

CITY OF NORWALK
FIRE DEPARTMENT



BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

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

FIRE COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
FEBRUARY 20, 2024

This meeting was conducted by Zoom/Teleconference.

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

STAFF: Fire Chief Gino Gatto; Assistant Fire Chief Edward McCabe; Deputy
Fire Chief Joseph Coppola; Assistant Fire Chief Mark Conte; Fire
Marshal Broderick Sawyer; Michele DeLuca, Emergency
Management;
Linda Shields; Tina Fogell, Personnel Director

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Rilling called the meeting to order at 3:03 p.m. A quorum was present. He introduced Rabbi Ita Paskind to those present.

ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES

• **January 16, 2024**

**** COMMISSIONER DESTRUGE MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 16, 2024.**

**** THE MOTION TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF JANUARY 16, 2024 AS SUBMITTED PASSED WITH TWO (2) IN FAVOR (RILLING AND DESTRUGE) AND ONE (1) ABSTENTION (PASKIND).**

ACTION ITEMS

There were no action items to consider at this time.

FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT

a. Budget Report

Chief Gatto offered to give Commissioner Paskind a tour of the Fire Department stations at her convenience.

Chief Gatto then gave a brief overview of the budget breakout. He noted that they have 12 vacancies at the present, but hoped that by the end of the year, the overtime would be absorbed by the salary account. Currently the Department is at 5.5% under budget.

There are three firefighters out on long term injuries since August of 2023 and when they return to work, it will help reduce the overtime budget.

ASSISTANT FIRE CHIEF OF ADMINISTRATION

Assistance Fire Chief Conte greeted Commissioner Paskind and gave a brief overview of the different items in his report.

a. Station Alerting System Upgrade

- 1. Final system testing nearing completion.**
- 2. System cut-over scheduled after all testing is complete.**

b. State Radio System Migration

- 1. System cut-over scheduled to occur in February.**

c. Buildings

1. Station 1: Apparatus Floor

- i. Preliminary assessment of the scope of work to replace the floor is in progress.**

2. Station 3: Apparatus Floor

- i. Design work has begun.**

3. Station 5: Bathroom Renovation

- i. Project nearing completion**

Commissioner Destruge thanked Assistant Fire Chief Conte for the detailed report and managing the construction projects.

ASSISTANT FIRE CHIEF OF OPERATIONS

Assistance Fire Chief McCabe greeted Commissioner Paskind and gave a brief overview of the different items in his report.

- a. Our last three recruits from the 2021 eligibility list reported to the Connecticut Fire Academy on February 12th. Their training will conclude at the end of May.**
- b. The company that ran our 2024 entry-level firefighter test is in the final process of scoring the exams. We plan to have results soon.**
- c. Standard Operating Procedures are being written and updated to coordinate fireground objectives between our two truck companies.**
- d. This month, OSHA issued new mandates pertaining to the fire service titled the OSHA Emergency Response Rule. This is the first such update since 1980 and, therefore, contains numerous regulations that affect many aspects of the fire service. I will be working with the City Risk manager and our OSHA Risk Specialist to make sure the NFD stays ahead of the curve in complying with the new OSHA Rule.**

Assistant Fire Chief McCabe then presented the monthly statistics.

There were 688 incidents in January of 2024, which averages out to 22.2 per day. There were 16 fires and 24 rescues of which 17 were motor vehicle accidents. The Department responded to 405 EMS calls, 40 hazardous conditions, 24 service calls; 105 fire alarms and 51 good intents. There were 43 fewer incidents this January than in January of 2023.

Commissioner Destruge asked to be informed when the new recruits graduate and asked if the Commissioners could join in with the celebrations. Assistant Fire Chief McCabe said that he would inform the Commissioners of the graduation date.

Commissioner Paskind said that she had no idea there were so many calls that the Department responded to and asked what a good intent call was. Assistant Fire Chief McCabe reviewed that type of call with her.

Commissioner Paskind asked about the eligibility list. Assistant Fire Chief McCabe reviewed the testing process with her. He also reviewed the year of probation for the new firefighters and when they are issued City benefits.

FIRE MARSHAL'S REPORT

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

Fire Marshal Sawyer gave an overview of the multi-family residence inspections, and the other types of the inspections that the Office performs, such as Certificate of Occupancy inspections and Liquor store licenses inspections. There are also plan reviews, letters of intent, code issues and fire investigations that are handled by the office.

Fire Marshal Sawyer explained that the Fire Marshal's Office has the right to inspect individual rental units with proper notice and they will be doing this accompanied by the building managers.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

a. Emergency Management Update

Ms. DeLuca said that they have been dealing with the snow storms. She added that the Department will be switching from Code Red notification system to Everbridge, which can notify a variety of devices at one time.

Plans are underway for a tabletop exercise in March and also in June. The tabletop exercise involves bringing various departments together to discuss various crisis scenarios.

Ms. DeLuca then gave a brief overview of her duties and said that there was an Emergency Management team of between 120-130 partners.

She explained that Western Connecticut Council of Governance (WestCog) is a group that is able to get regional grants and also works with the City on the FEMA flood mitigation plan.

TRAINING DIVISION REPORT

Deputy Fire Chief Coppola greeted Commissioner Paskind and gave a brief overview of the different items in his report.

a. Current Activities

- 1. EMS Recertification Class all shifts and platoons through February**
- 2. Engine Company Operator training for new operators (E1 and E2 new members)**
- 3. Utilizing Hatch & Bailey Lumberyard vacant properties for "destructive training"**
- 4. Ladder Company task books being worked on by Captains**
- 5. Preparing members of Station 1 for the arrival of refurbished Truck 1**
- 6. Wellness program/Injury Prevention**
- 7. Readyng the new recruits for the upcoming Recruit Class 73**
- 8. Radio system changeover training currently happening**

b. Completed Activities

- 1. Mandatory OSHA Respirator training with SCBA (25 second drills)**
- 2. SCBA fit testing**
- 3. SCBA limited passage and emergency maneuvers**
- 4. Elevator rescue training ALL SHIFTS/PLATOONS**

c. Upcoming/Scheduled:

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1. Gas detector training internally
2. Officer development workshops (shooting for spring '24)
3. With HHC chosen as our new medical provider, NFPA Compliant Physicals are being planned to begin in March 2024 once EMS recertification is completed.
4. Host CFA Pump Operator certification course scheduled for May 2024 (6-day class)

LOCAL 830 REPORT

There are no items at this time.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no Old Business to consider at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

a. Occupational Bid Award

Chief Gatto said that the City went out for Occupational Bids, and Hartford Health won the bid. This will be presented to the Council soon.

CORRESPONDENCE

a. "Thank You" letter attached

Chief Gatto said that Norwalk Department received a thank you letter from Wilton Fire Chief Blanchfield for Norwalk's assistance at a residence fire on January 23, 2024.

He added that an artist had painted a portrait of a firefighter that died last year.

PERSONNEL

a. Drop Pension for Lt. Efstathios Papadopoulos

Lt. Papadopoulos has applied for his Drop Pension after 29 years. Ms. Fogell then provided a brief overview of the details of Lt. Papadopoulos' Drop Program.

b. Drop Pension for Lt. Michael Pirri

Lt. Pirri has applied for his Drop Pension after 29 years. Ms. Fogell then provided a brief overview of the details of Lt. Pirri's Drop Program.

**** COMMISSIONER DESTRUCE MOVED TO APPROVE THE DROP PENSIONS FOR LT. PAPADOPOULOS AND LT. PIRRI.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

c. Executive Session:

City of Norwalk
Board of Fire Commissioners
Regular Meeting
February 20, 2024

1. Request for Disability Pension

**** MAYOR RILLING MOVED TO ENTER EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS PERSONNEL MATTERS.**

**** COMMISSIONER DESTRUGE SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The Commissioners, Chief Gatto and Ms. Fogell entered into Executive Session at 3:51 p.m. to discuss personnel matters. They returned to public session at 4:03 p.m. No actions or votes were taken during the Executive Session.

**** COMMISSIONER PASKIND MOVED TO APPROVE THE DISABILITY PENSION FOR FIREFIGHTER ANDREW KICK.**

**** COMMISSIONER DESTRUGE SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The Commissioners wish to thank Firefighter Kick for his years of service to the City of Norwalk.

ADJOURNMENT

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 4:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes

Telesco Secretarial Services