the department was working with the Health Department's volunteer program with training for assisting in the shelter, if needed during a weather event.

There were some fires where assistance from the Fire Victims Fund was used. Referrals and information were also distributed.

Ms. DeLuca spoke about potentially using flood sensors for urban flooding. The sensors display flashing lights when the road section floods.

TRAINING REPORT.

a. Company Training Objectives

- **Familiarization classes for Lucas automatic CPR device.**

Deputy Chief McCallum explained there are three Lucas devices in the City. This device only provides compressions. Two of the devices are in ambulances and one device is on Engine 4. Engine 4 used their device the day after they received it. The firefighters will provide CPR manually until the ambulance arrives.

Mr. Burney joined the meeting at 3:18 p.m.

b. Search and Rescue Training for the new four to one pulley system added to our complement of tools for R.I.T. Company.

c. OSHA required Bloodborne Pathogens training.

Mayor Rilling said that when new equipment is acquired, it would be important to let the Commission see some of the demonstrations because it would give the Commissioners a greater appreciation of what the department has and also a better understanding of what equipment the department needs.

LOCAL 830 REPORT.

Firefighter Ireland said that next month they will have the proceeds from the t-shirt sale totaled. The proceeds will be donated to St. Baldricks.

OLD BUSINESS

a. Fire Station Project Updates

Chief Gatto reviewed the Repairs and Maintenance Report.

- Station 1 - (Broad River) New ceiling tiles, lights and the painting are completed. The Mechanical Engineer has completed the equipment selection and they are ready to start the bidding process. There is also work being done on a renovation for the first floor space.
- Station 2 - (Connecticut Avenue) In good condition. They will be speaking with building management about spring house cleaning.
- Station 3 – (Van Zant Street) The Third Taxing District has given approval to start the floor stabilization project in July. The Third Taxing District will be

paying for the project. The Engineer was requested to drop the floor 7 inches or even with the Overhead door threshold. This will allow an engine to be brought in without concerns of it being too tall.

- Station 4 - (Westport Avenue) The Mechanical Engineer completed the equipment selection and the project is ready for bidding. New energy efficient windows are under consideration along with new LVT flooring.
- Station 5 – (Meadow Street) Discussions are underway about redesigning the crew bathroom and bunkroom to make them more gender neutral. The kitchen will be reconfigured and updated, and a better gym workout area is planned.
- 100 Fairfield - The Young Developers have finished the roofing aspect and are currently working on the steelwork and flashing.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business to discuss at this time.

NEW BUSINESS.

a. Entry Level Exam

Chief Gatto said that they were retiring the hiring list from three years ago. He spoke about IOS(Industrial/Organizational Solutions) Testing company who has previously worked on a program for CT Firefighter Recruitment. Eleven towns participated in this and the cost was \$168 per test taker. IOS is looking to increase the number of participating towns for a test in 2020. This would be a statewide test and the various departments could choose from the compiled list. Norwalk did not participate because they were working on the list.

Mayor Rilling asked if IOS has a validated test that shows no adverse impact. Chief Gatto said that the previous listing included 85% while males. At the last Norwalk test, the department was able to assemble a very diverse pool of candidates. Mr. Burney said that he would interested in hearing the feedback from the towns that participated. Discussion followed.

Chief Gatto said for the record, the last written and oral exam that the NFD gave was \$108,000. Deputy Chief McCallum said that he was a Norwalk resident. He reminded everyone that previously, the Department gave points to the applicants who were residents. The applicants who are residents have a greater level of buy in because this is their community. Mayor Rilling asked how someone would prove residence. Deputy Chief McCallum said that a candidate could provide a tax return with the applicant's name on it. Mr. Burney pointed out that it would be important to determine what the

department's goal was. If the goal was to have Norwalk residents, then using the residency points would be important. However if the goal was to hire the absolute best candidates, then the residency is not as important. Mayor Rilling said that he would like to know what the legal ramifications were. Discussion followed.

Mayor Rilling said that he would like the department to have the best firefighters, which would include Norwalk residents and be diverse. He added that one of the things that needs to be discussed is lateral transfers. Right now, the procedure would require that applicant to take the entry level exam and go back to the Academy. Discussion followed.

Mayor Rilling left the meeting at 3:54 p.m. Commissioner Destruge assumed the Chairmanship.

CORRESPONDENCE

Chief Gatto reviewed the three recent letters of commendation with the Commission. Two were from residents who were assisted by the firefighters in various ways. The third was from Fire Captain Joseph Coppola relating an incident where the team members took the initiative to shovel out a driveway for a young mother who needed to be temporarily relocated due to storm damage. Commissioner Bentley asked if it would be out of order to invite the various firefighters who go above and beyond to the meeting. Chief Gatto said that he would ask the firefighters. Assistant Chief King said he thought that it would be nice to be recognized by the Commissioners.

PERSONNEL

a. Swearing –In and Promotional Ceremony for:

- **Inspector Jesse Granton**
- **Firefighter Madeline Jankowsky**
- **Firefighter Gregory Petriccione**
- **Firefighter John Pomponio III**

The ceremony was held before the meeting began.

b. Update of Hiring Additional Personnel.

Deputy Chief McCallum said that there were five job offers extended and four of the applicants have accepted the offer. The background checks will start shortly. The candidates still need to pass the various physicals and other requirements.

c. Executive Session to Discuss Entry Level Policy.

**** COMMISSIONER BENTLEY MOVED TO TABLE THE EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS ENTRY LEVEL POLICY UNTIL MORE INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ADJOURNMENT

**** COMMISSIONER DESTRUCE MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services