

Hamden Fire Commissioners
Administration Building, in the Large Conference Room
Minutes of the Meeting of April 14, 2010

In Attendance: Henry Candido, Michael D'Andrea, Richard Reilly, and Duane Wetmore.

Absent/Excused: Robert LaToracca. **Also in Attendance:** Fire Chief David Berardesca and Deputy Fire Chief Robert Surprise.

Call to Order: Chairman, H. Candido called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. The agenda was reviewed.

Minutes: H. Candido requested a motion to approve the minutes of the March 10, 2010 meeting. D. Wetmore made the motion to approve the minutes as presented. M. D'Andrea seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Correspondence: Fire Chief Berardesca noted there was correspondence received; mainly letters thanking the Department for pumping out the water from basements of several homes in Hamden. During the week of the heavy rain and flooding, about 25 calls from residents were received.

Public/Media Comments on Agenda: Nothing to report.

Department Report: Fire Chief Berardesca presented the March report for the Commission's review. The activity reports were from the Fire Marshal, Training/EMS, and Repairs and Maintenance divisions for the month of March. A review of the call volume report (types of fires and services) and the response times were available. Due to the current renovations of two fire stations, there is the challenge of keeping a short response time, but the Department is still under the national standard. Discussion was held regarding the information presented this evening.

M. D'Andrea made the motion to approve the Fire Department's activity reports as presented. D. Wetmore seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Executive Session: Nothing to report.

Discussion with Department Head: Fire Chief Berardesca addressed a letter regarding the Department apparatus. There is a need to replace most of the equipment. A tower truck, fire pumper; the age of the apparatus is utilizing most or all of the maintenance funds in the Department's budget. The tower truck is very worn and unreliable. We have an agreement for support from two towns to use their tower trucks.

The Town Council removed from the proposed budget the replacement of two vehicles; therefore, we will look for bonding and/or grant applications for funding.

The Department proposes to sell or trade-in the present tower truck for a new or used mid-mount tower truck. Fire Chief Berardesca noted we would retain the present ladder truck and put it in reserve status, and sell the present 1984 pumper.

Fire Chief Berardesca is corresponding with the Mayor regarding the importance of replacing the equipment vehicles. For the number of calls the Department is expected to call on, the vehicles take a lot of wear and tear.

Personnel Updates—Monday, April 19th the job description of Fire Battalion Chief was updated and goes out for testing.

Fire Department has budgeted 3 people to attend the fire academy for 2010-11 year. We may conduct another certified list since the current one is outdated. The new test will be created.

When the Fire Battalion position is filled, we may be able to fill a Fire Captain position. Fire Battalion Chief discussed the idea of creating a strategic plan for the Department and positions include a command structure. Deputy Fire Chief Surprise and Fire Chief Berardesca went through the current budget and found \$80,000 in this year's budget to support the hiring of a Fire Captain. With Fire Battalion Chief Dave Strawhence retiring, this will create another opening for Fire Captain to be filled.

Further discussion was held regarding the staffing to be strategically placed in all areas of the Town. We are down 8 staff in the Department, and it will be difficult to get those positions filled over the years. There is a need for paramedics as there will be vacancies coming up in the future. Those currently on staff are working overtime and they will want to reduce their hours. However, the Commission and the Department both agree public safety is important, and we need to protect and look out for our services so we can provide adequate safety and protection to our residents and companies.

Old Business: Status of Fire Headquarters – The project is still pending. There were discussions with Mayor Jackson regarding a few suggestions for the future of the Fire Headquarters. Mayor Jackson is will to commit to the Putnam Avenue site for the headquarters. The RFP has not been published by the Building Committee.

The construction for the fire station at Old Town Hall is about to begin. The architects met with Fire Chief Berardesca about some final decisions. The layout of the station and the changes were shared with the Fire Commission.

New Business: On behalf of the Fire Commission, H. Candido congratulated Deputy Fire Chief Robert Surprise on his promotion. Everyone is very confident that he will bring much of his professional experience to the Department and this role.

Regular Meeting: The next Regular Meeting is to be held on Wednesday, May 12, 2010 at 6:00 p.m.

Adjournment: Chairperson H. Candido requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. D. Wetmore made the **motion** to adjourn the meeting at 6:50 p.m. R. Reilly seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Recorded by,

Patrice A. LeMoine

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Clerk of the Fire Commission