

# **FIRE COMMISSION**

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

## **Emergency Meeting MINUTES of March 22, 2009**

### **Final and Approved**

**In Attendance:**

Roger Williams, Chairman  
Sven Englund, Commissioner  
Jack Horner, Commissioner  
Captain Kerry Smith  
Captain Russ Kimes  
Firefighter Patrick Moley  
Firefighter Duffy Sasser  
Firefighter Al Bueti

Asst. Chief Jack Hennessey  
Captain Michael Socci  
Captain Eugene Tiani  
Fire Fighter Steve Gaeta  
Lieutenant Al DuPont  
Firefighter Steve Parrett  
Firefighter Paul Devan  
Firefighter Larry Pitt

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Williams at 9:38 AM with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Williams opened the meeting by explaining the rules for an Emergency Meeting. The Emergency is to discuss an email from Councilman Mark DeWaele requesting a meeting to discuss the Fire Department budget before the Town Council on Tuesday, March 24 at 7:30 PM. Chairman Williams then read the email from Councilman DeWaele for the record.

To: Roger Williams, Chairman New Canaan Fire Commission  
From: New Canaan Town Council

Dear Commissioner Williams,

As the Chairman of the Town Council I was asked to share the following message with you:

Based upon the guidance provided to the Town Council by the Board of Finance at Tuesday night's budget meeting, we request that the Fire Commission make a final budget presentation to the Town Council on Tuesday, March 24th at 7:30 pm at Town Hall. Please limit your presentation to addressing the Town Council's unanimous request for an annual Fire Department budget of \$2,663,883 for fiscal year 2009 – 2010. ( Your budget should fully fund all line items – including all overtime expense – so that there are

no supplemental appropriations to the Fire Department outside the annual budget process). This will result in a 1.2% increase to the Fire Department budget over the current fiscal year.

As you know, the budget that the Town Council expects is consistent with the target established by the Board of Finance. Since the Fire Commission has the benefit of additional time to analyze your budget and to complete the discussions that are now underway with the firefighters, the Town Council will now have the necessary information to finish the process the Board of Finance started. This is the final opportunity for the Fire Department to accomplish the necessary reductions prior to the annual town budget being set.

We look forward to your presentation and thank you for making the time to meet with us.

Sincerely,

Mark DeWaele  
Chairman  
New Canaan Town Council

Chairman Williams said there are no Town Council meeting minutes to show a vote was taken on the above referenced unanimous request for the Fire Department budget of \$2,663,883. Commissioner Horner noted that the last guidance from the town is the \$2,760,702 recommendation from the Board of Finance.

Chairman Williams said that on Thursday the 19<sup>th</sup> of March, Cheryl Jones and Gary Conrad received instructions from Councilman DeWaele that they were to have no further discussions with the IAFF Local 3224 on possible contract concessions to reduce the labor components of the Fire Department budget and that the Town Council would take over these discussions. Captain Socci said his discussions with Ms. Jones confirmed that this was the case. Commissioner Williams said he spoke with Councilman DeWaele, questioning the if the Town Councilman did order discussions between these town employees and the union to cease. Councilman DeWaele clarified this to Chairman Williams that the discussions with the town could continue but are not binding on the Town Council. As of Friday afternoon this had not been communicated to Ms. Jones or Mr. Conrad by the Councilman to the certain knowledge of Chairman Williams and was brought to the attention of the First Selectman.

The meeting Tuesday has not been posted on the Town website as of this meeting.

On Friday, March 20<sup>th</sup>, The IAFF presented Fire Department management and the Commission concessions totaling \$115,000. Chairman Williams has communicated this to the Selectmen and representatives of the Board of Finance. The Fire Commission unanimously thanked the IAFF for their constructive work to meet the budget numbers recommended by the Board of Finance. Chairman Williams pointed out that the IAFF is currently the only union in Town to offer concessions to their current contract.

A discussion of the individual line items changes from the previous budget presented to the Town Council was held. The Callback O/T line has been reduced to zero. Captain Socci explained that callback would need to be handled as an emergency appropriation. Fire Fighter Gaeta said this and the other items will get the Fire Department budget down and retain the 6 man minimum shift strength required for the safety of the Town and firefighters. Captain Socci said the Town needs to take the responsibility for the safety of the Town and the firefighters. Callback will have to be authorized as an emergency appropriation for the following situations:

- 1) Confirmed Structure Fires
- 2) Second Alarms requesting additional manpower
- 3) Mutual Aid that takes our firefighters out of town
- 4) HazMat incidents
- 5) High risk occupancy buildings
- 6) Overlapping calls
- 7) Incident Commander's discretion

A discussion of how to handle Hazardous Materials (HazMat) incidents within the budget constraints was held. The money to fund the subscription to the Fairfield County HazMat Team and keep our men trained and part of the HazMat Team as part of our responsibility within the Team's requirements are difficult under the current budget constraints. \$10,000 of the savings will be required to fund the subscription and training.

A discussion of the process for handling Emergency appropriations was held.

The ways to make the next presentation was discussed. It was noted that the \$97,000 difference in the budget amounts to about \$1 per residence per month. Assistant Chief Hennessey will provide a breakdown of past actual expenditure totals for Chairman Williams along with an estimate of the current year actual expenditure.

A **MOTION** to adjourn the meeting was unanimously approved at 10:53 AM.

Respectfully Submitted

Sven R. Englund, Commissioner  
Secretary of the Commission

Talley of Voting

- A Motion to adjourn was unanimously approved.