

# Town of North Branford

## Board of Fire Commissioners

### MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING, COMPANY #1 FIREHOUSE

DECEMBER 4, 2008

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

**ROLL CALL:** Chairman Joseph Civitello and Commissioners John Florio and Angelo Tosi. Vice-Chairman Donald LaBanca and Commissioner James Blakeslee were absent.

**OTHERS:** Officers: Acting Fire Chief/Deputy Chief Anthony Esposito, Jr., Deputy Chief of Training Robert Colangelo, Fire Inspector John O'Brien, and Captains John Florio, John Onofrio, Ken Neubig and Laura Burich.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS AND COMMENTS:** None.

**READING OF PREVIOUS MINUTES:** Commissioner Tosi made a motion that was seconded by Commissioner Florio that the BOFC approve the Minutes from the Regular Meeting of October 2, 2008. On roll call vote, all in favor. The Minutes from the Special Meeting held on November 11, 2008 could not be approved as a quorum from that meeting was not present.

**NOTICES AND COMMUNICATIONS:** A letter from the Captains regarding possible pension changes was received and forwarded to the Board's Pension Committee.

**DEPARTMENTAL OFFICERS' REPORTS:** The Fire Marshal's Report for October was not available due to computer issues at the Police Department. Reports from Deputy Chiefs Colangelo and Esposito were distributed. The Ambulance Activity report was also unavailable due to computer issues.

**COMMISSION COMMITTEE REPORTS:** Ambulance: There was some discussion on the contract for the ambulance that is up June 30<sup>th</sup>. Acting Chief Esposito stated that there is a time delay regarding the billing since AMR now sends their bills to the Midwest. Pension: The pension statistics were approved by the Town's Pension Committee and the stipend checks will be distributed Friday. There will be an increase in the Fire Department's budget for 2009-2010 due to the pension plan.

**REPORT FROM CHIEF:** Acting Chief Esposito discussed the mutual aid call in Wallingford on Thanksgiving that began as a garage fire. The gear that was on order has now been received. The budget process for 2009-2010 will begin later this month. The ambulance needed repairs but is now back in service. The State awarded a STOCS box to the department that will assist with interoperability issues for mutual aid calls.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** Acting Chief Esposito questioned whether or not the Board would like to discuss fire rescue calls and/or the fee structure for the Fire Marshal's office. It was decided that he will redistribute the paperwork for additional discussions on these issues at another meeting. The KNOX box ordinance was discussed and it was suggested that it be brought before the Council again since the issue of the keys has been addressed.

**NEW BUSINESS:** A motion was made by Commissioner Tosi and seconded by Commissioner Florio to reappoint Anthony Esposito, Jr. as Deputy Chief for a two-year term beginning January 5, 2009 through

January 4, 2011. On roll call vote, all in favor. The schedule of Board meeting dates for 2009 through January, 2010 was discussed and the dates were chosen. Commissioner Tosi made a motion that was seconded by Commissioner Florio to accept the meeting dates as selected for the BOFC Regular Meetings for the year 2009 through January, 2010. On roll call, all in favor. (A copy of the Schedule of dates is attached.)

**PUBLIC HEARINGS AND COMMENTS:** Santa will be appearing at Company #2 on Friday at 7:00 p.m. A benefit pasta dinner will be held on January 24<sup>th</sup> at Company #3 to benefit James Criscio, a one-year old childhood cancer victim. Tickets are \$15. Acting Chief Esposito raised the issue of term limits for the chief officers. It was his feeling that other members don't have the opportunity to move up to become chief officers. He felt the current chief officers are doing a great job but wondered about opportunities for others. Commissioner Florio stated that the Ansonia Department has a ten-year term and it rotates between companies although he was satisfied with the leadership as it is. Chairman Civitello stated that Chief Seward is reviewing the qualifications for company officers. Captain Neubig felt that the Chief and/or Board can not dictate to an individual company as they are private organizations. Captain Onofrio felt that if a chief officer's term expired and no one was available to fill the position, there would be an issue. He wasn't sure that a lot of people would necessarily want the chief positions. He understands Captain Neubig's position and agreed that the Chief shouldn't be allowed to say who can be elected as officers, but felt that the Chief should set some standards. It was noted that the Town apparatus is located in these company buildings and the Chief is responsible for the apparatus. Commissioner Florio stated that the Board could go to the rank and file for comments prior to a reappointment. It was noted that members could also be groomed for a position by working with the training division. Deputy Chief of Training Colangelo felt that the Board could meet with the Captains for input when a chief officer's term has expired. Captain Neubig felt that recommendations for officers were allowable but was not in favor of requirements for officers.

**WELFARE OF THE COMMISSION:** Commissioner Tosi will meet with Commissioner Blakeslee regarding the pension changes request and Acting Chief Esposito will redistribute the information about the fire rescue calls and Fire Marshal fees.

**ADJOURNMENT:** A motion was made by Commissioner Florio and seconded by Commissioner Tosi to adjourn the meeting at 8:28 p.m. On roll call vote, all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane B. Whalen  
Board Clerk