



TOWN OF NEWINGTON

1485 Main Street Newington, Connecticut 06111

Board of Fire Commissioners



Brian Whalen
Frank L. DeMaio
Kent E. Stoddard Jr
Fire Commissioners

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September 14, 2023

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS MEETING Minutes

Call to Order - The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Chairman Whalen. Meeting began with Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence.

- II. **Attendance** – Chairman Brian Whalen, Commissioners Frank DeMaio and Kent Stoddard, Chief Jeff Trommer, Deputy Chief Regina, Council Liaison Mitch Page, Council Liaison Tim Make.
- III. **Approval of Minutes** – Commissioner DeMaio made a motion to approve the August 17, 2023 minutes, Commissioner Stoddard seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.
- IV. **Public Participation** – Chief Trommer – Welcomed Town Manager Hutka to the meeting.
Chief Trommer Sr. - Addressed Town Manager Hutka stating that we have the best fire department in the state and is proud to part of the department for over 40 years.
- V. **Communications**- Commissioner DeMaio went over the monthly reports for August. The training report came off of the Red NMX system for the first time. This report should help our ISO rating. We are working to bring the rating to a class 2 rating. If this happens, we will be the only department in the state with a class 2 rating.
Promotions – Cassidy McNamara has been promoted to Training Coordinator and Nick Giansanti has been promoted to 2nd Lieutenant.
- VI. **Ledger Status** – Commissioner Stoddard went over the ledger status. Appears to be in good order. Part time salary line is low because of waiting on reimbursement for fire watch. Fire watch continues to go well and will go into October. Motion made by Commissioner Stoddard to accept the ledger status, seconded by Commissioner DeMaio, Motion passed unanimously.
- VII. **Old Business** –
 - Radio System Update- Chief Trommer, moving in a positive direction. Had a meeting with the State on the Callahan site, the state is interested in putting a tower up there. Still on target, January 1st or later to get system up and running. Town Manager commented that he has been getting involved in the project working to make sure the

system is properly implemented, he is not satisfied with progress in the past. He is working hard to keep the project moving forward. Equipment continues to come in but still behind on mobile devices. Console has come in.

- Grant Update – Chief Lapierre, building permit has been dropped off to the Town Hall for the sign. Estimate for the electrical work for sign has been received. Brick samples received. Construction to start soon. Met with Sonya on the Hero's grant. Will go with boots and helmets which is a line item in the budget. If received state will match 50%. Will use AFG grant to apply for a 2nd set of gear for every firefighter. This will meet the potential new state guidelines. Still waiting on drone grant from Sam Club/Walmart.
- Space Needs –On hold with the Town. Will table for now.
- Tablets and Alpine Software – Chief Regina, system is functional. Overall core system working well. Everyone using the fingerprint recognition. Having a little issue with new upgrade. Overall, very happy we went with the system.
- Autism Fund Raising – Events continue. Thomaston parade on Saturday, a lot lined up for the next few months.

VIII. New Business –

- Modification of Rules and Regulations – Deputy Chief position open. Going through the process to modify the current Rules and Regulations. Commissioner Stoddard agrees with the changes that are proposed to be made. Feels it opens it up to more candidates. Commissioner DeMaio is in full agreement of the changes. Commission has no individuals in mind for the position while making these changes.

Commissioner DeMaio made a motion to post the proposed changes for thirty days in all firehouses as written in the Rules and Regulations and then hold a special meeting to adopt changes. A copy of the proposed changes is attached. Commissioner Stoddard Seconded the motion. Motion passed annomously. Looking to the 1st of the year for position to be filled allowing 60 to 90 days to study for exam after position is posted.

- Chief Trommer spoke about how Lt. Muir and Lt. Castro have been stepping up and doing a fantastic job to help out the division while waiting to fill deputy chief position.

- Future Planning for New Apparatus – Engine 2 is slated for 2025 for delivery. Ariel deliveries are taking 40 to 45 months, 37 to 40 months for rescues and engines. There is no price increase if paperwork is signed today. There is talk about putting an actual percent increase into contract. Need to start building trucks sooner to get them done on time and possibly sign contract to avoid price increases. Need to work with Finance and the Town Council to look into this.
- Future Staffing for Department – Currently 98 members in department, looking to be over 100 members in the next few months. 15 to 20 cadets in program. With the amount of time put into the Chief's position start looking at a possible full time/paid position.

IX, Public Participation

John Montano – Does not agree with changes in the Deputy Chief position. People that were eligible last time are not eligible this time because of having to have been a Captain. Why can't a Lt. who has not had the opportunity to become a Captain because of no Captain movement apply for position? Questioned the change in not having to have Fire Officer One to apply.

Chief Lapierre – The State is trying to pass legislation that we have to have all gear that has gone into a fire transported back to the fire house in a different vehicle. If it passes, we will have 90 days to comply. This is a huge deal for cleaning and space needs. We do mandate that all gear must be washed with in 15 days of the fire. This will be mandated without any state funding. Second part of this is that they do not want any gear stored in apparatus bays, we would need a new room to store gear. Tons of stuff in bill that makes no sense. Based on bill would need a second set of gear for 100 firefighters, approximately \$500,000. Big concern over washing gear so often, will gear wear down faster, as we have a 10 year replacement program. Sunshine Laundry has given us a quote to wash gear, we would still need to dry. He has machinery to wash large quantities of gear.

Chief Regina - Last Sunday participated in Shepherd's Men walk, which is a walk supporting veteran's suicide. We were invited by Iwo Jima to participate. Four of our members participated, Bob Regina, Geoff Anderson, Dan Durity and Mya Lungu. It was an honor to participate and would like to train for the longer walk next year that ends at Ground Zero.

X. Commissioners Remarks - Commissioner Stoddard, amazed at how much is going on in the department. Want to point out that our officers were just trained in sexual harassment prevention. CIRMA presented the session. There will be three more sessions for anyone that did not attend.

Commissioner DeMaio –Impressed with what the department does on a daily basis. Able to spend a lot of time hearing the calls on the radio and is impressed with what is accomplished on a daily basis. Congratulations to Cassidy and Nick on their promotions.

Chairman Whalen – Getting a lot more calls on a daily basis. Department is very busy. Getting calls on a lot of interesting types of calls we never got called on before. Thank you to everyone and as always said, we are a family.

XI. Adjournment – Motion to adjourn by Commissioner DeMaio, seconded by Commissioner Stoddard. Meeting adjourned at 8:01. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted by: Sherri Leghorn, Fire Department Secretary



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CURRENT LANGUAGE

It is noted that changes to the Department Rules and Regulations may be made by the Board of Fire Commissioners without going to the Rules and Regulations Committee. In that case, modifications/changes must be posted for at least 30 days at each firehouse for member review and at next Board of Fire Commission meeting, members have the opportunity to provide feedback. Should no feedback be received or further modification/changes need to be made (either in person or in writing) the Commission may vote for acceptance. If further changes need to be made, the posting of changes at the firehouses starts again for another 30 days.

Eligibility

To be a candidate for the position of Chief Officer, a member must satisfy the following criteria:

- Be a member in good standing.
- Have ten (10) years of service
- Be certified Fire Officer 1
- Serve one (1) full term as Company Captain

The Process

For Chief Officer:

- Written test to Fire Officer I level
- Oral Board (see definition for oral board process under Company Officer)
- Board of Fire Commissioner Interview

PROPOSED CHANGES

To be a candidate for the position of **Deputy Chief**, a member must satisfy the following criteria:

The Process

For **Deputy Chief**:

Must be Fire Officer 1 certified **or must obtain certification within a reasonable time frame.**

Must have served as a **Company Line Captain.**

ADDITIONS

The Fire Commission reserves the right to pick from the top three candidates.