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OF PUBLIC SAFETY

May 2, 2012

A **REGULAR MEETING** of the Board of Public Safety was held in the City Hall Auditorium on Wednesday, May 2, 2012.

Those in attendance included Mayor Ryan J. Bingham, Corporation Counsel Ernestine Yuille Weaver, Members of the Board of Public Safety Angelo LaMonica, Richard Zaharek, Douglas Benedetto, James Potter, Christopher Cook and Darlene Battle, Police Chief Michael Maniago, Fire Chief John Field, Deputy Fire Chief Gary Brunoli, Campion Ambulance Director of Operations Fred Rosa, Burrville Volunteer Fire Chief Ken Marques, Toppingford Volunteer Fire Chief James Newkirk, Drakeville Volunteer Fire Chief Michael Maccalous and Officer Steven Pisarski. Also present were Litchfield County Dispatch Executive Director Joseph DelBuono, Communications Supervisor Manager Kevin Webb, and President Eric Epstein.

Mayor Bingham called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

On a motion by Commissioner Benedetto, seconded by Commissioner Cook, the Board voted unanimously to enter Executive Session under pending litigation at 6:30 p.m. inviting Chief Maniago.

OPEN SESSION

On a motion by Commissioner Benedetto, seconded by Commissioner LaMonica, the Board voted unanimously to enter Open Session at 6:45 p.m.

MINUTES

On a motion by Commissioner Potter, seconded by Commissioner Benedetto, the Board voted unanimously to accept the minutes of the Regular Meeting held March 7, 2012.

MINUTES

On a motion by Commissioner Potter, seconded by Commissioner Cook the Board voted unanimously to accept the minutes of the Special Meeting held March 15, 2012.

MINUTES

On a motion by Commissioner Potter, seconded by Commissioner Cook the Board voted unanimously to accept the minutes of the Special Meeting held jointly with City Council on March 26, 2012.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

On a motion by Commissioner Benedetto, seconded by Commissioner Cook, the Board voted unanimously to enter Executive Session under Police personnel at 6:45 p.m. inviting Chief Maniago.

OPEN SESSION

On a motion by Commissioner Benedetto, seconded by Commissioner Battle, the Board voted unanimously to enter Open Session at 6:56 p.m.

PROMOTE TO POLICE DETECTIVE – K. Johnson

On a motion by Commissioner Cook, seconded by Commissioner LaMonica, the Board voted unanimously to promote Officer Kyle Johnson to Police Detective effective immediately.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

On a motion by Commissioner Potter, seconded by Commissioner Benedetto, the Board voted unanimously to enter Executive Session under Fire Dept. personnel at 6:57 p.m. inviting Chief Field and Deputy Chief Brunoli.

OPEN SESSION

On a motion by Commissioner Benedetto, seconded by Commissioner Battle, the Board voted unanimously to enter Open Session at 7:08 p.m.

PROMOTE TO FIRE LIEUTENANT – D. Casper

On a motion by Commissioner Benedetto, seconded by Commissioner Cook, the Board voted unanimously to promote David Casper to Fire Lieutenant effective May 6, 2012.

PROMOTE TO FIRE LIEUTENANT – K. Engle

On a motion by Commissioner Potter, seconded by Commissioner Battle, the Board voted unanimously to promote Kevin Engle to Fire Lieutenant effective May 6, 2012.

ADD TO AGENDA

On a motion by Commissioner Potter, seconded by Commissioner Zaharek, the Board voted unanimously to add to the agenda.

HIRE FIREFIGHTERS – T. O'Donnell, J. Brown, C. Titus

On a motion by Commissioner Benedetto, seconded by Commissioner Potter, the Board voted unanimously to conditionally hire the following firefighters: Timothy O'Donnell, effective May 7th, James Brown, effective May 7th, and Chad Titus, effective May 27th.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

On a motion by Commissioner Benedetto, seconded by Commissioner Potter, the Board voted unanimously to open the meeting to the public.

Mr. Georgio Cavaleri spoke on behalf of all pedestrians using crosswalks. He said downtown Torrington, Route 8, Exit 44, Route 4, and Route 22 are very dangerous to cross because cars may turn right on red. The walk signs say to walk, cars come through the intersections at about 35 mph, and a pedestrian doesn't have a chance in the crosswalk. Mayor Bingham referred this to Officer Pisarski.

James Castelli spoke about two pieces of property in the area of Hoerle Blvd. He said there is a public safety issue where seven to nine children are playing on the street where moving trucks are maneuvering and parking massive trailers in front of homes. Officer Pisarski said he would address this with the moving company. Mayor Bingham asked to be informed if this does not improve.

A second issue, Mr. Castelli said, is a vacant lot with oil spills and a building that's ready to collapse. This lot is easily accessible and unsecured. Children are seen coming out of the building which contains an empty oil truck. Mayor Bingham said the blight issue is very much ongoing, and is more a City Council matter than Board of Public Safety.

Commissioner Benedetto said he visited the Hoerle Blvd. neighborhood this morning. A truck was blocking a home in front of a "No Parking" sign, the neighbors don't want to call the police every day, and trailer trucks back down the hill, he said. Chief Maniago offered to have a meeting with the moving company.

Mary Bagnaschi expressed concern about an area of New Litchfield St. where car accidents occur. She further complained about her experiences of harassment and false arrest by the Police Department since her own accident in 2010.

Mayor Bingham asked Officer Pisarski to research the safety of the intersection of Summer St. and New Litchfield St.

LITCHFIELD COUNTY DISPATCH STATUS REPORT

Executive Director Joseph DelBuono, Communications Supervisor Manager Kevin Webb, and President Eric Epstein updated the Board on LCD's transition into Torrington.

Mr. DelBuono commended the cooperation from Chief Maniago, Chief Field, and their staff. He said the lines of communication have worked very well back and forth.

Over the past ten months they have serviced 51,694 incidents for the Police Dept. and 2,114 incidents for the Fire Dept. Their bi-weekly transition meetings have been changed to monthly dispatch review meetings to discuss issues as they occur. He said this has been a positive communication tool that has made the project go very well. They have recently implemented emergency police dispatching protocols which have helped create a more consistent and organized information flow. Mr. DelBuono said that Police Lt. Newkirk has been involved with their Personnel Committee and helped hire for several key positions as well as dispatchers. He said that Mayor Bingham has been a part of the finance committee and budget planning, while Deputy Fire Chief Brunoli has been attending all Board meetings as the Torrington Director. Mr. DelBuono said they have completed cross training of all 16 dispatchers. They have lost two or three dispatchers in the transition but have been fortunate to keep turnover low. They hired qualified dispatchers from other area towns such as Wallingford, Newtown and Bristol. He noted that during the October storm, they had a power loss the first day they were in the new center. The generator kicked in and everything worked fine, he said. Mr. DelBuono noted that having the EOC upstairs makes for a better work ethic and better communications. In July they hired a training officer who is also their quality assurance representative in a very respectful and high level program where calls are evaluated on a daily and weekly basis. They also communicate through written reports to dispatchers on how they are doing, take corrective action and concentrate on training when necessary. This has been very well received, he said, as dispatchers like the feedback which makes them feel better about what they do. The written reports create a good learning process and bring a good level of service to Torrington and the 19 other towns where they serve.

Commissioner Benedetto said he is concerned over the way things are dispatched, such as sending the Fire Department to a lockout that is not an emergency situation. Mr. Webb said that in the other 19 towns they serve, the Fire Dept. has gone on every call. There was training involved in getting the dispatchers to realize that it is different within City limits. He added that sometimes they are at the mercy of the callers who say the right things, knowing it elicits the right response.

Commissioner Benedetto said it is the same with animal calls, such as utilizing apparatus for a bat in someone's house. Mr. Webb said this was also a learning curve because the dispatchers were accustomed to sending apparatus for all things. He offered to look into this further and will work with the chiefs for consistency. Commissioner Potter said he wants to make sure the dispatchers are perceiving their directives and if those directives are consistent with what we want to see.

Mr. DelBuono said they avoid undersending, but now understand that Torrington doesn't want to oversend. He said he's sure they can find a happy medium through policy and procedure.

Mayor Bingham recommended that the policy subcommittee meet.

Chief Field added that we are reviewing our policies to make sure they match up to LCD's.

POLICE CHIEF'S REPORT

On a motion by Commissioner Benedetto, seconded by Commissioner Zaharek, the Board voted unanimously to accept Chief Maniago's Report for February and March, 2012.

Commissioner Benedetto expressed concern about dispatch radio communications and dropped calls. Chief Maniago replied that calls are still being dropped but not at the same rate as digital. He said Kenwood has prepared a remedy, NW Communications will take care of this and the analog issues soon.

Commissioner Benedetto noted that the High School SRO has been very busy with 7 arrests in one month.

Commissioner Cook asked if there's something that could be done to reduce that number. Chief Maniago said the Officer's very presence is probably diminishing the problem.

OFFICER PISARSKI'S REPORT

On a motion by Commissioner Potter, seconded by Commissioner Benedetto, the Board voted unanimously to accept Officer Pisarski's Report for February and March, 2012.

Commissioner Benedetto asked why motor vehicle accidents are blank on the report. Officer Pisarski said that Records Division is not up to date.

REGIONAL TRAFFIC UNIT

Commissioner Cook made a motion to approve the Regional Traffic Unit and it was seconded by Commissioner Potter.

Commissioner Benedetto expressed concern that the department is already shorthanded without our Officer leaving town once a month. Chief Maniago explained the Officer we supply will go around to the other towns when it is that town's turn, but this may vary when the Chiefs get together and decide the activity warranted.

Commissioner Potter asked how this really benefits us, as the towns we'd join are far away from us. Chief Maniago replied that on the day that we have the traffic unit in town, we'll have up to a half dozen units concentrating with laser traffic enforcement on problem areas such as traffic signal and cell phone violations. It especially addresses specific problems that may be taking place, he said.

Commissioner Potter asked why we can't do this on our own. Chief Maniago said he can't take them off the town's patrol force, leaving sectors unpatrolled, or hire officers on overtime.

Chief Maniago said regionalization is the accepted way to increase our ability to use resources.

Mayor Bingham asked if the Board's reluctance is due to unequal usage of our officers vs. theirs, or if it is due to an opposition to the general concepts.

Commissioner Potter said if a regional traffic unit is going to be somewhat effective, they need to go into each town at least once a month. That means our officer goes to other towns four or five days a month from a department that we're already saying is short staffed and that their work is not getting done.

Chief Maniago disagreed and said it doesn't have to be three or four times a month to be effective.

Commissioner Cook asked if they are voting now on something that's really still in the working stage.

Chief Maniago said he is waiting to get direction from the board.

Commissioner Cook asked for documentation of what exactly is going to happen, before they approve it. Chief Maniago said he cannot provide that as it would be tying the hands of the regional traffic squad to do such a thing. The squad would need to be open to the possibility of something out of the ordinary taking place, and that may be here in Torrington. He said once a month the regional traffic squad gets together for regional traffic enforcement in each participating town. This is an accepted practice all across the country, he added.

Commissioner Cook said he liked the idea, but a department like Middlebury may want the squad down there more often. Chief Maniago said it won't happen like that because the Chiefs will concur on an equal distribution amongst the towns.

Commissioner Zaharek asked how often we'll get the benefit of extra officers.

Chief Maniago said a schedule will be created, and he offered to include the Regional Traffic Unit in the monthly report.

Commissioner Potter argued that that the Traffic Office's constant complaint is that they are not getting the work done in there, and they shouldn't offer to lose a guy even once or twice a month.

Commissioner Potter added that we have the resources here to create our own traffic squad.

Chief Maniago said those resources would cost us overtime whereas in the regionalized traffic unit, we get six officers for the price of one, not on overtime.

Commissioner Battle suggested the regional traffic unit be approved and reevaluated after a progress report.

Chief Maniago said there needs to be at least a year's commitment, and our officer will have to participate every time the unit goes out on a town by town rotation.

Commissioner Potter said he doesn't see how it could be effective for us if the unit is only coming into Torrington twice a year, for example.

Chief Maniago said he would be more than happy to create our own squad on overtime, but regionalization is a way to do it without overtime money. He said the other departments have already waited four months for Torrington's decision.

Commissioner Cook suggested tabling this for tonight.

Commissioner Zaharek said the Board needs to see the town rotation schedule so they can weigh it against the cost of overtime.

Mayor Bingham suggested that if the Board liked the concept but are waiting to see the schedule, they can amend the motion to 'pending approval of schedule' to give the Chief authority to move forward.

Commissioner Benedetto said it's very effective to get a regional team together to take care of problem areas. He said he can't see us putting together a team on overtime that's going to save us any money.

Commissioner Zaharek said if the regional team only comes up once or twice a year, he doesn't see that as a benefit.

Chief Maniago said any time you can go out in different locations simultaneously in town and conduct traffic enforcement for a specific offense, it's a definite benefit. It gives you omnipresence throughout the City and people won't know when it's going to happen again, he said. Commissioner Benedetto explained that the Board is opposed to losing Officer Pisarski or another officer two or three times a month to another town.

Commissioner Zaharek asked Officer Pisarski if he had an opinion on this. He said he thinks the regionalization will be good, and has previously worked on a very effective squad with Thomaston and Winchester.

Motion: Commissioner Cook amended his motion to approve the Regional Traffic Unit *pending schedule approval* and Commissioner Potter amended his second. The vote was 4/2 with Commissioners Potter and Battle opposed.

FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT

On a motion by Commissioner Potter, seconded by Commissioner Benedetto, the Board voted unanimously to accept the Fire Chief's report for February and March, 2012.

Commissioner Benedetto asked if Engine 4 is having the same radio issue. Deputy Chief Brunoli said that problem has been solved. Commissioner Benedetto asked how the CT Fire Officer Weekend was. Chief Field said he took a 16 hour class on courtroom preparation

DEPUTY FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT

On a motion by Commissioner Potter, seconded by Commissioner Cook, the Board voted unanimously to accept Deputy Chief Brunoli's report for February and March, 2012.

Commissioner Benedetto asked about the National Fire Service Command course. Deputy Chief Brunoli said he sent out a 360 evaluation to all personnel to evaluate his performance and learn what he could do to make the Department better. He said he's looking into the use of social media to better market the Department. Deputy Chief Brunoli said he also attended a good class on the budget process through the City of Tampa, and that the networking was really beneficial.

Commissioner Cook asked about the evaluation. Deputy Chief Brunoli said it's a good learning tool.

Commissioner Benedetto questioned the five hour comp time given to the Fire Marshal's Office for inspections. Chief Field explained that some of their inspections have to be done on off-duty hours.

Commissioner Battle asked what the Fire Marshal's plan reviews are. Chief Field explained that the Fire Marshals are responsible for CT Life Safety Code enforcement. Mayor Bingham commended the Fire Marshal's Office for adding a crucial piece to Torrington's business-friendly environment.

Commissioner Battle asked about building demolition after a fire. Chief Field explained that after the investigation is completed, properties become the responsibility of their owner; and after litigation is completed, they are treated like other blighted properties.

Fire Marshal Thareau addressed Mr. Castelli's concern, saying that over the years, that property has been involved in tax sales and has been in court. He said he will work with the new owners to see what can be done to try and rectify that. He said the oil truck has been in place for fifteen years.

FIRE MARSHAL'S REPORT

On a motion by Commissioner Potter, seconded by Commissioner Benedetto, the Board voted unanimously to accept the Fire Marshal's report for February and March, 2012.

TRAINING OFFICER'S REPORT

On a motion by Commissioner Potter, seconded by Commissioner Benedetto, the Board voted unanimously to accept the Training Officer's Report for February and March, 2012.

Commissioner Potter asked if there is a good, solid training program set up between the Volunteers and the Training Officer. Chief Field said all three departments have a training officer that meets with his training officer on a regular basis. He added that as far as he knows, the participation is good.

Commissioner Benedetto expressed concern that the training officer taught a fire extinguisher class at a group home while in full gear, yet none of the civilians had any protection. His second concern was that the group home was charged a fee. Chief Field confirmed the Fire Department's policy.

LIVE BURN TRAILER SHED

On a motion by Commissioner Potter, seconded by Commissioner Benedetto, the Board voted unanimously to approve the purchase of a 10' x 16' vinyl sided, two-door shed for the burn trailer to store training supplies in the amount of \$3000.

LIVE BURN TRAILER SUPPLIES

Deputy Chief Brunoli explained this is for a grant request's matching funds to purchase a safety air bag and another fire escape staircase. He further explained the grant requirements for charging other towns trailer-use fees. Deputy Chief Brunoli said the matching cost for these

supplies will be under \$20,000 and has been included in their budget.

On a motion by Commissioner Cook, seconded by Commissioner Benedetto, the Board voted unanimously to approve the purchase of live burn trailer supplies not to exceed \$20,000.

ASSIGNMENT TO FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE: E. Bascetta

On a motion by Commissioner Potter, seconded by Commissioner Cook the Board voted unanimously to permanently assign Deputy Fire Marshal Ed Bascetta to the Fire Marshal's Office.

Chief Field said DFM Bascetta has done an exceptional job.

EMS PROVIDER REPORT

On a motion by Commissioner Potter, seconded by Commissioner Cook, the Board voted unanimously to accept the EMS Provider Activity Report from Campion for February and March, 2012.

BUSINESS: DEPT. HEADS

On a motion by Commissioner Potter, seconded by Commissioner Benedetto, the Board voted unanimously to consider business by Department Heads.

Chief Field announced a benefit dinner for EMD Dalla Valle. He said Mr. Dalla Valle is working from home and has worked a lot on getting our FEMA reimbursement.

Commissioner Benedetto asked who would take over during an incident. Chief Field said the other emergency services would take care of it as a unified command structure.

Chief Field thanked the Police Department, Volunteer Fire Departments, and neighboring Fire Departments for their outstanding assistance during a recent tragic event.

Mr. Rosa thanked the Board, Mayor and Mayoral Aide for their work in solving the signage problem at Squire Hill. He said the new signs are working very well.

BUSINESS: VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPTS.

On a motion by Commissioner Benedetto, seconded by Commissioner Potter, the Board voted unanimously to consider business by Volunteer Fire Departments.

Drakeville Chief Mike Maccalous announced an upcoming pancake breakfast fundraiser.

Burrville Chief Ken Marques reported that Engine 47 underwent a DOT test, has been repaired, and is back in service. Engine 45 will undergo the same thing. He announced their annual Mother's Day Brunch.

Torrington Chief Newkirk announced their upcoming beer and wine tasting fundraiser. He said their membership drive started on January 1st. Four active members were gained. Chief Newkirk further reported that Rescue Truck 16 is down for repairs and will be back the first week in June.

Burrville Chief Marques said their membership drive didn't go as well as planned but will be repeated.

Drakeville Chief Maccalous said Drakeville has trained with Torrington three times, with their tanker.

BUSINESS: MAYOR & MEMBERS

On a motion by Commissioner Potter, seconded by Commissioner Benedetto, the Board voted unanimously to consider business by the Mayor and members of the Board of Public Safety.

Commissioner LaMonica congratulated all the newly promoted, and thanked the emergency personnel for all they did in a recent tragedy that affected his family.

Commissioner Benedetto said he received a phone call from local downtown store owners who have issues with customer harassment, obscene gestures, etc. from members of halfway houses in the downtown area. He recounted one incident that resulted in a shoplifting attempt and said the merchants have requested an increased police presence and a meeting to discuss this. Chief Maniago offered to host the meeting and increase the park-and-walk patrols in that area.

Commissioner Potter asked if the Volunteers tried putting the spare engine in Burrville Station. They said it didn't fit.

Commissioner Battle questioned the timing of pedestrian crosswalks in front of the Armory and said she has received complaints about dim street lighting on Main Street. Mayor Bingham replied that the new lights are brighter and suggested their color may be to blame.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Commissioner Benedetto, seconded by Commissioner Zaharek, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:21 p.m.

ATTEST: JOSEPH L. QUARTIERO, CMC
CITY CLERK

Respectfully Submitted,
Carol L. Anderson, CCTC

Assistant City Clerk