

MINUTES

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSION MEETING SEPTEMBER 28, 2021

A meeting of the North Haven Board of Fire Commission was held on Tuesday, September 28, 2021 at 6:00 PM in the community room at Montowese Co2, 282 Quinnipiac Ave, North Haven, CT.

Commissioners Present:

Pasquale Nuzzolillo, Chairman
Mary Jane Mulligan, Secretary
Vincenzo Gallo, Commissioner
Jennie Caldwell, Commissioner
Joseph Cappucci, Commissioner

Staff Present:

Paul Januszewski, Fire Chief

Chairman Nuzzolillo called the meeting to order at 6:10 PM.

Commissioner Mulligan made a motion, with a second motion from Commissioner Cappucci to approve the minutes of the Board of Fire Commission Regular Meeting that was held on July 27, 2021.

VOTE: Nuzzolillo – yes, Mulligan – yes, Cappucci – yes, Caldwell – yes, Gallo - abstained

Chairman Nuzzolillo introduced and welcomed new Commissioner Vincenzo Gallo to the meeting. He is replacing Commissioner Michael Zuccarelli who resigned after 16 years of service to the Board and the Town of North Haven and he thanked him for all his years of service and dedication.

Chief Januszewski discussed his Chief's Report and spoke regarding the following: EMS alarms; EMS billing; current budget; permit fees received and fire marshal office details were discussed. Training within the department was also discussed. He stated that sick and injury would be discussed during executive session. Lastly, he spoke about his Emergency Management role as the Fire Chief and discussed Flood Mitigation meeting with residents regarding Hurricanes and such. He encourages residents and businesses to log onto "CT know your zone" enter your address and see if you would be affected by flooding.

Brief discussion was had amongst the Commissioners regarding the Chief's report. Commissioner Caldwell had questions regarding alerts for hurricanes and budget costs regarding water expense at FD/PPD being overbudget. Lastly, she spoke about pushing Finance to be consistent with crediting the appropriate budget lines when grants are received instead of putting it into the general fund.

Chairman Nuzzolillo asked Secretary Mulligan to read the correspondence within the department – 2 letters were read from First Selectman regarding resignation of Commissioner Zuccarelli and the replacement appointment of Commissioner Vincenzo Gallo onto the Board of Fire Commission with his term ending 11/30/21. No other correspondence was had by the Board of Fire Commission or the department.

Chief Januszewski discussed the unfinished business within the department. He spoke about the progress of the new training center behind Northeast Co4 station and still awaiting a completion date; state of fire apparatus with regard to repairs/issues and the ordering of 2 new engines at the end of July 2021 which will take about 18 months for completion; lastly, he spoke about transmission issue on an Administrative vehicle and being without his vehicle for more than 2 weeks and the need for a back-up vehicle to be able to respond to calls as the Chief's are on call 24 hours a day / 7 days a week.

Brief discussion was had amongst the Commissioners regarding the unfinished business. Chairman Nuzzolillo stated the need for another command vehicle as backup and agreed with Commissioner Caldwell about being credited not debited grant funds. Chief Januszewski then stated they should be using the Fire Department permit fees collected by the Town for the needs of the fire department such as the need for an additional command vehicle instead of putting monies into the general fund.

Chief Januszewski spoke of the new business within the fire department. He spoke about Fire-Police rebranding/Rules & Regulations being updated by the Board of Fire Commission sub-committee of recent with updating and changing some language including FOOSC new structure. The rebranding of Fire-Police will now be FOOSC "Fire Operations Support Command" assisting the Command Post during fire scenes and will still be entitled to all the benefits of VFF's and retirement will all stay the same. Chairman Nuzzolillo then read a letter that was received from Police Chief Glenn regarding the Fire-Police rebranding and removing the word Police during the state of our world nationwide. Chairman Nuzzolillo on behalf of the Board of Fire Commission was deeply appreciative of the time and commitment to our Town during the worst possible times. The Fire-Police have done a remarkable job and this rebranding will be a valuable role between Police and Fire. He appreciated that the Fire-Police members agreed to the rebranding and the Rules & Regulations. Lastly, he thanked the sub-committee for their time with updating them.

Chairman Nuzzolillo then asked for a motion to accept the modified Rules & Regulations as submitted dated September 28, 2021 by the Board of Fire Commission Sub-Committee. Commissioner Mulligan made the motion, seconded by Commissioner Caldwell.

Brief discussion was had amongst the Commissioners before voting on the motion at hand. Commissioner Cappucci stated he had an issue with disbanding the Fire-Police. After discussion was had amongst the Commission and a statement was made by Fire-Police member Frank Bumstead, he stated that the members of Fire-Police were fine with the new changes as it's an evolution, Commissioner Cappucci was fine with it. Chairman Nuzzolillo then asked for the vote with regard to the motion made:

VOTE: Nuzzolillo – yes, Mulligan – yes, Gallo – yes, Cappucci – yes, Caldwell – yes

Chief Januszewski then continued with his new business with regard to the hiring process for 2 new Firefighters in January, 2022 (recruit testing and lateral applications).

Chief Januszewski discussed the good of the fire department. He stated that Fire Prevention starts October 3, 2021 and lasts through October 9, 2021 the theme this year is Learn the Sounds of Fire Safety. NFPA selects the theme and the fire departments throughout the state help to promote the message to the children at the elementary school level.

Chairman Nuzzolillo asked if anyone had any public comments.

Third Selectwoman Sally Buemi – Blossom Drive was glad to see everyone and hopes that all are healthy and doing well through this pandemic as well as the members of the fire department.

Ms. Buemi also welcomed Commissioner Vin Gallo and thanked him for his willingness to serve the Board of Fire Commission. She also thanked Commissioner Zuccarelli for his years of service in the military and also to the Board of Fire Commission. Ms. Buemi asked if Chairman Nuzzolillo ever read Commissioner Zuccarelli's resignation letter for the record. Chairman Nuzzolillo then read it aloud to be on the record. She then commented that she agreed with past Commissioner Zuccarelli and hopes to have a female firefighter in the near future as well in the fire department.

Ms. Buemi then spoke of her 5 issues she was there to discuss as follows: New vehicle behind Town Hall/Fire Department white pick up truck; fire station generator purchases over the past 3 budget years; concerns about maintenance and repairs to the buildings on the fire departments budget line that were overspent last fiscal year; water overage expense on the fire department current budget; lastly, contractual replacement staffing line from last year's fiscal budget also being overspent versus comparing it to the Police Department.

Lengthy discussion was then had amongst the Board of Fire Commission and Chief Januszewski with response to Ms. Buemi's concerns. The vehicle is a utility vehicle that was purchased in 2019 budget to help with functions within the department; generators were put in at all 3 volunteer stations as they did not have them and this year Fire Headquarters is being replaced as it is currently 30 years old; covid costs were the reason for many of the overages with the cleaning of all four (4) of the department's building to keep all members healthy and safe; Chief Januszewski stated he was not aware of the water overage this year and to check with Finance; lastly, the fire department staffing has to be replaced when they are out and covid impacted this contractual overtime line while they were out with covid or exposed and that the Police Dept runs differently than the Fire Dept with regard to replacement. Ms. Buemi stated she would reach out to Chief Glenn at the Police Department.

Lastly, Ms. Buemi asked Chief Januszewski now that the department is completing the phase in of the eight (8) new firefighters this fiscal year for each shift by January, 2022 – do you anticipate seeking any more staff from the Board of Finance. Chief Januszewski stated yes, the department does look to continue to get two (2) more firefighters per year.

Chairman Nuzzolillo asked if there were any other public comments – Lt. Curt Andrews Fire-Police member thanked the Chairman and the Board of Fire Commission for all their support throughout the years and he is proud to serve and be a leader of that group and appreciates the Chief leadership in working with them to phase into a new role and the members are all on board with this role. Chairman Nuzzolillo thanked him for his comments.

There being no further public business to come before the Board of Fire Commission, Commissioner Mulligan made a motion, with a second motion from Commissioner Gallo to convene an executive session at 7:39 PM.

VOTE: Nuzzolillo – yes, Mulligan – yes, Gallo – yes, Cappucci – yes, Caldwell – yes

Chairman Nuzzolillo moved to reconvene the meeting at 8:30 PM.

Chairman Nuzzolillo stated - hearing no other public comments and having no further business to come before the Board of Fire Commission he asked for a motion to adjourn.

Commissioner Caldwell made a motion, with a second motion from Commissioner Cappucci to adjourn the meeting at 8:32 PM.

VOTE: Nuzzolillo – yes, Mulligan – yes, Gallo – yes, Cappucci – yes, Caldwell – yes

Reminder: The next Board of Fire Commission Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 26, 2021 at 6:00 PM at Montowese Co2 – Community Room.