CITY OF NORWALK
FIRE DEPARTMENT
REGULAR MEETING
FEBRUARY 18, 2020

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

STAFF: Fire Chief Gino Gatto; Assistant Chief Chris King; Michelle DeLuca, Emergency Management Director; Broderick Sawyer, Fire Marshal; Michael McCallum, Deputy Chief

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Rilling called the meeting to order at 3:02 PM. A quorum was present.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

It was noted that on page 2 under "Operations", first paragraph, second line, the text should read "discussion moved", and on page 3 under "Local 830", it should read "Mr. Ireland updated the commission".

****COMMISSIONER BENTLEY MOVED TO APPROVE THE DECEMBER 17, 2019 MINUTES AS AMENDED**
****MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.**

ACTION ITEMS

There were no action items to consider at this time.

FIRE MARSHAL'S REPORT

Fire Marshal Broderick Sawyer detailed his January 2020 Report. He said that he collected more fees this year than last year. Mr. Sawyer left the meeting earlier to attend to department related business.

FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT

Fire Chief Gatto said they are now 7 months into the budget season. He said they are under budget in both the salary expense and operating expense accounts. He said that, provided there are no catastrophic illnesses, they should be where they were last year.

Fire Chief Gatto said that they were scheduling meetings to discuss the new budget.

ASSISTANT CHIEF'S REPORT

Assistant Chief Chris King said that there were fewer calls made this year versus last year, reporting 616 calls in 2019, and 552 calls in 2020. He reviewed the "Calls for the month", as well as his report on "Notable Incidents" in January 2020. Mayor Rilling remarked that, though fewer, the types of calls (including a school fire, a suspicious fire in a vacant house, a utility vault fire, and magnesium explosions in a car fire) seemed more serious than in the past.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Ms. DeLuca said that she met with Lamond Daniels, Chief of Community Services. They are going to do a program on March 3 for the nonprofits in the City and some of the surrounding partners to help them focus on their continuity plan, figure out how to be involved in the City Response, and to figure out how they can help their clients. She said if these organizations go out of business, then their client base gets redirected to the City's other departments. She said that keeping these nonprofits in business is beneficial for everybody.

Ms. DeLuca discussed the special event permit process in the works. She said they are asking the current permittees to submit a crisis plan for events like the Oyster Festival, Nice Festival, and the fireworks (which may involve a larger action plan). She said that, with regards to events with more than 1,000 people in attendance, the plan focuses on who to call in an emergency, and the location of emergency numbers. She said that the bigger events meet with Fire, Police, and Public Works departments to review the plan in writing,

Ms. DeLuca said they discussed a Continuity of Government template for all the departments. It would help them identify what their mission is, essential personnel, what they would do if they had to relocate from City Hall, and then pull it all together in one continuity plan. She said that they need to create these plans for themselves and has offered them worksheets from a California-based program for them to fill out.

Ms. DeLuca discussed their plans for the summer. She said that they had a program 2 years ago that distributed 1,100 safety water bottles with tips to the elderly population. Commissioner

Destruge asked if the tips were written in multiple languages. Ms. DeLuca confirmed that the tips were written in English and Spanish, but not Creole. She said there was a link provided on the water bottles for a translation of safety tips in many languages online.

TRAINING REPORT

Deputy Chief McCallum said that last month they started the Search and Rescue Training with their PackTrack locator system. This is new equipment used to locate a downed firefighter. They are drilling with it and entering it into the cache of tools that they carry on the apparatus.

Deputy Chief McCallum spoke with regards to EMR and EMT Training. He said that 1/4 to 1/3 of the department is due for a recertification, which will be held in house in the EOC training room. Mayor Rilling asked if the Fire Department partners with the Police Department for these recertifications. Deputy Chief McCallum said that they have extended an open offer between the two departments. He also said that they are always reviewing an action plan for carbon monoxide.

Deputy Chief McCallum gave an update on the SoNo Collection. He said they are regularly updating the standard operating procedures because they are constantly opening new stores. Mayor Rilling asked if there were any issues with the radios in the mall. Assistant Chief King explained that they currently use a special amplifier, which covers 90-98% of the building.

Deputy Chief McCallum reviewed the details of the recent recruitment drive. He said that posters were posted around town, emails and mailings were sent out, and sign ups closed last Wednesday.

LOCAL 830

There was nothing to report at this time.

OLD BUSINESS

Fire Chief Gatto gave an update on the Regional Entry Exams. He said that there were 863 applications for the 16 departments represented in the consortium. 26. It was reported that 38 females applied overall. It was also reported that there were 58 applications from Norwalk, which was the highest number of applications from one municipality.

Mayor Rilling asked about the new recruits. Fire Chief Gatto said they are good. Their written exam is scheduled to start at 9:00 am on March 14 at Norwalk High School. Deputy Chief McCallum said the exam will be proctored. Mayor Rilling and Fire Chief Gatto discussed and confirmed that the new recruits figure out where they will apply to when they take the test. Once the recruits are hired, they cannot move somewhere else. Mayor Rilling said that the CT Municipal Academy says they cannot go to another department within 2 years; however, if they challenge that, the new department has to pay the money for academy training back to the original department in which they were hired.

BUILDING REPAIRS

Fire Chief Gatto said that, since last meeting, the roof work has been done. There are some leaks now and they will be repairing damaged and stained ceiling tiles. He said that there is some heating and electrical work to be done. Mayor Rilling said that they posted a bond. Fire Chief Gatto said that they didn't finish paying that yet. Mayor Rilling suggested checking in with the law department.

Fire Chief Gatto said they went out to bid in early January for Station 1, and the bid opened on February 19 with a $240,000 budget. Mayor Rilling said that he always questioned the bid amount. Fire Chief Gatto said that construction will take place while they live there and they are looking for a spring start. They will be redoing 2 offices and the kitchen. They are discussing setting up trailers for showers and toilets and temp kitchen.

Fire Chief Gatto said that Station 3 has been taken care of. They are working on the replacement of the floor and are getting prices for that. He said that Jim Hines, in a conversation with the 3rd taxing district, is open to paying for it down the road.

Fire Chief Gatto said that the floor was painted and the kitchen is in the process of being upgraded at Station 5. Energy efficient LED lights were installed at a cost less than $3,000 because of a $2,700 rebate from the contractor.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business to report at this time.

CORRESPONDENCE

Discussion took place on a letter regarding Firefighter Rodriguez from Lt. Sussman.

Commissioner Destruge asked if there was a bonus for bilingual firefighters. Mayor Rilling said that they receive $600 additional for the year. Commissioner Destruge said that Firefighter Rodriguez is identified as multilingual. He said that this could have an effect on admissible evidence if a bilingual speaker were not present on the scene. Mayor Rilling said they also use the Language Line as a resource. Discussion took place.

Mayor Rilling congratulated Firefighter Rodriguez and Fire Marshal Sawyer.

MISCELLANEOUS

On March 4 at 3:00 PM, there will be a swearing in ceremony for new recruits. 2 fire inspectors will be promoted. There was an incident on August 19 when a ceiling collapsed on a firefighter and he was knocked unconscious. 4 firefighters will be honored for their assistance with that incident with a meritorious service bar.

The St. Patrick's Day parade will take place on March 14. The Fire Department is welcome to march.

ADJOURNMENT

****COMMISSIONER DESTRUGE MOVED TO ADJOURN MEETING AT 3:49 PM**
****MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.**

Respectfully submitted,

E.A.Sheils
Telesco Secretarial Services