

# City of West Haven Fire Department Allingtown

## COMMISSIONERS

John Panza, Chair  
Robert Lathrop, Vice Chair  
Iris Diaz  
Aaron Haley  
Andrea Palumbo  
Frederick Brown, Alternate  
Robert Pimer, Alternate



Michael T. Esposito  
Deputy Chief/Fire Marshal  
mesposito@cityofwesthavenfd.org

## Regular Meeting

### CITY OF WEST HAVEN FIRE COMMISSIONERS ALLINGTOWN

Board of Fire Commissioners  
January 8, 2019 at 6:30 p.m.  
City Hall  
Harriet North Room, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
355 Main Street, West Haven, CT

## AGENDA

1. Pledge of Allegiance
2. Roll Call
3. Approval of December 4, 2018 meeting minutes.
4. Public Session
5. Finance  
Invoices
6. Communications
7. Report of Chief
8. Report of Deputy Chief/Fire Marshal
9. Old Business  
Parkview Commons Project  
Budget FY 2018 - 2019  
Headquarters Roof  
Chief's Position  
Headquarters – Exterior repair  
Discussion and vote on proposed bylaws  
Parking Situation Admiral Street  
Discussion and approval of two new firefighters
10. New Business

2019 JAN -7 PM 12:28

REC'D  
TOWN AND CITY CLERK  
OF WEST HAVEN



# City of West Haven Fire Department Allingtown

## 11. Executive Session.

Vacation and Sick Time

Personnel Issues

Discussion of two new firefighters

RECEIVED  
TOWN AND CITY CLERK  
OF WEST HAVEN

CITY OF WEST HAVEN FIRE DEPARTMENT ALLINGTOWN

2019 JAN 15 PM 4: 39

January 8, 2019

Minutes

A Meeting of the City of West Haven Fire Department Allingtown was held on Tuesday, January 8, 2019 at City Hall, 355 Main Street, West Haven, CT.

Present were Commissioners Robert Lathrop, John Panza, Andrea Palumbo and Frederick Brown. Also present was Deputy Chief Esposito.

Commissioner Panza called the meeting to order at 6:47 pm.

1. Pledge of Allegiance

2. Roll Call

Commissioner Palumbo called the roll and declared a quorum. Commissioners Diaz, Haley and Pimer were absent.

3. Approval of December 4, 2018 meeting minutes.

Commissioner Palumbo brought up a conversation between her and the Mayor that was not in the September 4, 2018 meeting. The minutes were approved at the October meeting however I was out sick. She stated that she had reached out to Debbie and she stated that we cannot get the minutes off the recorder. It starts up but then shuts off. Acting Chief Esposito added that the recorder does indeed start up but keeps shutting off.

Commissioner Palumbo suggested that we contact the Mayor and maybe we could listen to her recording to get the conversation that is missing. Commissioner Panza suggested tabling the minutes until the next meeting so we can review them and make sure everything is on them.

4. Public Session

Teddy Brown of 56 Highview Avenue, West Haven, CT asked if we had a tape here. Commissioner Palumbo replied yes, we have a brand new one. Teddy asked if the Allingtown Fire District is a City agency. Commissioner Panza replied that we are not 100 percent sure maybe the Deputy Chief can answer that question. Deputy Chief Esposito replied that we are a City agency but we are a separated entity like the Board of Education is. We are called an enterprise. Yes we come under the city but we have our own financing. Commissioner Panza suggested that he look at the City Charter at section 106. When the city took over control of the Allingtown Fire District this was set up. Teddy said does the city own the fire department. According to the Mayor the city owns the fire department, but only certain people have to pay for it. You say the city owns it but I have to pay a separate tax. There's no separate tax for the police department. Do we have a budget? The mayor says you have to go through city council to fix the roof. If we have a city budget then it could come out of our budget. Who sets the standard for our taxes? If we are part of the city then why are my taxes different then the other people in the other districts? We've got the largest taxes and we also house the biggest portion of tax exempt property. When UNH puts up a big building up there the city gives them permission to put it up and we have to pay the taxes for it, or when they give a rebate. Our taxes are going up enormously because we can't support the city. When the people in Allingtown decided that they can't afford a fire department. They can't afford it. If UNH doesn't want to pay taxes charge them a user's fee. First we need to find out what we are. Was it done legally? They didn't pay for anything. If they did we could have gotten the pension paid up. How did they get everything? According to the when the Mayor was talking she said you can't change the bylaws, you can't do anything. What kind of board are you. You want to have a little party or something you have to go to city council and ask them and tell them it's going to cost us twenty dollars. You got a budget but you can't use it. You have to go to city council. I'm here because you people represent me as a taxpayer for West Haven. That's what I expect, to get some answers. Lou Esposito came in and said why you don't use this other room. When we are in the Harriet North room, I can't

hear a thing you say. Then I talked to a City Councilman and he said that was in the deal. Did we make a deal? Then a young man over here says Martha Bell made the deal. Anthony Krzeminski replied that he didn't say that Martha made a deal. I simply said that Martha got the taxpayers riled up so then they would not pass the budget four times. The taxpayers are the ones who made the deal. Teddy went on to say that we couldn't pay for the fire department and now we have to pay for it whether we want to or not. Commissioner Panza stated that you are saying that you have no representation. Is that right. Teddy replied whatever. More discussion continued on how much property UNH and Yale own in Allingtown. Also the fact that even the firemen don't even live in Allingtown. Commissioner Panza responded that the board does not set the mill rate and we haven't for two or three years. We don't know the future of Admiral Street quarters are. Brief discussion on who owns Admiral Street station. Commissioner Palumbo responded that she felt that along the way there might be a little misconception with the districts. So we are the Allingtown District, you have the First District and they pay their property taxes to the city as well as West Shore does also. We are not paying more, we live in Allingtown. We are not paying more that the other districts are being taxed for. They are also paying two taxes. The problem is with Allingtown as you have stated that a lot of the property in Allingtown is tax exempt. Some of the property I think we are getting paid for; we are getting some tax money. All three districts are paying a fire tax. Now in 2012 they took a vote for the fire department to be taken over by the city because Allingtowns department was going under. People voted to do that thinking it was the right thing to do. If we could go backwards I think I would do that. With that vote they didn't think they were going to lose total control. This commission is appointed by a mayor. We have our set duties. We do look at the budget. The budget has to go the council like any other department that is part of the city of West Haven. When the buildings or the trucks need to be repaired, that is the Allingtown Fire Departments budget. We get our lists of items that need to be paid. Debbie sends them to the city. The city pays them because we are part of the city. So when the department was taken by the city in 2012 the other two districts had a big problem. They thought they were going to have to pay extra to cover the Allingtown Department. They did not want to become responsible for our bills. Teddy replied but they took over. So basically nothing changed. Commissioner Palumbo responded that nothing changed as far as the taxes go. Brief discussion followed about the takeover of the fire department.

Peter Massaro of 8 Chris Jon Circle, West Haven, CT stated in regards to your minutes, you did the right thing by tableing the minutes tonight. In doing so you can make changes to them but the minutes that you want to make changes to have already been approved. You cannot change them once they approved. That's an FOI violation. Once you guys approve them they are done you can't go back and change them. Commissioner Palumbo replied that we can't amend them. Peter responded no not once you have approved them. Commissioner Palumbo stated that we will have to look into that.

Margaret Krzeminski of 1 Robart Street, West Haven, CT stated that to answer questions that were brought up. In 2012 we had five meetings to approve the budget for the Allingtown District. They were not approved by the people that were at the meetings. We were in dire straits. So the Mayor at the time, John Picard had a solution. That was for the City of West Haven to take over the Allingtown Fire District. We couldn't go it alone because the people kept voting down the budgets. We had a special meeting at the Admiral Street station. It was put forth on what to do. They approved the fire department to be taken over by the City of West Haven. A group of legal lawyers came up with a special plan. They put it together. I was at the office when the paperwork was presented. It was decided to have I think three commissioners from Allingtown, one from West Shore and one from the Center Districts. The plan was put in place. The city was as of then going to take over the Allingtown Fire District. City Council then had to decide how things were going to be done, such as the budget. That's how it's been working since 2012. We have no say as to how Allingtown is run. We lost it. People didn't realize it when they decided to knock down the five budgets. Their approval was gone. Now with tax increases we had MARB from the state of CT increasing our taxes. So you want to complain, complain to them.

Sean Brown of 56 Highview Avenue, West Haven, CT stated that he didn't hear anything back from corporation

council about the bid process. He said that he didn't get a fair shot at it. Sean also stated that he never got the last fire department consolidation study that he requested. I went to corporation council and I was told that you guys put it on your list. Now it's been a month. Commissioner Panza asked if he gave corporation council a list of things that he wanted. Sean replied first he wanted the consolidation study from 1996, secondly I wanted to know how he could be part of that bid. How was that bid ever started and who decides to select the agency for that bid. Corporation council said Robert Sandella. It was said that it came for you guys. Commissioner Panza replied that you should get a letter together for what you are asking for. Get it to us and then we can forward it to the Chief. I think you should back it up with an FOI request because then it becomes part of the process. Sean replied that it's on the minutes. It was added to your list and here you are giving me back the responsibility. I came here for your help and I'm not getting any solutions to what I'm asking for. That's what my father was saying. He came for help and isn't getting any kind of solution. Commissioner Panza explained that they can't tell corp council what to do. Sean said he understood that but you must have something to do with that study from 1996. Also, with the bid process. Sean said he needs support. Commissioner Panza replied that he understands that but we don't put that together. I don't know where it comes from. It may come from council. Maybe Quagliani can help us with that. Councilman Quagliani said it came from the city. Peter Massaro explained that it came from the city under the direction of the state (MARB). Commissioner Panza stated that it was probably given to the Mayor and then it was given to Rob Sandella who puts it out to bid. Maybe we can help you with the old study. Chief Esposito responded that it's over twenty years old and who knows where it has been filed. Commissioner Panza said we will instruct the Chief to look for it. You are welcome to go down there and look at it during office hours. The part about the bid I can't do anything about it. It's more the city's direction. Chief Esposito explained that the MARB ordered it done; it was in the paper back in November I believe. There's a timeline for things to be done. These things have to be done in order for the city to get any money. As far as us it was the three Chiefs, the retired Chief, the finance director and Mike Maloney; he appointed by the MARB. There were seven people who bid; we got it down to four. The last four were asked to come in for an interview after we read what they submitted. We scored them and made a decision. We gave our choice to the finance director who was going to bring it to the MARB to see if they are accepted. We graded them on seven or eight areas. Commissioner Palumbo asked if they were large companies or individuals. Chief Esposito explained what they were rated on and they had references and do this type of work. The one that we thought would come in first did not. After seeing their presentations another company came in first according to the categories that the scoring was based. We have a deadline. The rough draft has to be done by May 1<sup>st</sup> and the final has to be done by May 31<sup>st</sup>. Sean stated that so now he doesn't even get a fair shot at this. Nobody knows if I qualify or I know someone who would qualify. I didn't get a fair shot at this bid. All anyone can tell me here is they don't know. Commissioner Palumbo responded that they had no part in this process. Sean replied that he (Chief Esposito) is part of it. Chief Esposito explained that he did not become part of it until the bids were in. Your complaint is with the city government not the fire department. Commissioner Palumbo added that this was part of the city getting that money from the state. The state told the city what they had to do. It was put in the paper. Commissioner Palumbo stated that she doubted that a study that was done over twenty years ago would help anyone out with the new study. Sean replied it would have to, it was a study done in 1996. Commissioner Palumbo explained that the city has changed since then. Brief discussion followed on the process of the new study and on the process involved in consolidation.

Commissioner Panza made a motion to close public session, seconded by Commissioner Palumbo and approved unanimously.

5. Finance: list of processed invoices for December was reviewed and accepted.
6. Communications : None
7. Report of the Chief: Acting Chief Esposito gave a verbal and written reports for December which will be kept on file.

8. Report of Deputy Chief/Fire Marshal: Deputy Chief Esposito gave a written reports for December. Written report will be kept on file.

9. Old Business:

Parkview Commons Project-Acting Chief Esposito explained that the pipe work is almost done and soon they will start the building.

Headquarters Exterior Repair- Acting Chief Esposito said that it is getting worse. There's mortar on the ground and a couple of bricks are breaking away. There is money to fix it but if we are not staying then I can't see putting the money into it.

Headquarters Roof-Acting Chief Esposito explained it's the same for the roof.

Budget FY 2018-2019-Commissioner Panza asked if it was ready. Acting Chief Esposito explained that it is not. We have to get the schedule from the city. Then we will have a budget work shop. We are still under the MARB so we can review the line items and see if we can adjust them if needed. There's not a lot that we can do. Brief discussion on the budget due date.

Discussion and vote on proposed by laws- Brief discussion.

Discussion and approval of two new firefighters-Acting Chief Esposito explained that we have about six weeks before school starts. They would have to have a physical and interview. I spoke to the Mayor and she wanted to know the cost of hiring versus the cost of coverage in overtime. Debbie worked up the numbers and we have tried to meet with the Mayor but have not been able to yet. I need to know if we are going to hire. If not I will have to make a shift change. Move someone around. Commissioner Palumbo stated that she felt that it would be cost effective to move forward. More conversation on the amount of time left on the list. Commissioner Panza replied that since they are in charge of hiring if they could get us the information that we requested and what the Mayors take is on it.

10. New Business: None

A motion was presented to close Regular Session at 8:04 p.m. and go into Executive Session by Commissioner Lathrop, seconded by Commissioner Palumbo and approved unanimously.

A motion was presented to close Executive Session and return into Regular Session at 8:31 by Commissioner Palumbo, seconded by Commissioner Lathrop and approved unanimously.

A motion was presented to adjourn by Commissioner Lathrop, seconded by Commissioner Palumbo and approved unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:31 p.m.

All minutes are subject to the final approval of the City of West Haven Fire Department Allingtown Commissioners.

Minutes recorded by Business Manager Brooks