

# **FIRE COMMISSION**

Town of New Canaan, Conn.  
60 Main Street  
New Canaan, CT 06840  
203-594-3140

**MINUTES of June 12, 2007**

**FINAL and APPROVED**

**Attendance:**

Jack Horner, Chairman

Sven Englund, Commissioner

Roger Williams, Commissioner

Jeb Walker

FF Tony Ryan

FF Steve Gaeta

Asst. Chief Karl

Asst. Chief Hennessey

Penny Young

FF Patrick Moley

FF Duffy Sasser

Kristiana Galvin

Meeting called to order by Chairman Horner at 7:33 PM

**Review of the Minutes from the last meeting-**

Minutes were read by Secretary Englund. A Motion to accept the corrected May, 2007 minutes was made and seconded. The Minutes were approved and entered into the Record.

**Chairman's Report:**

Chairman Horner reported that Assistant Chief Hennessey and the duty crew have pictures showing the problem with turning radius for the fire trucks at New Canaan High School. The Chairman has been in contact with the Building Committee to find a date when they can see the problem first hand. He said the problem is real and the apparatus cannot approach the High School building to best effect. Driving over the curbing is not a good solution as it will most probably result in damage to the apparatus. He said the Commission will continue to work with the Building Committee to assure the safety of the school children and employees.

The Chairman has asked the Fire Marshal to re-open discussions with the Town on a Fire Lane Ordinance. Commissioner Williams said that voluntary means do not seem to be making progress and therefore we reluctantly have no other course to assure public safety in high occupancy buildings than to re-open the discussions on an ordinance.

The Chairman spoke in glowing terms of the new Fire Department website and recommended visiting [newcanaanfire.com](http://newcanaanfire.com).

Chairman Horner is working with the parents of a special needs student to schedule real duties within the firehouse. She will be attended by a monitoring adult.

The Chairman asked if anything was seriously wrong with Engine 1 being parked behind the firehouse earlier in the week. Assistant Chief Hennessey replied it lost a fan belt that was easily replaced and it is back in service.

In response to questions about the communication equipment, Assistant Chief Hennessey reported he is in contact with the Ridgefield and Georgetown Fire Departments about a proposed new regional fire dispatch center in Georgetown at the old wire mill. 911 calls would still be received by the Police Department then transferred to the regional fire dispatch center instead of CMED should this come about and be approved.

### **Chief's Report:**

In Chief Jonker's absence Assistant Chief Karl reported on the following:

There were 90 calls in May, of which 7 were fires, 7 were rescues, 18 hazardous condition and service calls and 46 were false alarms.

Assistant Chief Karl reported on Chief Jonker's initiatives for the coming year. These include:

- ISO re-rating in the hydranted district
- Improved water supply in the non-hydranted district
- Increasing the number of qualified apparatus operators
- Continuous improvement of the radio and land line communications infrastructure
- Moving the prefire plans from paper to an electronic database
- Updating the volunteer's probationary training
- Promoting leadership and management throughout the department
- Updating the Personal Protective Equipment
- Recasting the Department's mission statement and writing a statement of department cultural values
- Initiating a formal personnel development program
- Increasing public awareness and promotion of positive image of the Fire Department.

The Chairman asked that the initiative report submitted to the Selectmen include a time line for those items that are not already in progress and completion dates where practicable. A gantt chart would be ideal. Commissioner Williams asked if September was still a good date for the ISO re-rating. The Assistant Chiefs replied that the date is possible but dependent on completion of record keeping functions and equipment delivery and deployment. There followed a discussion of how to accurately track the hours of the volunteers' time spent in the firehouse. The Town's initiative to install biometric scans to log personnel in and out has hit some snags and will be too late to help us. FF Ryan suggested we go with a paper logbook.

Commissioner Williams asked for the new Lieutenant positions in the IAFF contract to be made a separate item in the list.

Assistant Chief Hennessey reported an increase to 773 hours of training for the month of May.

On the budget, Assistant Chief Hennessey reported we have spent 92.9% of the budget or just 1% over where we should be. Barring any major storms or apparatus problems we should be able to finish the year even. Call back hours for the flood pushed up spending but he has applied for FEMA reimbursements. The FEMA money would go back to the general funds of the Town. He further reported on the closing of the capital items for the year. Money for the new tanker and ventilation system will be carried over. Money for the gear racks, and air bags will be returned to the town. Radios, irons, adapters and HVAC are spent and will be closed out. The bathroom is completed and monies will be returned to the town.

Assistant Chief Hennessey reported that about \$150,000 have been received from CIRMA. Alarm fine collections are up but are returned to the general funds.

All apparatus are ready for service with no problems known at this time.

### **Fire Marshal's Report**

In the absence of Fire Marshal Baker, Commissioner Englund read the Fire Marshal's summary report. There were 78 inspections, 8 plan reviews and 6 investigations for the month. There were no questions or comments on the summary report.

### **Old Business:**

Commissioner Englund reported the stainless steel for the kitchen renovation had been ordered.

Assistant Chief Hennessey reported the work on the new tanker is wrapping up at Seagrave's plant. The final inspection trip is scheduled for the end of June.

The contract with the IAFF is due to come before the Town Council meeting on June 20<sup>th</sup>. Commission and department representatives will be in attendance.

Commissioner Williams asked Assistant Chief Hennessey for an update on the STOCS radio upgrades. The Assistant Chief indicated it will be a small cost to reprogram the radios in house. A discussion of the new siren system ensued. The Assistant Chief indicated this involves all the Emergency Services not just the Fire Department and we will be working with Jim Cole and others to make the evaluations.

Assistant Chief Hennessey said the May CMED and telephone bills are not in error according to the Finance Department.

### **New Business:**

Councilwoman Penny Young addressed the meeting on the future uses of town property with respect to the long range plans of the emergency services. The Clark property on Route 123 has not been designated as park land and the feeling is to leave it that way. The matter will be discussed at the June 20 Town Council meeting.

Chairman Horner said the Commission's only concerns are for public safety. With larger homes in the north of town and ISO's distribution rating system putting a premium on distance traveled by the fire apparatus we want to keep the Clark property undesignated so a possible site for a new firehouse covering the north of town is not lost.

Commissioner Englund added that ISO focuses on property but life safety issues are a large concern. He said the new construction materials have a quicker structural failure in fires putting both resident's and fire fighter's lives in jeopardy. The need for fast response to fires in the new type of construction for rescue, evacuation and fire suppression is paramount. Councilwoman Young said with plans for development at Windsome Farm and a possible new full day kindergarten program increases the needs for fire protection in the north of town. Commissioner Williams said though we are not ready to do a study for a new firehouse the signs point that way for the future and we need to keep our options open.

A discussion of the disposition of Tanker 8 after the arrival of the new tanker was begun. Commissioner Englund opined that we should plan to keep it until we are settled on the water supply operations for the non-hydranted district. His reasons are the availability of 3000 gallons of mobile water, the learning curve for the new tanker may be longer than anticipated and it may help with the ISO rating in the non-hydranted district. On Commissioner Williams prompting, he allowed this may be for 3 to 9 months after delivery of the new tanker. Further discussion about where to store Tanker 8, if kept in service, focused on the center lower bay. Chairman Horner reported his discussion with Chief Jonker indicated the Chief did not feel it would aid the ISO rating and Tanker 8 is not a shuttle tanker. The Chairman asked that we not take on any major building renovations. Attendees said removing the old stairs and putting new stairs through the supply closet would not be a major project. The Commissioners agreed in principal assuming the cost can be covered under the existing maintenance budget line.

Commissioner Englund asked the Commission to thank Eric Olsen, John Westendorf, Candace Karl and Charles Bentley for their work to bring up the NewCanaanFire.com website. Commissioner Englund was asked to convey the Commission's thanks by formal letter.

The date of the next meeting was set by Chairman Horner for July 10, 2007 at 7:30 PM in the firehouse.

It was voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:52 PM.

Respectfully Submitted

Sven R. Englund, Commissioner

Secretary of the Commission

Talley of Voting

Minutes of May 2007 were approved unanimously.  
Motion to adjourn was unanimously approved.