

CITY OF NORWALK
FIRE DEPARTMENT



BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

MAYOR HARRY W. RILLING
COMMISSIONER/PASTOR OSCAR DESTRUGE

FIRE COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
JANUARY 16, 2024

This meeting was conducted by Zoom/Teleconference.

ATTENDANCE: Mayor Harry Rilling, Chair; Commissioner Oscar Destruge

STAFF: Fire Chief Gino Gatto; Deputy Chief Joseph Coppola, Fire Chief Mark Conte, Assistant Chief Edward McCabe; Assistant Fire Marshal Kirk McDonald; Michele DeLuca, Emergency Management; Linda Shields

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Rilling called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m. A quorum was present.

ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES

• December 19, 2023

**** COMMISSIONER DESTRUGE MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 19, 2023 MEETING.**

Page 3, under **Summary of Activities**, paragraph 2, line 2: please change the following from:

“Assistant Fire Marshal McCabe described the process”

To: “Assistant Fire Marshal McDonald described the process”

**** THE MOTION TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES AS CORRECTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ACTION ITEMS

There are no items to consider at this time.

FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT

Budget Report

Chief Gatto said that they were half way into the budget year. He had some concerns about two different items, which he reviewed with the Commissioners. The overtime account will be monitored. He also noted that there had been price increases on parts for repairs. This account will also be monitored closely.

ASSISTANT FIRE CHIEF OF ADMINISTRATION

Assistant Fire Chief Conte presented his report to the Commissioners.

- a. **Station Alerting System Upgrade**
 - 1. **Final system training to be scheduled with Purvis.**
 - 2. **System cut-over scheduled to occur in February.**
- b. **State Radio System Migration**
 - 1. **Final system training to be scheduled with Norcom.**
 - 2. **System cut-over scheduled to occur in February.**
- c. **Buildings**
 - 1. **Station 3: Apparatus Floor**
 - i. **Design work to begin upon contract execution.**
 - 2. **Station 5: Bathroom Renovation**
 - i. **Project nearing completion.**

Assistant Fire Chief Conte noted that the contract for the apparatus floor was returned earlier in the day.

Commissioner Destruge suggested that once the new Commissioner comes on board, the Commissioners should visit each one of the stations. Mayor Rilling said that the Fire Commission and the Police Commission had both been increased from three members to five members.

ASSISTANT FIRE CHIEF OF OPERATIONS

Assistant Chief McCabe presented his report.

- a. **We have placed an order with Pierce Manufacturing for a new rescue truck to replace the 1993 Marion rescue. The 2009 Marion will move to reserve status when the new truck arrives. Unfortunately, the apparatus industry is currently quoting 46-month delivery times. Longer delivery times stretch the Apparatus Maintenance Division to keep older trucks safe and serviceable.**
- b. **To augment the rescue company, a new tactical rescue truck has been designed, which will function as a scene support apparatus. The conventional Freightliner chassis will carry, among other equipment, an air compressor and cascade system, which will allow SCBA air bottles to be refilled at fire scenes.**

- c. **On January 13th and 14th, our entry-level firefighter exam was held at Brien McMahon High School. 890 applicants took the exam. Results will be forthcoming shortly from the testing company.**
- d. **Among numerous other emergencies in December, NFD personnel fought a house fire on Christmas morning on Pine Hill Ave. The occupants of the home escaped unharmed. Two dogs were rescued by firefighters. One of the dogs died later at the emergency vet, but fortunately, the other has since healed. The Fire Marshal's Office is working with the homeowner's insurance agency to determine the final cause of the fire.**

There are three candidates from 2021 list that will be reporting to the Fire Academy in February. The course is 14 weeks long and graduation is anticipated around Memorial Day.

Assistant Chief McCabe then presented the monthly statistics.

There were 718 incidents in December of 2023, which averages out to 24 per day. There were 11 fires, 42 rescues of which 34 were motor vehicle accidents and 2 were pedestrians motor vehicle accidents. The Department responded to 460 EMS calls, 25 hazardous conditions, 30 service calls; 105 fire alarms and 44 good intents. There were 119 incidents more than last year.

FIRE MARSHAL'S REPORT

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

Assistant Fire Marshal McDonald presented his report. Statistically, there was a slight decrease in the numbers which is most likely due to the holiday staffing. Also, one of the part time inspectors resigned last month. Inspection numbers decreased from 203 to 183 and notifications dropped from 27 to 19. There was only one public education event in December. The Plan reviews increased slightly and the liquor licenses remained basically the same. There were fewer fire investigations and code hazards than the previous month.

Assistant Fire Marshal McDonald said that Deputy Inspector Burroughs was the primary investigator for the Christmas fire. The area of origin appears to have been a sauna located in the basement.

Commissioner Destruge said that the number of fires had decreased. Assistant Fire Marshal McDonald agreed and said that it was clear that the inspections were helping reduce the number of actual fires.

Mayor Rilling asked about the part time Fire Inspector

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

- a. **Emergency Management Update**

Ms. DeLuca presented her report. There has been a string of weather incidents including rain, flooding and snow recently. Social media has helped with all the cross postings. There was some very significant flooding on Water Street and in Veterans Park.

Ms. DeLuca said that the Community Services has been working a response both regionally and locally for mass migration planning. Many Social Service agencies have been discussing this and also working with the Emergency Management and Homeland Security on the State level. There was a large meeting held recently and there will be some follow up both locally and regionally to discuss the reality of the State's plan.

Ms. DeLuca said that she was working on catching up with the Emergency Performance Grants. All the recent documents that the Mayor signed have been submitted.

Ms. DeLuca said she had been working with the Tax Collector Customer Service to provide residents with insulated grocery bags along with preparedness tips.

TRAINING DIVISION REPORT

Deputy Chief Coppola presented his report to the Commissioners.

a. Current Activities

- 1. EMS Recertification Class all shifts and platoons (**intensive on the training schedule)**
- 2. Entry Level FF Written and Oral Examination (1/13 & 1/14/24 @ BMHS)**
- 3. Utilizing Hatch & Bailey Lumberyard vacant properties for both ladder companies to train together**
- 4. Ladder Company task books being worked on by Captains**
- 5. "Q" Licensing & pump operations training for new drivers – ongoing**
- 6. Preparing members of Station 1 for the arrival of refurbished Truck 1**
- 7. Wellness program/Injury Prevention**
- 8. Readyng the new recruits for the upcoming Recruit Class 73**

b. Completed Activities

- 1. Forcible Entry and Door Breaching Drills with our Police Department partners**
- 2. Fire Behavior/Flow path Training classes – all shifts & platoons**
- 3. Rapid Intervention Team Training**
- 4. Cold water rescue equipment review**
- 5. Marine Operations – charting**
- 6. Rollout of new ballistic gear for Active Assailant incidents**

c. Upcoming/Scheduled:

- 1. Working with Alan Lo to utilize interior of vacant Hatch and Bailey site for training evolutions and exterior for destructive training evolutions (forcing doors and roof cutting)**
- 2. Next round of Department NFPA Compliant Physicals in process for Early March 2024**
- 3. DFM exam scheduled for 1/25/24 and 1/26/24**
- 4. Host CFA Pump Operator certification course scheduled for May 2024 (6-day class)**
- 5. Recruit Class 73 at the CFA for 3 new hires**

Mayor Riling asked if there was any progress on selling the boat. Chief Gatto said that there were two inquiries and one of the parties has since withdrawn. The remaining inquiry is from an out of state volunteer company.

Mayor Riling asked how they were doing with staffing with three new recruits. Chief Gatto said that there were 12 vacancies and 6 firefighters out on long term injuries since August of 2023. The three new recruits will bring the staffing vacancies to 9 slots. These may be filled once the testing results have been released.

LOCAL 830 REPORT

There are no items to consider at this time.

OLD BUSINESS

Update on a New Entry Level Exam

This was discussed earlier in meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Chief Gatto thanked Norwalk Public Schools for the use of Brien McMahon for the test. Deputy Chief Coppola said that having as many test candidates taking the test speaks well of the Department. Mayor Riling said that he has also heard the same type of comments from others at regional Fire Department events.

CORRESPONDENCE

• Resignation Letter

Chief Gatto explained that the part time Fire Marshal had been promoted in his home company to a full time position.

PERSONNEL

There are no items to consider at this time.

ADJOURNMENT

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 3:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

City of Norwalk
Board of Fire Commissioners
Regular Meeting
January 16, 2024