

# Town of North Branford

## Board of Fire Commissioners

### MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING, COMPANY #3 FIREHOUSE

FEBRUARY 5, 2009

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Civitello called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m. with the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

**ROLL CALL:** Chairman Joseph Civitello, Vice-Chairman Donald LaBanca and Commissioners Anthony DellaCamera and Angelo Tosi. Commissioner James Blakeslee was absent.

**OTHERS:** Officers: Fire Chief William Seward, III, Deputy Chief Anthony Esposito, Fire Inspectors/Acting Fire Marshals John O'Brien and John Zulawski, Captains Laura Burich, John Florio, Ken Neubig and John Onofrio, Lieutenants Tom Hart, Joseph Manzi and Megan Posten and Foreman Dave Roden.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS AND COMMENTS:** None.

**READING OF PREVIOUS MINUTES:** Commissioner DellaCamera made a motion that was seconded by Commissioner Tosi that the Board of Fire Commissioners (BOFC) approve the minutes from the Regular Meeting of January 8, 2009. On roll call vote, three in favor and one abstention by Vice-Chairman LaBanca as he was absent from that meeting.

**NOTICES AND COMMUNICATIONS:** A letter was received and read from Superintendent of Schools Scott Schoonmaker regarding a recent bus accident. He commended the Department on their handling of the matter. A letter was received from the New Haven County Fire Commissioners regarding dues that is currently due.

**DEPARTMENTAL OFFICERS' REPORTS:** The Fire Marshal's Report for January listing 142 calls was distributed at the meeting along with the Ambulance Activity Report and reports from Deputy Chief of Training Colangelo and Assistant Chief of Training Amatrudo.

**COMMISSION COMMITTEE REPORTS: Pension:** Commissioner Tosi and Chairman Civitello met with the Captains regarding their pension request changes and the actuary is computing figures based on the information. When the figures are available, the BOFC Pension Committee will meet with the Captains to discuss it.

**REPORT FROM CHIEF:** Chief Seward distributed a memorandum to the Board regarding his report for the month of January that is attached to the Minutes and made a part hereof. He reported that the Department received the CT Fair Plan Grant of \$500 that will be used to purchase digital photography equipment for the Fire Marshal's Office. Guilford and Valley Shore Emergency Communications will install Nbfd alert tones into their consoles that will help with mutual aid requests. The Chief would like to implement a Citizens Emergency Response Team (CERT) in town and has requested approval from the Town Council.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** There was some discussion on the issue of the Knox Box Ordinance aka Key Lock Box. Commissioner Tosi made a motion that was seconded by Vice-Chairman LaBanca that the BOFC endorses the proposed ordinance requiring key lock boxes and instructs the Clerk to notify the Town Manager. On roll call, all in favor. The Street Numbering Ordinance was discussed and it was

noted that it should be advertised in local papers, if approved. Commissioner Tosi made a motion that was seconded by Commissioner DellaCamera that the BOFC endorses the changes to Chapter 205, Town of North Branford Code of Ordinances, regarding the Street Numbering Ordinance and instructs the Clerk to notify the Town Manager. On roll call, all in favor. Fire billing was then discussed. Vice-Chairman LaBanca was uncomfortable handing the homeowner a bill after an incident at their home. He also felt that it could affect fundraising capabilities and also may make homeowners hesitant to make 911 calls. It was noted that the bill would not be the responsibility of the homeowner to pay but to send it to their insurance company. If insurance doesn't pay the bill, then it would not be collected. Commissioner Tosi stated that it should be made obvious to the homeowner that they are not required to pay the bill. The language of the bill would instruct the homeowner to forward it to their insurance company.

Commissioner Tosi made a motion that was seconded by Commissioner DellaCamera that the BOFC endorses the concept of a Town ordinance for Fire Billing and instructs the Fire Chief to include it in the upcoming RFP for Ambulance billing commencing July 1, 2009. On roll call vote, three in favor and one against the motion by Vice-Chairman LaBanca. Fire Marshal billing was then discussed and it was noted that the frequency of inspections is going to be changed according to Inspector O'Brien. After discussion, Vice-Chairman LaBanca made a motion that was seconded by Commissioner Tosi that the BOFC endorses the concept of Fire Marshal billing and instructs the Clerk to notify the Town Manager. On roll call, all in favor. The Chief asked that the BOFC approve the description previously presented to the Board for the position of Fire Marshal. Commissioner DellaCamera made a motion that was seconded by Vice-Chairman LaBanca to approve the Fire Marshal position description. On roll call, all in favor.

**NEW BUSINESS:** The budget for 2009-2010 was discussed. The Town Manager had asked for a minimum increase of 2% and the fire department budget came in at 2.13%. Rents were discussed with the Town Manager and it was agreed that there would be no increase for this budget year. The Chief noted that \$1500 was added to the budget so that shirts could be bought for the members. Vice-Chairman LaBanca made a motion that was seconded by Commissioner Tosi that the BOFC approve the Fire Department Operating Budget for the fiscal year 2009-2010 in the amount of \$500,108.00. On roll call, all in favor. The Ambulance Service Fund Budget was then discussed. The pros and cons of billing inhouse were discussed and it was decided to table the capital request budget item regarding inhouse billing. Commissioner DellaCamera made a motion that was seconded by Vice-Chairman LaBanca that the BOFC approve the Ambulance Service Fund Budget for the fiscal year 2009-2010 in the amount of \$429,454.00. On roll call vote, all in favor. The Equipment Reserve was then discussed. After some discussion, Commissioner Tosi made a motion that was seconded by Vice-Chairman LaBanca that the BOFC approve the Fire Department's Equipment Reserve for the fiscal year 2009-2010 with an ending balance for June 30, 2010 of \$55,400.00. On roll call, all in favor. Capital Requests were discussed and the Board advised the Chief to also request two hurst tools since the Department has 1978 models which do not work on the newer vehicles. The Air Cylinder Recharging Station request for \$50,000.00 was also approved. Commissioner DellaCamera made a motion that was seconded by Vice-Chairman LaBanca that the BOFC approve the Capital Requests Budget Items of the air cylinder recharging station and two hurst tools for the Fire Department for the fiscal year 2009-2010 in the total amount of \$100,000.00. On roll call, all in favor. The Chief then discussed an application package as a uniform process for hiring new regular members. The application package is comprehensive and includes an interview panel after submission of an application. A change in the Rules and Regulations would be required to accomplish this. The Chief also inquired as to why regular members of the Department are not required to be sworn in by the Town Clerk. It was noted that area departments do swear in their members. Captain Onofrio felt that an expiration date for the blue light permit should be in effect since he doesn't receive any information from his members. The background check is basically a license check and it was suggested that fingerprint records should be on file for all members. Captain Onofrio felt that an interview panel might be too formal and felt that it should not be a test, just an interview. Captain Burich agreed with Captain Onofrio and asked that the panel be held in a timely fashion. Commissioner DellaCamera made a

motion, seconded by Commissioner Tosi, to accept the Application Packet with the changes as presented to the Rules and Regulations. On roll call, all in favor.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS AND COMMENTS:** It was noted that Captains Onofrio and Neubig just attended a swearing-in ceremony in Wallingford and their companies were recognized for their mutual aid support to Wallingford.

**WELFARE OF THE COMMISSION:** None.

**ADJOURNMENT:** A motion was made by Vice-Chairman LaBanca and seconded by Commissioner Tosi to adjourn the meeting at 9:47 p.m. On roll call vote, all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane B. Whalen  
Board Clerk