

June 15, 2011
Regular Meeting Board of Fire Commissioners

The regular meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners was held on the above date.

President Rosenberg called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Present: President Rosenberg, Vice President Ana Garcia, Commissioners Doris G. Garcia, Klein, Lee, Meszoros, and Fire Chief Rooney

Absent: Commissioner Rodriguez

Commissioner Ana Garcia motioned to dispense with reading the minutes of the previous meeting; Commissioner Meszoros seconded and the Board passed it unanimously.

Old Business

1. Local 834-Grievance 2011-12; Time off not granted.
2. Local 834-Grievance 2011-14; FF Maurice Barnes, Article 5, Disciplinary Action.

President Rosenberg requested that the two grievances be tabled because Union President Whitbread was on vacation.

Commissioner Klein motioned to table both Grievances to the July meeting; Commissioner Meszoros seconded and the Board passed it unanimously.

New Business

1. Communications:
 - a. None.
2. Swearing in of Probationary Fire Assistant Chiefs Richard Thode, Robert Morton and William Hathaway.

President Rosenberg welcomed Mayor Finch and turned the chair over to him to swear in Richard Thode, Robert Morton and William Hathaway as Fire Assistant Chiefs.

Mayor Finch spoke as follows:

I am very honored to be here today to swear in three (3) new Assistant Chiefs and before doing that I really want to thank two groups of people and the first are the Commissioners. I am very proud of the accomplishments of these gentlemen here and I would like to thank the Commissioners because in a democracy people by the thousands throughout Connecticut serve on Boards and Commissions without pay and many of these meetings go many, many hours into the evening that they are away from their families and they are volunteers and volunteers in a democracy always supervise public safety officers. I am very pleased that I have such great Commissioners that

spend so many hours that I see at fires, at times, and sites of incidents. Thank you for your service and I appreciate it very much.

The second group that we always need to thank, especially with our public safety officers, are the families. The families were introduced by each Assistant Chief. I want to thank the families because when I put my family to bed, I know that they are safe because of the great work of the Bridgeport Fire Department. You are not going to find a better Fire Department anywhere than the Bridgeport Fire Department. We have installed almost 35,000 smoke detectors and saved lives of people in the City of Bridgeport not to mention the lives they've saved by pulling them out of fires. We know it is a very dangerous job, the men and women of the Bridgeport Fire Department are excellent public servants that I am enormously proud of and I want to thank each and every one of you because I know you make sacrifices. Thank you very much.

It gives me a great deal of pleasure to be joined by the Chief in swearing in three new Assistant Chiefs.

The oath was given by the Mayor and they were congratulated by all.

Chief Rooney spoke as follows:

I want to repeat some of the things that the Mayor said. The fact of the matter is that we are really proud of the families that support these gentlemen and without their families it would be very difficult for them to get to where they are today. I just want to remind everybody that to get to this position it takes decades. You just don't go on the Fire Department and after a couple of years you wind up being Assistant Chief. It takes many, many years. Lots of studying, lot's of schooling and lots of learning and hanging in there and the hardest thing is the competition. There is an awful lot of people that compete for these positions and not everybody makes it and these gentlemen are in the top three and I'm really proud of them, and we're here to support them in any way that we can and congratulations to them and again, I want to thank all the families for supporting them as well.

3. Executive Session for attendance review of the following individuals:

a. LT Frank Mercaldi (B) – Executive Session waived.

Lieutenant Mercaldi referred to the first page of the report wherein it stated that his exam was normal and on the third page it said his blood pressure was 165/95. So, he didn't think that was too normal.

President Rosenberg stated that the diagnosis from the doctor was anything but normal.

Commissioner Klein stated that Lieutenant Mercaldi was referring to documents that they obviously did not have.

Deputy Chief Grace represented that the Department received one page from Berkley and if the Lieutenant had more information, he could have called him.

Commissioner Klein stated that he didn't want to deny him an opportunity to present the Board with whatever he wanted to present. Lieutenant Mercaldi responded that he was fine.

President Rosenberg asked if he had anything to present to the Board other than what they had in front of them. Lieutenant Mercaldi responded no, he just wanted to say on tape that his exam was not normal as stated on the first page.

President Rosenberg stated that the important part is that the doctor, in his professional opinion, does not feel that he should be employed as a full time fire fighter. President Rosenberg asked if he agreed to that and he responded he thought so.

President Rosenberg stated that clearly the doctor on the IME exam feels that he is not capable and shouldn't be a full time fire fighter. At this point, President Rosenberg said he thought that a decision had to be made. This has been going on for quite awhile and he could appreciate the fact that he had a long career in the Fire Department, but unfortunately there comes a point and time that you may not be able to continue doing that kind of work. At that point, it might behoove you to put in your papers to retire. Based on this letter, President Rosenberg said he would be negligent looking out for his well being to let him continue to be a fire fighter and certainly negligent for the people he would be working with, both of those things they can't have. He could put his papers in and retire or they can retire him.

Commissioner Klein stated that they did have the authority to retire him involuntarily, but they don't like to do that.

Attorney Steven Antignani introduced himself and stated that Lieutenant Mercaldi will put his papers in to retire.

A Notice Regarding Disability Retirement was signed by President Rosenberg and given to Lieutenant Frank Mercaldi.

Commissioner Klein motioned that Lieutenant Frank Mercaldi submit his retirement papers in accordance with the instructions he was handed right now, to file his papers for an effective retirement date of July 1, 2011; Commissioner Lee seconded and the Board passed it unanimously.

- b. FF Mark Bigard (B) (Tabled until July)
- c. FF Autumn Waggoner (B) (Tabled until August)
- d. LT Joseph Southard (B) (Tabled until July)
- e. FF Darren Carroll (B) – Executive Session waived.

Fire Fighter Carroll reported that he had surgery and is now six or eight weeks into therapy. The doctor suggested that he not do light duty, at this time, because there is pain involved with rehabilitation from stretching. He said that his doctor said that for now to put it off until his next visit. His next doctor's appointment is July 18, 2011.

Commissioner Klein motioned to table the matter to the July meeting; Commissioner Meszoros seconded and the Board passed it unanimously.

4. Commissioner Ana Garcia motioned to accept the Report of Sick and Injury; Commissioner Meszoros seconded and the Board passed it unanimously.

5. Commissioner Meszoros motioned to accept the Payroll Register; Commissioner Ana Garcia seconded and the Board passed it unanimously.

6. Policy and Procedure review.

a. Approval of revisions to Rules and Regulations.

Commissioner Klein motioned to approve the revisions to the Rules and Regulations; Commissioner Meszoros seconded and the Board passed it unanimously.

7. There being nothing further to come before the Board, Commissioner Meszoros motioned to adjourn the meeting; Commissioner Ana Garcia seconded and the Board passed it unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.