

CITY OF NORWALK
FIRE DEPARTMENT



BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

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

REGULAR MEETING
March 16, 2021

This meeting was conducted by Zoom/Teleconference.

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

STAFF: Fire Chief Gino Gatto; Assistant Chief Al Bassett; Assistant Chief
Edward McCabe; Deputy Fire Marshal A. McDonald; Firefighter
Peter Brown, Local 830; Michelle DeLuca, Emergency
Management; Captain Adam Markowitz

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Rilling called the meeting to order at 3:03 p.m. A quorum was present.

ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES

Regular Meeting – February 16, 2021

**** COMMISSIONER DESTRUGE MOVED THE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 16, 2021.**

**** THE MOTION TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 16, 2021
AS SUBMITTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ACTION ITEMS

There were no action items to consider at this time.

FIRE CHIEF REPORT.

a. Budget Report.

Chief Gatto presented his report and said that there were four months left in the budget cycle. The budget is in line with last year's budget, however, the overtime account reflects the eleven vacancies. He added that Lt. Gorman has announced his pending retirement, which will result in a total of 12 vacancies at the end of the year.

Mayor Rilling asked if there was any possibility of using names off the previous list to fill some of the vacancies. Chief Gatto said that the Commission had extended the previous list for a year and that year has expired. Using the consortium did not work out well. He said that they would be able to send people to the Academy in the spring of 2022. Discussion followed about reviewing the expired list for potential candidates.

**** COMMISSIONER BENTLEY MOVED TO SUSPEND THE RULES TO CONSIDER THE PREVIOUS FIREFIGHTER CANDIDATE LIST.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COMMISSIONER DESTRUGE MOVED TO AUTHORIZE CHIEF GATTO TO REVIEW THE EXPIRED LIST AND IDENTIFY ANY POTENTIAL CANDIDATES THAT COULD BE BROUGHT IN FOR AN INTERVIEW.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Chief Gatto reminded everyone that in December of 2022, they will have 15 retirements. Mayor Rilling said that he did not want to see the Fire Department struggling with under staffing issues.

ASSISTANT FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT OF ADMINISTRATION

**a. ISO – Insurance Services Office
1. Audit Progressing**

Assistant Chief Bassett said that the audit work was still underway.

b. Hydrant Cost Update

The Corporation Counsel's Office contacted the Water Department about a contract. The only feedback is that the Water Departments have no interest in entering into contracts.

c. Communication Upgrade

The project is moving forward, but there are challenges due to the number of different channels. Assistant Chief Bassett said that the Department had planned on upgrading the system for a number of years.

d. Public Safety Cadets

1. Meeting in Person weekly

The meetings have started with a limit of 20 attendees per meeting with the health protocols in place.

Regarding the communications upgrade, Mayor Rilling said that having the police and fire provided with adequate and reliable communication with their base was critical. The new service will give better coverage and expand the coverage area.

ASSISTANT FIRE CHIEF OF OPERATIONS

a. Entry Level Firefighter Test

1. Online Job Posting and Recruitment

Assistant Chief McCabe updated the Commissioner on the recruitment efforts on the web. There have been 650 responses to the interest ad.

2. Coordinating with Community Leaders Regarding In Person Recruitment

There was a meeting with Mr. Daniels and Assistant Chiefs McCabe and Bassett will be featured in Mr. Daniels' broadcast on March 19th.

3. Morris and McDaniel Job Analysis

The first step for completing the written test has been done. The process is moving forward on schedule.

b. Second Generation Firefighter Personal Escape Systems

1. Completion of Training and Issuing of Systems to Station 2 Personnel

The first Phase of the training has been completed and the second phase will start after July 1st.

c. Fire and Police Marine Divisions Meeting

1. Dispatch

2. Emergency Responses

A meeting regarding the upcoming boating season was held with the Fire and Police Marine Divisions. The focus was coordinating the Emergency response system.

d. Meeting with Shift Commanders

- 1. Fire Ground Communications**
- 2. Mayday and Rapid Intervention Team Procedures**

Assistant Chief McCabe getting good feedback from the discussions about lessons learned and those issues are being incorporated into the training manual.

Assistant Chief McCabe reviewed the details of the February calls, including the significant events.

Commissioner Bentley noted that there had been a significant amount of vehicles. Assistant Chief McCabe said that some of the fires involved snow plows.

Mayor Rilling complimented the Marine Unit for their quick response.

Commissioner Destruge said that they had been receiving a comparison of the prior year according to the month. Mayor Rilling said that his administration was reviewing all the staffing for the different departments to insure that the departments had the resources they need.

FIRE MARSHAL'S REPORT

- a. Summary of Activities.**

- b. Fire Reports.**

- c. Fire Marshal Fees.**

Deputy Fire Marshal McDonald presented his report and significant reports. Four of the calls involved vehicles. The number of calls were down, most likely due to the weather.

Mayor Rilling asked how the staffing was in the department. Deputy Fire Marshal McDonald said that one Fire Marshal had retired and a new one has come on.

Mayor Rilling asked about the inspections. Deputy Fire Marshal McDonald said that they had done some major inspections recently, such as the Avalon complex.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT.

- a. Emergency Management Update.**

Ms. DeLuca presented her report. The attorneys approved the agreement with the Red Cross for Emergency Management. They are moving forward with the signatures.

A hurricane exercise may be held in June, with a choice of in person or virtually attendance.

Discussion about the July 4th fireworks and the Seaport event are underway.

Mayor Rilling asked if the Commissioners could be invited to observe the hurricane exercise. Ms. DeLuca made a note of this.

Mayor Rilling asked if they had a percentage of the firefighters who had opted to get the vaccine. Deputy Chief Markowitz said that there was between a 60-70% vaccination rate.

TRAINING'S DIVISION REPORT.

Deputy Chief Markowitz presented his report.

a. Practical Portion of the Ice Rescue Training (see attached picture)

The training drill was held at the former Dolce Center.

b. (6) New Rapid Intervention Packs in Service (see attached picture)

There are four firefighters on duty for rescue of a firefighter. Now all the trucks have the packs on them.

c. Rapid Intervention Team Training with a Firefighter Removal Scenario (see attached picture)

A recent training involved evacuating a firefighter through a second floor window.

d. Communications Training for Shift Commanders/Aides Including Mayday/Evacuations

The Shift Commanders and aides also had the opportunity to train regarding evacuating a firefighter through a second floor window. Over the years, the department has accumulated the specialized type of equipment to safely remove a firefighter via a window. Chief Gatto said that Department has an excellent training center on the mezzanine level.

LOCAL 830 REPORT

1. Golf Outing is going to be on June 7th at Oak Hills Park Golf Course

Firefighter Brown said that Union President Ireland had a conflict in schedule. Firefighter Brown said that they had just received confirmation that the Golf Outing would be held on June 7th at Oak Hills. He invited the Commissioners.

In the fall, there will be a small recognition gathering to honor the recently retired members. The Firefighters Ball in honor of approximately 20 retired members is tentatively scheduled for the fall of 2022.

OLD BUSINESS

Update on Building Repairs.

- **Broad River –Station One** – Work was stopped and Corporation Counsel sent a letter to the bonding company on February 25th.

NEW BUSINESS.

- **Update on Firefighter Entry Level Exam.**

Chief Gatto said April 1st is Autism Awareness Day and the lights will be blue in support of this for the entire month.

CORRESPONDENCE

Two Thank You letters Attached.

Chief Gatto gave a brief overview of the incident on February 7th where an individual fell and was knocked unconscious.

A letter regarding how the firefighters shoveled the driveway during a snowstorm while there was a medical emergency underway so the ambulance could access the residence.

PERSONNEL

a. Drop Pension for FM Broderick Sawyer

Fire Marshal Sawyer is applying to enter the Drop Pension Plan effective July 1, 2021. The documents will be taken to City Hall for the Mayor's signature.

**** COMMISSIONER DESTRUCE MOVED TO APPROVE FIRE MARSHAL SAWYER'S APPLICATION TO ENTER THE DROP PENSION PLAN EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2021.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ADJOURNMENT

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services