

**Town of North Branford**  
**Board of Fire Commissioners**  
**North Branford, CT 06471**

**MINUTES**

**REGULAR MEETING, COMPANY #2 FIREHOUSE**

**JANUARY 8, 2004**

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order by Chairman Civitello at 7:35 p.m. with the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

**ROLL CALL:** Chairman Joseph Civitello, Vice-Chairman Angelo Tosi and Commissioners Patricia Nagot and Joseph Tulli. Commissioner Donald LaBanca was absent.

**OTHERS:** Officers: Interim Chief Anthony Esposito, Jr., District Chief Mark Amatrudo, Captains Laura Burich, John Florio, Ken Neubig and John Onofrio and Lieutenants Don Cappelli, Robert Colangelo, Dennis Juhasz, John O'Brien, and Dan Watson, Foreman Jason Conway and Gary Sampieri and Fire Inspector John Zulawski.

It was agreed that Commissioner Joseph Civitello would act as Temporary Chairman for the purpose of electing new officers.

**ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING:** Chairman Civitello called for nominations for the position of Chairman. Commissioner Nagot made a motion to nominate Joseph Civitello for Chairman and Commissioner Tosi seconded the motion. There were no other nominations for Chairman. On roll call vote, three in favor and one abstention by Chairman Civitello. The Clerk cast one ballot for Chairman Civitello. Chairman Civitello made a motion to nominate Angelo Tosi for Vice-Chairman and Commissioner Nagot seconded the motion. On roll call vote, three in favor and one abstention by Commissioner Tosi. The Clerk cast one ballot for Vice-Chairman Tosi. A motion was then made by Vice-Chairman Tosi to appoint Diane B. Whalen as Clerk. The motion was seconded by Chairman Civitello and on roll call vote, all in favor. The nominations were closed.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS AND COMMENTS:** None.

**READING OF PREVIOUS MINUTES:** A motion was made by Vice-Chairman Tosi and seconded by Commissioner Nagot to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting held on November 13, 2003. On roll call vote, all in favor.

**NOTICES AND COMMUNICATIONS:** A letter was received from District Chief Amatrudo requesting that the agenda be revised in order for questions to be discussed regarding the Chief's position. Chairman Civitello stated that, in accordance with the personnel search committee, the search for a new Chief has been tabled until the ambulance issues have been resolved. Vice-Chairman Tosi stated that the specifications for the Chief's position will be posted again after the ambulance issue is resolved but no time frame has been set. A letter from John Conway was received regarding a recommended change to the Pension for a death benefit for non-vested members. Chairman Civitello gave the letter to Vice-Chairman Tosi to bring before the Pension Committee. A letter was received and read from Captain Laura Burich regarding alleged derogatory comments made by District Chief Amatrudo. She would like the Board to investigate the validity of these alleged comments and take the necessary disciplinary action against whoever made these comments. The Board felt that these comments would need to be backed up and would turn this letter over to the Grievance Committee. After questioning by District Chief Amatrudo about the proper channel this letter should have gone through, the Board agreed that it should have gone through Interim Chief Esposito first. Interim Chief Esposito was aware that the letter was being written. The letter was given to Interim Chief Esposito to investigate and the Board apologized to District Chief Amatrudo for not giving the letter to the Chief

initially.

**DEPARTMENTAL OFFICERS' REPORTS:** The Fire Marshal's Reports for November and December were distributed at the meeting and it was noted that there were 117 calls and 141 calls respectively.

**COMMISSION COMMITTEE REPORTS:** Pension: Vice-Chairman Tosi wanted to inform the department that the pension fund is up 33% from last year and he was pleased with the increase. It was noted that Commissioner Tulli will be appointed to the Committees that former Commissioner Ferrigno served on. Ambulance: The Department is checking with different companies for prices for 24-hour coverage. The possibility of hiring our personnel on a part-time basis was looked into but it was determined that it wouldn't work. Among the concerns were possible violations of the Fair Labor Standards Act, the possibility of the creation of another labor union or incurring benefits costs for employees. A list of names was compiled of all the interested part-time department members and it will be given to the company that is contracted to see if they'll hire them. Some of the specifications were discussed and one stipulation will be that they are assigned solely to the Town of North Branford and one of the two must be a department member. Another stipulation will be that the contact person for the daily operations of the ambulance is the Chief. Interim Chief Esposito will email a copy of the draft to all the Captains. It was made clear that Company 4 has not disbanded and the \$20 per call option is still in place for the backup ambulance.

**REPORT FROM CHIEF:** Interim Chief Esposito distributed a memorandum to the Board regarding the Chief's Report. It is attached to the Minutes and made a part hereof. He informed the Board that the ambulance building should be available for occupancy by February 1<sup>st</sup>. He noted that he sent a letter to the editor of the Totoket Times regarding the ambulance concerns. He discussed some planning and zoning issues as well as the Fire-Lite mutual drill with North Haven on January 12<sup>th</sup>. He informed the Board of the receipt of a \$3,500 Photo Ionization Detector through the State's Department of Homeland Security. He is working on getting a consultant for the radio system. He recommended accepting the donated bus from Evergreen Woods which would house the department's equipment and replace the 1977 Dodge vehicle currently in use. After some discussion, Vice-Chairman Tosi made a motion which was seconded by Commissioner Nagot to send a letter to the Town Manager recommending that the Fire Department accept the bus from Evergreen Woods. On roll call vote, all in favor. Vice-Chairman Tosi amended his motion to state that there would be no increase in the size of the fleet. Commissioner Nagot seconded the motion and on roll call vote, all in favor. It was noted that there are extra lights and a radio at Company 1 that can be used for the vehicle. Interim Chief Esposito requested guidance from the Board regarding salaries and rent increases for the 2004-2005 budget. He felt that the Board should adjust the compensation for the fire inspectors since they are working many hours. He also informed the Board of a meeting on January 15<sup>th</sup> with the dispatchers to finalize scripts on the proper way to dispatch fire calls. The Chief informed the Board that the Town Council was reluctant to change the street numbering ordinance as they felt it was not being enforced currently. He forwarded a press release to the Totoket Times requesting compliance from the residents. The Town Council was concerned with the issue of the Knox Box keys. They felt that there could be a safety issue and the possibility of installing a tone activated decoder in the trucks was discussed. Also, the police are going to monitor the door opening policy for the fire houses because of the liability issues with opening the doors for anyone who requests it. The Board received a breakdown of the ambulance activities summarizing the calls for December, 2003. He requested guidance setting a time frame for response from members receiving annual stipends. Some paperwork has still not been received for several years. The budget should be available for discussion at the next regular Board meeting and he encouraged the Board to go over to the ambulance building after the meeting to view the progress.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** The ambulance issues need to be resolved and then the Personnel Search Committee will discuss new criteria for hiring a Chief.

**NEW BUSINESS:** The radio system issue is being worked on and the pension committee will review the request by John Conway.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS AND COMMENTS:** Captain Onofrio discussed the issue of the members not completing the required paperwork for their stipends. He suggested that a list be prepared for the Captains to check into it further. Chain of command issues were also discussed. Captain Onofrio wanted clarification of the Grievance Committee's role as it relates to the general public's concerns that they may have regarding the actions of any fire personnel.

**WELFARE OF THE COMMISSION:** The budget will be discussed as well as the ambulance staffing issue.

**ADJOURNMENT:** A motion was made by Commissioner Nagot and seconded by Vice-Chairman Tosi to adjourn the meeting at 8:57 p.m. On roll call vote, all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane B. Whalen  
Board Clerk