

CITY OF NORWALK
FIRE DEPARTMENT



BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

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

REGULAR MEETING
February 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; Deputy Chief Al Bassett; Captain Edward
McCabe; Firefighter William Ireland, Local 830; Michelle
DeLuca, Emergency Management; Captain Adam Markowitz

CALL TO ORDER

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

ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES

Regular Meeting – January 19, 2021

**** COMMISSIONER DESTRUGE MOVED THE MINUTES OF JANUARY 19, 2021.**

The following corrections were noted:

Page 1 and following: please change the date of January 20th in the header and footer to January 19th on both the header and footer.

Page 1, under **STAFF**: please remove Assistant Chief McCallum and add Captain Markowitz.

**** THE MOTION TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 19, 2021 MEETING AS CORRECTED 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. He said that compared to February 2019 budget, the figures are slightly better this year. Commissioner Destruge complimented Chief Gatto for being on budget despite the COVID challenges. Chief Gatto said that last year, none of the firefighters took vacations, but they had to by the end of the calendar year.

ASSISTANT FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT OF ADMINISTRATION

a. Assistance to Firefighters Grants

Deputy Chief Bassett reported that he had submitted the application by February 12th. They are trying to replace some of the physical fitness equipment which is over 10 years old.

Another grant application is being processed.

b. ISO Audit.

Deputy Chief Bassett said that they are working with the water companies to get their flow test data.

Mayor Rilling asked about the hydrants. Deputy Chief Bassett said that he had checked with the water companies and the companies replace about 20 hydrants a year. They do not charge the City based on the amount of water they use. The First District does have a set percentage for increases. The Second District does not have a firm percentage. He reviewed the details and said that once they have more complete data, they can speak with Corporation Counsel about create a contract. Discussion followed.

ASSISTANT FIRE CHIEF OF OPERATIONS

a. Ongoing Updating and Revision of Standard Operating Procedures

a. Rapid Intervention Team

b. Mayday Procedure and Training

c. Emergency Response to Highways

b. Maintenance and Replacement of Firefighter Personal Protective Equipment

a. Turnout Gear/Helmets

b. Personal Escape Systems

c. Development of a Standardized Training Procedure and Tactics for the Department's Ladder Trucks

Captain McCabe said that they were reviewing their training and Operating Procedures. The new ladder truck is expected at the end of the year.

Captain McCabe then reviewed the various calls that were logged and the significant calls with the Commissioners as outlined in the reports.

Mayor Rilling asked if they knew what caused the fire in the City Carting truck. Captain McCabe said that they believed it was something that was smoldering in the load. DPW came with a front end loader to clean up the debris and City Carting had a supervisor on site. Booms were used to prevent the debris from entering into the storm water drains. A street sweeper was also dispatched to finish cleaning the street.

FIRE MARSHAL'S REPORT

a. Summary of Activities.

b. Fire Reports.

c. Fire Marshal Fees.

The Deputy Fire Marshal presented the materials included in the report.

Mayor Rilling asked how the inspections for the liquor stores were done. The Deputy Fire Marshal reviewed the protocol with him. Discussion followed.

More inspection notifications are being sent out now that the quarantine restrictions are being loosened.

Commissioner Destruge asked if the backlogged inspections had been cleared. He was told that due to the State's restriction on inspections, they are a bit behind, but catching up.

A new Fire Inspector will be starting classes in the coming days.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT.

Emergency Management Update.

Ms. DeLuca presented her report.

Eversource has a new municipal status reporting hub and the Department should be able to identify problem areas during events. This should cover location identification, repairs and estimates for restoration of power. Damage assessment is also being addressed.

Work on the City Building Guide is underway and employees have received training on lockdown and evacuation procedures.

There has been discussions about an automated weather alert system which has an opt in function. This would be an additional \$3,000 plus modules for the Code Red system.

Mayor Rilling asked if it would be available in multiple languages. Ms. DeLuca said that right now, it is only available in English. Mayor Rilling said that Norwalk should wait because they would be interested in Spanish and Haitian Creole in the future.

TRAINING'S DIVISION REPORT.

Captain Markowitz presented his report.

a. EMS Recertification Classes Completed

b. 2nd round of COVID-19 Vaccinations

c. Ice Rescue Training

d. Rapid Intervention Team Training

Captain Markowitz said that they found that the about half of the firefighters who received the second vaccine dose reported fevers and other flu like side effects.

Stamford had a recent ice rescue and Norwalk is planning an ice rescue training event.

They are also working on training for rescuing a trapped firefighter. When there is a structure fire, one of the vehicles is there solely for rescuing a firefighter should it become necessary.

Mayor Rilling asked for the details about the ice rescue training. Captain Markowitz explained where the training would take place over the next few weeks.

Mayor Rilling asked how many firefighters opted for the vaccination. Captain Markowitz reviewed the figures with him.

LOCAL 830 REPORT

There were no items to discuss. The unions are working with the new Assistant Chiefs and encouraging the firefighters to get the vaccine.

Mayor Rilling said that the City had administered about 2,600 vaccines without any major reactions.

OLD BUSINESS

Update on Building Repairs.

- **Broad River – Station 1** – The project has come to a halt and the Legal Department is now involved. Chief Gatto gave a brief overview of the problems involved with the quality of the work and code violations. The work will remain on hold until the legal issues are resolved.

NEW BUSINESS.

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

Chief Gatto said that the process for Morris and McDaniel is starting. The recruiting efforts will be done through a Firefighter Internet app. There is a \$25.00 application fee for all candidates. The company performs the initial applicant sorting. Mr. Burney is in favor of using the app. Captain McCabe said that the Police Department has used the Police version of the app and the Police Department was pleased with the results. The Police Department also uses a grass roots effort to reach out to the local residents. Mayor Rilling said that he would like to insure that the local community is made aware of the upcoming exam. Chief Gatto said that the company is willing to have an online video about becoming a Norwalk Firefighter. It will not cost the City anything to use the program.

Commissioner Destruge said that he would like to make sure there was a hardship waiver available for the fees.

**** COMMISSIONER BENTLEY MOVED TO PROCEED WITH USING THE FIREFIGHTER APP. AS PROVIDED BY MORRIS AND MCDANIEL.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

CORRESPONDENCE

There is no correspondence to consider at this time.

PERSONNEL

a. In Executive Session:

- **Request for Disability Pensions.**
- **Finalize AC appointments.**

**** COMMISSIONER DESTRUGE MOVED TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS DISABILITY PENSIONS.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The Commissioners, Chief Gatto and Firefighter Ireland entered into Executive Session at 3:51 p.m. They returned to Public Session at 4:16 p.m. No motions were made or actions taken during Executive Session.

**** COMMISSIONER BENTLEY MOVED TO APPROVE FIREFIGHTER ANTHONY BRUNO'S REQUEST FOR A DISABILITY PENSION. RETROACTIVE TO JAN. 31, 2021.**
**** COMMISSIONER DESTRUGE SECONDED.**

The Commissioners thanked him for his service to the Department and the citizens of Norwalk and wished him well.

**** COMMISSIONER DESTRUGE MOVED TO PROMOTE DEPUTY CHIEF AL BASSETT AND CAPT. EDWARD MCCABE TO THE POSITIONS OF ASSISTANT CHIEF, EFFECTIVE JAN. 04, 2021.**
**** COMMISSIONER BENTLEY SECONDED.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The Commissioners congratulated both men.

The following list of personnel were read for promotions:

Captain Adam Markowitz promoted to Deputy Chief of Training

Lt. Brian Theis promoted to Captain

Lt. Robert Juda promoted to Captain

Lt. Bruce Sanford promoted to Captain

FF James Lyons promoted to Lieutenant

FF Corey Gilchrist promoted to Lieutenant

FF Anthony O'Marra promoted to Lieutenant

FF Edgar Lopez promoted to Fire Inspector

**** COMMISSIONER DESTRUGE MOVED TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING PROMOTIONS EFFECTIVE JAN. 04, 2021:**

CAPTAIN ADAM MARKOWITZ PROMOTED TO DEPUTY CHIEF OF TRAINING

LIEUTENANT BRIAN THEIS PROMOTED TO CAPTAIN

LIEUTENANT ROBERT JUDA PROMOTED TO CAPTAIN

LIEUTENANT BRUCE SANFORD PROMOTED TO CAPTAIN

FIREFIGHTER JAMES LYONS PROMOTED TO LIEUTENANT

FIREFIGHTER COREY GILCHRIST PROMOTED TO LIEUTENANT

FIREFIGHTER ANTHONY O'MARRA PROMOTED TO LIEUTENANT

FIREFIGHTER EDGAR LOPEZ PROMOTED TO FIRE INSPECTOR

**** COMMISSIONER BENTLEY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ADJOURNMENT

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services