

## June 7, 2005 SPECIAL MEETING

The Wethersfield Town Council held a special meeting on June 7, 2005 at 6:40 pm at the three Fire Houses. The meeting began at Company #3.

Present: Councilors Czernicki, Forrest, Fortunato, Montineri and Chairperson Morin.

Absent: Councilors Adil, Cascio, Hemmann and Deputy Mayor Karangekis.

Also present: Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager; Fire Chief Charles Flynn, Assistant Chief Mark Mahder (6:53 pm) and Deputy Chief Charles Varca.

**Company #3** - Captain Brian Schroll went through the history of Company #3 and described the engines that the Company presently has in the bays. One of the engines is 16 years old and the shelf life for this type of vehicle is 25 years. They also house the Regional Task Force truck which they use for regional training. The company has 30 members. The members do 100% of the cleaning of the house. The volunteers now must go through OSHA training and make sure all OSHA paperwork is completed. The engineers are responsible for all equipment, which must be checked every day. Lt. Mark Guerrero is in charge of the training and all firefighters must be the minimum OSHA required training. It takes hours to plan the weekly drills and then to administer the drills. Councilor Fortunato asked whether the Fire staff design the drills themselves or are their guides to go by? Lt. Guerrero said that you can download materials for the drills but you also have to design the drills specifically to meet Wethersfield's needs. Captain Schroll said that OSHA does stop in and inspects Wethersfield's records so everything must be kept up to date. OSHA has found Wethersfield's records to be far and beyond what most Towns keep for OSHA. Lt. Scott Roberts explained to the Council that his duties entailed taking care of the Fire quarters, repairs, etc. The windows desperately need to be replaced for energy efficiency and the doors need to be weather stripped, but there is not enough money to complete this work. Councilor Fortunato asked if there was money requested in the Capital Budget for this work. Town Manager Therrien said the money is in the out years, but this was never brought up as a priority by the Fire Department compared to their other capital requests. Lt. Roberts said that the windows in the addition are newer from 1987. Lt. Mark Fagan reviewed the self contained breathing apparatus. Company 3 has the newest suits and they have 6 of those. The bottles are rated for 30 minutes and the newer equipment has personal protective devices which automatically come on and you can also use the buddy system for air, if someone's bottle runs out. They do need more new types of suits. The old air bottles last about 15 years. They do not have air packs for every Fire volunteer. Some of the air bottles will not be serviceable any longer and so they much be taken out of service. The Fire Department tries to replace them every 5-6 years and a price of \$795 each bottle. Chief Flynn said that they did apply for a Federal Homeland Security grant for air packs but no one has heard anything yet. Deputy Chief Varca toured the Town Council the old EOC which Northeast Utilities gave money towards for a regional backup. This EOC is no longer used by the Town. Captain Schroll showed the number of items that need to be moved back to the Moeller Home for storage which will then give them room to house the SBAC repair area. He also showed the Council each of the fire trucks. Councilor Czernicki asked if there was a physical exam requirement. Chief Flynn said there are yearly physicals and then the Doctor determines whether you are fit to fight fires. Stress tests would only be given if problems are found or you are a smoker or have any type of lung problem.

Assistant Chief Mahder said that the Fire Department would like a fitness room but there is no space to house one.

**Company #2** - Captain Gordon Harris showed the Council the smaller boat which Council had approved to purchase earlier in the year. He said this would be used for smaller waterways that the bigger boat cannot enter. He said that their House also has window problems and there are cracks in the doors. He explained to the Town Council the new federal requirement called NIMS. Anyone, even Council members, who go onto a fire scene, will have to be trained in this incident command system before being allowed onto the fire grounds of any fire. The Captain also said that they house the specialty rescue truck as Company #2 is the rescue company for the Fire Department. He said that they are down 9 bottles from what they should have for air bottles. Lt. James Hughes is in charge of training. He said that it takes 4 days for the volunteers to test all of their own hoses. Most Towns hire an outside company to do this, but Wethersfield's fire personnel do it themselves, saving the Town money. He said that the technology for fighting fires is

changing constantly and he used the old vs. new Hurst Tools as an example. It is important that the Fire Department keep up with the new technology. Captain Harris said that inter community training is very important and that they buy very similar equipment and train on each other's equipment so one set of personnel from one Town can work on another Town's equipment in case of a large fire. Lt. Robert LaCreniere is in charge of the building. He stressed the need for individual voice mails for each fire volunteer. He also said there were a lot of cracks in the building which are constantly being checked. The light bulbs also need to be changed on a regular basis. The fire personnel are willing to do this, if the unions agree to this. Town Manager Therrien will check into this. The main engine is about 25 years old and needs to be replaced and their pick-up truck is 20 years old. There are a lot of work orders in order to keep these vehicles on the road. These should be replaced. Lt. Hughes said that the #1 killer of fire personnel is heart and hypertension so physical fitness is very important. Captain Harris said that it is important for their physicals to be budgeted sufficiently each year. Councilor Fortunato asked whether the Fire Department promotes physical fitness. Assistant Chief Mahder said that there is nothing budgeted for this. This company has 29 members.

Assistant Chief Mahder showed the Council the Fire Department's Administration Offices where 6 of them are very tight with each other and there is a definite need to expand the Administration area.

**Company #1** - Chief Rich Bailey toured the Council through the building and showed their equipment. He noted that the air conditioning unit just went down that week. Company #1 is considered the marine company and it was established in 1803. The roof on the building is the original one and it has serious problems. There is also limited storage. Chief Bailey said that a lot of their equipment is left outside as there is no where to store it indoors. This is not good. He said that the Fire Department had been requesting an expansion to Company #1 for some years and it needs to be done very soon. They have a 30 year old snorkel truck and it would cost approximately \$750,000 to replace this. Things are so crowded in Company #1; there is no room for fire fighters to put their gear on before entering the trucks. It was also brought up that Company #1 and #3 are not ADA accessible.

At 8:44 pm, Councilor Forrest moved, "**TO ADJOURN THE MEETING**", seconded by Councilor Montineri. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 5-0-0.

Bonnie L. Therrien  
Acting Secretary

*Approved by vote of Council 6/20/05*