

TOWN OF SOUTHLINGTON
BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

Chairman Daly called the regular meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners, held at Headquarters on June 11, 2009, to order at 7:31 p.m. Commissioners Daly, Sherman, Longo and Nevelos were present. Also in attendance were Chief Clark and Asst. Chief Wisner. Commissioner Berkmoes was absent.

Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Daly addressed the audience in regards to a change in the agenda. An Executive Session was scheduled but the party involved, IAFF 2033 Union, represented by President Harold Ballard and IAFF 2003 Vice President Douglas Roy, chose to have the matter discussed in open session.

Discussion was held on the grievance filed by the union against the sentence given by Chief Clark to Inspector Upson for an incident that occurred at a CFMA conference on April 22, 2009. The union is disputing any charges brought against Inspector Upson because he was off duty. President Ballard handed out copies of the Rules and Regulations to the Board and pointed out the section the union feels exempts any action brought against a member of the department while off duty.

Commissioner Longo asked Chief Clark why he took this action on an off-duty member and Chief Clark stated that it was "conduct unbecoming". Assistant Chief Wisner furnished the Board and union officers with copies of statements pertaining to the incident.

Chief Clark explained the circumstances that led up to the incident: Originally two members of the Inspection Bureau, Captain Casarella and Inspector Upson, were approved to attend the CFMA conference and the a purchase order was requested. Before the purchase order was received by the Finance Department, Inspector Upson notified Chief Clark of his intent to transfer back to the line. After receiving Inspector Upson's letter, Chief Clark chose to send only one member of the Bureau, Captain Casarella, and sent only one registration down to Finance for payment. After the decision to remove Inspector Upson's registration was made, Captain Casarella notified him of Chief Clark's decision. Due to an error by the Finance Department the full amount of the purchase order was sent and a second seat was reserved for the Southington Fire Department. After receiving notification from CFMA about the error it was decided to have Assistant Chief Wisner attended.

Commissioner Sherman asked Inspector Upson if other conference attendees knew him by his title and connection to the Southington Fire Department. Inspector Upson answered he was known by his affiliation with Southington and several other places. Inspector Upson stated he did not know that his registration

was not sent in until he arrived at the conference. He was expecting to reimburse the town for the fee for the first day, with the understanding that he was there on his own time.

President Ballard asked the Board to reverse Chief Clark's decision of a two-day suspension without pay on the alleged offense that occurred while Inspector Upson was off duty.

MOTION: by Longo to overturn Chief Clark's two-day suspension of Inspector Upson. The motion failed with lack of a second.

MOTION: by Sherman, seconded by Nevelos, for the Board of Fire Commissioners to take the afforded time period stated in the contract, to reach a decision. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion on the time line being five calendar days and Tuesday, June 16, 2009 at 7:30 p.m. being the deadline. The question of including the missing board member in the future vote was asked by the union and Chairman Daly stated that the missing board member would not be included.

MOTION: by Nevelos, seconded by Sherman, to accept the minutes of the May 15, 2009 meeting as circulated. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION: by Sherman, seconded by Longo, to approve the payment of bills for May in the amount of \$55,815.85. Motion carried unanimously.

Chief's Report: (Copy attached to the minutes.)

- The Memorial Day parade was well attended by all companies.
- A meeting with Tom West from the Water Department was held to clarify the use of hydrants for training. All school hydrants, with the exception of Kennedy Middle School may be used. Future use of the old drive in site is also anticipated.
- Two live burn training exercises were held.
- The department participated in Youth Day. A Southington High School student is assigned to each department head for the day.
- Chief Clark has been asked to submit an article for the Observer on a monthly basis. The first article will be published this week.
- Chief Clark attended the Board of Finance meeting last night and all department transfers were approved. The request for funds for a lease-purchase was amended to a purchase for this fiscal year with the funds being found in various departments' budgets.
- There was a mountain rescue at Ragged Mountain last week. All members involved did an excellent job.
- Computers for all volunteer stations have been installed. These computers will be used for the volunteer members to access Firehouse Software. Training will be scheduled when all the necessary software is installed.

- Various projects in Headquarters are being done. Rugs have been ordered for the Inspection Bureau. They will replace the ones damaged by a water leak.

MOTION: by Longo, seconded by Nevelos, to accept the Chief's Report as given. Motion carried unanimously.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC:

Inspector Upson thanked Chief Clark for processing his transfer back to line quickly. The transfer is needed to allow him to fulfill various outside commitments.

Commissioner Sherman congratulated FF John Solury for his work on the Parking Authority.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS – CONSENT ITEMS:

MOTION: by Sherman, seconded by Nevelos, that the Board adopts Consent Items 9.A. through 9.I. as recommended. Motion carried unanimously.

- A. Lt. Jonathan Block's request for a six-month leave of absence.
Recommendation: That the Board approves the request.

ACTION: Approved.

- B. Company 3's request to hold a Lobster Bake on Sunday, June 28, 2009, from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Recommendation: That the Board approves the request.

ACTION: Approved.

- C. Chief Clark's request to attend the NEDIAFC in Springfield on June 24-28, 2009.
Recommendation: That the Board approves the request.

ACTION: Approved.

- D. Investing the annual Incentive Plan stipend of \$30,000 in Sentry Life Insurance.
Recommendation: That the Board approves the request.

ACTION: Approved.

- E. Chief Clark's request to attend the VCOS Symposium in the Sun 2009 in Clearwater Beach, FL, on November 2-9, 2009.
Recommendation: That the Board approves the request.

ACTION: Approved.

- F. Company 5's request to hold their annual picnic at the firehouse on September 13, 2009 from 11:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Recommendation: That the Board approves the request.

ACTION: Approved.

- G. Company 5's request to hold their annual Old Timers Night at the firehouse on September 13, 2009 from 5:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.

Recommendation: That the Board approves the request.

ACTION: Approved.

- H. Company 2's request to hold their annual Christmas Tree Sale fundraiser from November 27, 2009 through Christmas in the company parking lot.

Recommendation: That the Board approves the request.

ACTION: Approved.

- I. Company 2's request to transfer FF Kevin Bleau to fire police.

Recommendation: That the Board approves the request.

ACTION: Approved.

MOTION: by Sherman, seconded by Longo, to adjourn to Executive Session, excluding the public and the press with the exception of Chief Clark, Asst. Chief Wisner, Captain Training Officer Mello and Captain Ozga to discuss personnel matters at 8:32 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Personnel matters were discussed.

Returned to open session at 9:40 p.m.

A brief discussion was held on the earlier grievance filed by the union.

MOTION: by Sherman, seconded by Nevelos, to uphold Chief Clark's decision and deny the union's grievance. Motion carried with three ayes and one nay.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:55 p.m.

Robert Sherman, Secretary
Board of Fire Commissioners