

**CITY OF NORWALK
HEALTH, WELFARE AND
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
MARCH 22, 2012**

ATTENDANCE: David Watts, Chair; Carvin Hilliard; Jerry Petrini;
Joanne Romano; Anna Duleep (7:43 p.m.)

STAFF: Erin Halsey, City Clerk; Adam Bovilsky, Director Human
Relations/Fair Rent; Laurence Riley, Assistant Fire Chief;
Glenn Iannaccone, Fire Marshall; Roderick Sawyer, Fire
Department

WELCOME AND ROLL CALL

Mr. Watts called the meeting to order at 7:31 p.m. and Ms. Halsey called the Roll.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

No quorum, however minutes were submitted for February 23, 2012. The Committee agreed to table the minutes to the next meeting.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Ms. Diane Cece, Olmstead Place said that she wanted to speak about a process, the Fire Marshall fee schedule and then will reserve her comments for the Fair Rent/Human Relations item on the agenda.

Ms. Cece said that she called Mr. Watts today to express her frustration for the public who go to the website, but can't find minutes and agendas for meetings. She said that it makes it hard to be engaged and informed. She said that she called the City Clerk's office to get copies of minutes.

Ms. Cece said that she was also frustrated because there was no back up posted on the website with the agenda. She said that it would be helpful for the residents and would give them an opportunity to do their due diligence if this information was posted on the City website. She asked if this Committee would consider posting their agendas, minutes and back up on the City website in a timely basis.

There were no other members of the public present who wished to speak. Mr. Watts thanked Ms. Cece for reaching out to him today. He said that he hopes to get the information posted.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business discussed this evening.

NEW BUSINESS

PUBLIC HEARING – Fire Marshall Fee Schedule

Mr. Iannaccone explained that setting the fees has been a two year process. He said that the City asked him to create a fee schedule. He said that the only existing fee was the blasting fee for \$30.00. He reviewed the fee schedule.

Mr. Petrini asked about underground storage tank removal. Mr. Iannaccone said that his records go back to 1993. Mr. Petrini asked who pays for the storage tank removal. Mr. Iannaccone said that it is normally paid by the contractor.

Ms. Duleep joined the meeting at 7:43 p.m.

In discussing the fees, Mr. Petrini asked if the Fire Department could increase the Compliance Inspection fee of \$280.00 if they have to go back more than three times. Mr. Iannaccone said that the State would not permit that. Ms. Romano asked if the license could be pulled if the establishment is not in compliance. Mr. Iannaccone said that it could, but they try to work with them.

Ms. Romano asked about CO detectors and smoke alarms. Mr. Iannaccone said that it is not a law yet, but if it does become law, they will have to amend the fee schedule.

Mr. Watts opened the public hearing and invited anyone who wished to speak.

Ms. Diane Cece, Olmstead Place said that she was surprised that no one else was here this evening to speak about this item. She said that she supports the fees and that they are reflective of some unique services the Fire Department provides. She said that she was concerned if new legislation come through and will require inspections of all single family residences.

Ms. Cece said that she is lenient and liberal regarding the three visits. She said that she would be in favor of higher fees if the Fire Marshall had to return to an establishment three times. Ms. Cece said that the amounts are fair and equitable and do not put an undue burden on residents and contractors.

Mr. Roderick Sawyer, North Taylor Avenue said that there is a statute where Fire Fighters can go in to a residence to check for smoke detectors, but there is not enough manpower. He said that in his experience, residents are eager to comply and install smoke detectors. He added that a lot of people are interested in installing smoke detectors, especially at senior centers. Mr. Sawyer said that a lot of people can't

install them themselves but if they sign a waiver, a Firefighter will install it for them.

Mr. Watts said that as someone who had a fire two years ago and with the recent tragedy in Stamford, it is important to install smoke and CO detectors. He said that they can make the difference between life and death. He said that he would like to communicate to the public that if they are unable to afford to buy a smoke detector, the City will provide one at no cost.

Ms. Cece asked requested that this be on be on the April agenda.

Mr. Watts asked if there was anyone else who would like to speak at the public hearing. Hearing none, he closed the public hearing at 7:53 p.m.

**** MR. PETRINI MOVED TO SEND THE FIRE MARSHALL FEE SCHEDULE TO THE FULL COUNCIL**

Ms. Cece said that the Committee had to suspend the rules to add an item to the agenda, before they could vote to send the item to the full Council.

**** MR. PETRINI WITHDREW HIS MOTION**

**** MS. ROMANO MOVED TO SUSPEND THE RULES TO ADD AN ITEM TO THE AGENDA**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**** MR. PETRINI MOVED TO ADD THE FOLLOWING ITEM TO THE AGENDA**

VOTE ON FIRE MARSHALL FEE SCHEDULE

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**** MR. HILLIARD MOVED TO SEND THE FIRE MARSHALL FEE SCHEDULE TO THE FULL COMMON COUNCIL**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

FIRE DEPARTMENT

**** MR. PETRINI MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE PURCHASING AGENT TO ISSUE A PURCHASE ORDER FOR 32 SCOTT 45 MINUTE CARBON FIBER SCBA CYLINDERS TO AAA EMERGENCY SUPPLY COMPANY FOR AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$35,168. \$10,773.03 TO COME FROM ACCOUNT # 091031105777C0310, AND \$24,395 FROM ACCOUNT**

091131105777C0310 FY2012

Assistant Fire Chief Riley explained the item. He said that he had capital money from the previous years to replace the air cylinders. OSHA requires that they can be used for no more than 15 years. He said that AAA Emergency Supply Company was the second lowest bidder. The lowest bidder did not comply with the RFP.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**** MS. DULEEP MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE PURCHASING AGENT TO ISSUE A PURCHASE ORDER TO THERMAL IMAGING CONCEPTS , 156 O'CONNELL DRIVE, BERLIN CT 06037 , TO PURCHASE FIVE (5) ISG ELITE XR THERMAL IMAGING CAMERAS, AND ACCESSORIES, FOR A PRICE NOT TO EXCEED \$ 48,875.
\$ 39,100 TO BE PAID FOR BY FEMA THROUGH AN ASSISTANCE TO FIREFIGHTERS GRANT (AFG).
\$ 7,573.97 TO BE PAID FROM OPERATING ACCOUNT # 0300002637, AND \$2,201,03 TO BE PAID FROM VARIOUS OTHER OPERATING ACCOUNTS.**

Assistant Fire Chief Riley explained that the Fire Department applied for a grant through FEMA to purchase the Thermal Imaging cameras. He explained how they are used and what they are used for. He said that one is carried on each Fire truck.

Assistant Chief Riley explained that they put in a sole source request. He said that the Firefighters are working in smoky, adverse conditions when they use the equipment and they need to have each piece of equipment be the same. He said that the first thermal imaging cameras were purchased in 1997 and there were fundraisers to pay for them. Mr. Watts said that it was awesome that there is someone fighting to get these grants to purchase this equipment. He said that it is great technology and agreed that it is important that the Firefighters have equipment that they are familiar with. He said that as Chair, he wanted to thank Captain Markowitz for getting the grant.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

FAIR RENT/HUMAN RELATIONS

AUTHORIZE MAYOR RICHARD A. MOCCIA TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH INDEPENDENT LIVING RESOURCES FOR AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT CONSULTING SERVICES FOR

AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$30,000.00.

Mr. Watts asked if anyone from the public wished to speak.

Ms. Diane Cece, Olmstead Place, said that in looking at the agenda, this is a case of a sole source provider. She said that she tried to do research on Independent Living Resources. Ms. Cece said that there is nothing specific as to what kind of consulting services they are and there are no account numbers associated with the cost and no contingency noted.

Ms. Cece said that when she looked at the RFP, there were only three (3) responses and that Independent Living Resources was not the lowest bidder. She said that she suspected they were the lowest responsible bidder. She said that this firm is out of Massachusetts and there is very limited information about them on their website.

Ms. Cece said that she has a number of reservations about the company and that she asked Mr. Watts if the Committee would consider tabling the item if they were not satisfied with the answers they get this evening.

Mr. Bovilsky asked if he could expand on the history of the project and how they ended up with ILR. He explained that when the ADA was passed in 1990 every municipality was required to perform a self evaluation and then create a transition plan. He said that no self evaluation or transition plan was every passed, as required by Federal law. Mr. Bovilsky noted that while he is the director of Fair Rent and Human Relations, he is also the ADA Coordinator.

Mr. Bovilsky said that over 20 years ago, the City did standardized work in City buildings and properties regarding ADA, but there is substantially more work that needs to be done to be compliant. He said that they attempted to do the work in house, because the Field Representative was trained to do the inspections, but that position has been vacant for the last 15 months. He said that since that position was vacant, he asked the Board of Estimate and Taxation to move funds into a budget for this item.

Mr. Bovilsky said that he first consulted with an architect who said the project would cost \$900,000. He said that when the RFP was first constructed, they received angry e-mail from architects who said that the budget was insulting. He said that they received three responses to the RFP. Two were over budget and another would only provide bullets of what was likely needed in the City.

Mr. Bovilsky said that the sub-committee of the Human Relations Commission met and voted unanimously for ILR. They have been in business a long time and come very highly regarded. He said that they pull together a team to do the work. They are not just architects, but also experts in ADA policies and procedures. He added that their proposal was solid and would do everything that they are being asked to do.

Mr. Petrini said that he is not comfortable in voting on this item until he gets back up information. Mr. Bovilsky said that he provided backup information. Mr. Petrini asked Mr. Bovilsky what would be lost if they waited another month to vote on this item. Mr. Bovilsky said that it is a matter of availability. The consultant pulls together a team. He said that he can't talk for him. He added that this project has been in the works for a long time.

Ms. Halsey said that she e-mailed the back-up information to the Committee and would be happy to re-send. Ms. Duleep asked Mr. Bovilsky about any other non-profits ILR is involved with. Mr. Bovilsky said that the OPA, which is a State agency, recommended them. He said that all of the information is in the proposal.

Mr. Watts said that they did not have enough information. He said that although he roots for the small guy, he is worried that they won't be able to deliver. He said that the Committee has to do their due diligence because \$30,000 is a lot of money. He said that he is not comfortable moving this item forward without having all of the information. Mr. Bovilsky said that he provided all of the information to the City Clerk's office.

Ms. Romano suggested to Mr. Bovilsky that he forward the information directly to the Committee. She said that she did not see the backup either. She said that this goes back a long time and she would like to see it go forward.

Mr. Bovilsky told the Committee that when they see the proposal they will see lots of examples of their work and their resumes.

Mr. Hilliard said that he respects all opinions on the Committee, but this is not a lot of money. He added that this is a worthwhile project. Mr. Watts said that this will not fall through the cracks.

Ms. Duleep said that there was a link in the meeting packet. Mr. Bovilsky said that this company was vetted in their meeting and this was the company the Commission chose. They felt they are the best company and they meet all the criteria. He said that their proposal is very extensive.

**** MR. PETRINI MOVED TO TABLE THIS ITEM TO THE NEXT MEETING**

**** MOTION PASSED WITH TWO (2) ABSTENTIONS (MR. HILLIARD AND MS. DULEEP)**

NEW BUSINESS (continued)

Mr. Watts said that he wanted to discuss two items tonight; the Police Department and the Fire Department. He said that the City is moving in a direction where there is going to be a new Chief. The Police Commission decided that they want to eliminate the Captain's position. He said that he hopes that the City does not decide to go with

three Deputy Chiefs and that they keep the Captain's position in place to permit that person to move up the ranks. He said that Norwalk needs to preserve the Captain's position that will be the highest union position in the City.

Ms. Romano said that as a Committee she does not feel they have the jurisdiction. She said that they could; however, create a resolution or recommendation to the Common Council.

Mr. Watts recommended that the Norwalk Police department keep the Captain's position in place. He said that the City is reluctant to hire three Deputy Chiefs because they would be eligible to enter the union. He said that when they try to encourage a Lieutenant to seek the Assistant Chief's position, they are reluctant because that position does not have the protection of the union.

Mr. Watts said that it is the wrong direction for the Police Department to have one or two Deputy Chiefs. He asked that he wants a resolution that the Committee encourages the Police Department to keep the Captain position in the ranks.

Mr. Petrini said that he understands, but can't support this resolution until he talks to the Police Chief, and the Rank and File. He said that he needs more information. Mr. Watts said that he understood and asked the Committee members to do their due diligence.

Mr. Watts talked about Minority recruiting in the Fire Department. He said that out of 141 Fire Fighters, there are currently nine Minorities on the Fire Department; six African Americans and three Hispanics. He said that he hopes this Committee will work with the Fire Commission, the Mayor and the Fire Union to reach out and recruit more Minorities.

Mr. Hilliard said that about four years ago, Reverend Bolden conducted a hearing about recruitment of Minorities. He said at that time there were about 13-14 Minorities on the Fire Department and promises were made that have not been kept. There are less Minorities now. He said that it is not his intention to point fingers at anyone.

Mr. Watts said that they are all supportive of the men and women who serve on the Fire Department. He said that he was there when Reverend Bolden chaired the Committee and agreed that there were promises made. He said that he does not know how to proceed and hopes that with the change in the Council, whoever takes over this Committee will make this a priority. He said that diversity is our strength. He said that being an American, we have a diverse background.

Mr. Watts said that he supports the Fire Department and asked if this Committee could work with the Fire Union to come up with a process that is fair. He said that they may have to reach out to people out of state. Ms. Romano said that there is no reason to go out of state. She said that they should go into the local schools to recruit.

She added that this has been discussed for many years. Mr. Hilliard said that it is worthwhile pursuing this – we are a diverse country and each department should reflect that.

Mr. Watts asked for the support of this Committee to encourage the Mayor and Fire Union to do a better job of recruiting. He said that he talked to the Mayor and the Fire Chief and they are concerned and that is a good thing. He said that nine Minorities is not enough, especially since some of them will be retiring which will make the numbers go down.

Mr. Sawyer reviewed his background and said that he was raised in public housing by a single mother and went to local schools. He said that he went into the three high schools for career day to represent the Fire Department. He said that it is harder to recruit students when they don't see someone who looks like them on the Fire Department. He said that he is willing to do something. He said that New York City and Chicago now have great recruitment programs because they were forced to because of law suits.

Mr. Sawyer said that in the past 25 years Norwalk has hired six Minorities and only had two officers. He said that most African Americans come into the Fire Inspection Bureau. The numbers can change if everyone is willing to do something.

Ms. Duleep asked if there are qualified people applying. Mr. Sawyer said that it is a perception that there is a rich history of legacy. It is not a level playing field. He gave the example of a young man (Minority) who was number one on the list and then was let go and told he was not a good fit.

Ms. Duleep asked Mr. Sawyer if other towns hire more Minorities. He said that they did. He said that there is the perception that Norwalk does not hire Minorities on the Fire Department. He suggested reading the Fire Commission minutes from the 1970's to the present.

Mr. Hilliard said that when he was in the Army they did away with oral testing because it did not work as far as promoting Minorities. They found some tests to be discriminatory. Mr. Sawyer said that an oral test is subjective; he agreed that the playing field has to be level.

Mr. Watts said that the City has to make a commitment to come up with an action plan; he said that it won't work if it is one sided. He said that he would like to see women in the Fire Department. He suggested having a Minority on the Fire Department who would be in charge of Minority recruitment and also act as a mentor to the recruits.

Mr. Watts stressed that he did not want any special treatment. He said that no Minority wants to be promoted based on race and he would not advocate for that. It has to be all based on merit, but there has to be an equal, level playing field. Mr.

Watts said that he wants the process to be fair. He said that as a Minority, he does not want people promoted based on race.

Mr. Watts said that he hopes this Committee could start a dialogue with the Mayor and Fire Chief that it is important to find someone in the Fire Department who could head up Minority recruitment.

Mr. Hilliard said that about 10 years ago, there was a problem with the testing in the Police Department. He said that he gives Chief Rilling credit because he promised to rectify the problem and he did. He said that some of the tests can be designed to discriminate.

Mr. Watts asked Ms. Halsey that for the future if she could have the packets mailed to the Committee instead of e-mailing them. Ms. Halsey said that she never got the full packet. She said that this is only her third meeting and that she is more than willing to do whatever the Committee asks.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Nothing to submit

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Nothing to submit

**** MR. PETRINI MOVED TO ADJOURN**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

There was no further business and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 9:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi
Telesco Secretarial Services