

TOWN OF NORTH BRANFORD

Board of Fire Commissioners

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING, COMPANY #2

SEPTEMBER 7, 2023

CALL TO ORDER/SALUTE TO THE FLAG: Chairman Prunier called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. with the pledge of allegiance to the flag. He then requested a moment of silence for North Haven firefighter Anthony DeSimone who recently passed. He also requested a silent prayer of well wishes for Nicole Ferrucci.

ROLL CALL: Chairman Ed Prunier, Vice-Chairman Joseph Civitello and Commissioners Laura Burich, Ron Onofrio and Neill Salamack. **OTHERS:** Officers: Interim Fire Chief Anthony Esposito, Deputy Chief Mark Amatrudo, Deputy Fire Marshal John O'Brien, Captains James Buda, Jake Conway, Artie Hausman and Corey Roberts.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None.

READING OF PREVIOUS MINUTES: Vice-Chairman Civitello made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Salamack, to approve the Minutes from the June 1, 2023 meeting. On roll call vote, all in favor. Commissioner Burich made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Salamack, to approve the Minutes from the June 20th Special Meeting. On roll call vote, all in favor. Vice-Chairman Civitello made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Salamack, to approve the Minutes from the Special Meeting of July 6th. On roll call vote, all in favor. Commissioner Salamack made a motion, seconded by Vice-Chairman Civitello, to approve the Minutes from the Special Meeting of August 7th. On roll call vote, all in favor. Commissioner Onofrio made a motion, seconded by Vice-Chairman Civitello, to approve the Minutes from the Special Meeting of August 14th. On roll call vote, three in favor and two abstentions from Commissioners Burich and Salamack due to their absence from that meeting.

NOTICES AND COMMUNICATIONS: A letter was received from Cyndie Baker at St. Ambrose Parish inviting all members in public safety in the community to a Blue Mass on September 29th at 5:30 p.m. at St. Monica. All are encouraged to attend, in uniform, with their families. After Mass, there will be a fried dough reception. A thank you note was received from Kerry Haynes at Park & Rec for the appearance of the fire truck "sprinkler" at the summer camp.

DEPARTMENTAL OFFICERS' REPORTS: Reports were received and distributed from Interim Fire Chief Anthony Esposito and Deputy Chiefs Mark Amatrudo and Robert Colangelo. The Fire Marshal's report for August will be mailed. Interim Chief Esposito noted that the Closer to Free event that raises money for cancer research will occur on Saturday and will proceed through town and an ambulance will be stationed at the Town Hall during the event. Deputy Chief Amatrudo distributed photos of the partially completed Tower truck and he expects that a trip to Florida to check it out will be at the end of October.

COMMISSION COMMITTEE REPORTS: Pension: Commissioner Salamack reported that the pension was in good standing at the last Pension meeting held on August 9th. Communications: Regarding the tower in Northford, Verizon will be installed prior to the fire department installation

on the tower. Future Planning & Projection: A Blueprint Committee has been established to determine the overall long-term strategy mapping out town buildings. Interim Chief Esposito suggested that the Board might like to attend one of their meetings.

REPORT FROM CHIEF: Interim Chief Esposito informed the Board about the many town functions that the department members participate in and it is greatly appreciated. There was a First Responder night at the Hartford Yardgoats game which Norcom distributed about 80 tickets and t-shirts in appreciation. The drone policy was discussed. Interim Chief Esposito will email copies of it to the Board. Chairman Prunier stated that he did not want the drone to be flown in hazardous conditions without a police officer in attendance. He did not want any of the members who might be flying the drone to be in jeopardy and the police officer must stay with the drone operator until the area is secured. The new trex bench will be delivered to Company #1. He distributed the maintenance costs for the apparatus. The total calls for the individual Companies were discussed and there is a discrepancy between the Nexgen calculations and the department's numbers. He asked if the Board would approve of him revisiting the previous year's calls for a Company #1 member who didn't have enough points. There was a discussion about how far back this could be done and where the cutoff would be. The Board agreed to have Interim Chief Esposito look into the matter. He discussed having sensory kits available in each station and it was suggested that he check with Yale to see if they are interested in the project. The bid was awarded to Northeast Fire Rescue and a 60 day notification must be made to Vintech prior to termination. There is an increase of \$203,000 from the cost of Vintech to Northeast Fire Rescue. He distributed a proposed ordinance titled "Air Pollution Control" and asked that the Board review it and possibly discuss it at the next meeting. There was a discussion about getting bids for a new roof on the ambulance building. The wrap for the ambulance was discussed and he will get more information on costs.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: none.

NEW BUSINESS: a. Discussion re: Mandatory Retirement Age: The mandatory retirement age is 70 for the department. Deputy Chief Amatrudo researched this issue statewide and presented his findings. Out of 169 towns, 35 towns responded and 86% of those responding had no mandatory retirement age, 11% had a mandatory retirement age of 70 and 3% had a mandatory retirement age of 65. Most of the responses for the no mandatory retirement age required physicals for their senior members (usually 60 to 65 years old range). It was noted that 43% of our department is over 50 years old. Deputy Chief Amatrudo suggested that physicals be required for older members. There was a discussion about occupational health doctors at Hartford Hospital as a possible choice for physicals. Vice-Chairman Civitello made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Onofrio, to table the discussion on retirement age until more information is available. On roll call vote, all in favor.

b. 2022-2023 Repair Cost Analysis and other Fiscal Year Statistics: Interim Chief Esposito distributed information on the repair costs and invited the Board to review it and let him know if there are any questions. The pension statistics will be available at the next meeting.

c. Discussion & Action re: Disposition of Tower 1: It was discussed that the new Tower may arrive in October and then the old Tower should be deemed surplus equipment and then advertised for sale. Vice-Chairman Civitello made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Salamack, to send a letter to the Town Manager to deem the Tower 1 as surplus equipment with a date to be determined. On roll call vote, all in favor.

d. Discussion & Action re: Striping of New Tower 1: Captain Conway proceeded to discuss the striping on the new Tower. As he listed different items to be put on the truck, Chairman Prunier inquired as to why there wasn't a Committee meeting held to discuss these items prior to bringing them to the Board. He stated that he was not necessarily opposed to what was being presented, but felt that it should have been discussed in a Committee meeting first so that there

weren't five different views from the entire Board. The Board agreed that the Committee should discuss this first and then present their findings to the entire Board. Captain Conway said he has spent a lot of time working on this and he became visibly upset. He proceeded to leave the meeting at that point and Deputy Chief Amatrudo apologized for having this item brought up at the full Board meeting and will set up a meeting with the Committee to discuss the new Tower truck. Commissioner Onofrio made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Salamack, to table the discussion of the striping of Tower 1 until after the Committee has met. On roll call vote, all in favor. **e. Update on Physicals:** Commissioner Salamack made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Onofrio, to table the update on physicals until further information is received. On roll call vote, all in favor. **f. Discussion & Action re: Fire Inspector Candidates Selection:** Interim Chief Esposito requested that the Board approve who should be sent to the Fire Inspector training class. He suggested Jake Huston and Dave Prather as candidates. They would be performing code enforcement inspections only, if appointed. Vice-Chairman Civitello made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Salamack, to approve sending Jake Huston and Dave Prather to the Fire Inspector training class. On roll call vote, all in favor.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Captain Roberts inquired about fast tracking a new member into driving the apparatus. It was noted that this member drives for the Guilford Fire Department but because he is on probation as a new member, he can't drive yet. Deputy Chief Amatrudo noted that there are reasons why a new member on probation isn't approved to drive, ie. learn rolling procedures and the district, etc. Captain Roberts asked if his probation could be accelerated. They will discuss this issue with the Interim Chief. Mr. Potter felt that each matter should be decided individually and it is a difficult issue. He also felt that the Town Council has no longevity and that the current members may not realize all the hard work that's gone before on some issues. Interim Chief Esposito requested that a letter be sent to the Town Manager regarding the pension situation. The Board originally asked that the town attorney appoint outside counsel to review the pension plans and the Council agreed. Commissioner Onofrio made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Burich, to send a letter to the Town Manager requesting a status update on the review of the pensions. On roll call vote, all in favor.

WELFARE OF THE COMMISSION: The pension statistics and an update on physicals will be discussed.

ADJOURNMENT: A motion was made by Vice-Chairman Civitello, seconded by Commissioner Salamack, to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 p.m. On roll call vote, all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane B. Whalen

Diane B. Whalen, Board Clerk