

17TH CHARTER REVISION
COMMISSION

Public Safety &

Health/Education/Ethics Committee

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Jay H. Sandak, Chair

Members

CLARENCE R. GREBEY, III

MICHAEL C. JACHIMCZYK

GAIL S. OKUN

ROBERT S. ROBINS

MINUTES

April 10, 2012

The 17th Charter Revision Commission Public Safety & Health/Education/Ethics Committee was called to order by Chair Sandak at 7:00 on April 10, 2012. The committee members in attendance were: Jay Sandak, Gail Okun, Robert Robins, and Clarence Grebey. Also attendance were Vincent Freccia, a Commission member, and volunteer and career members of the fire service for the City Of Stamford including Fire Marshals Callahan and Olive.

A motion was made, seconded, and passed to approve the minutes of April 3.

A discussion of the Fire Marshall provisions with the invited guests was introduced. Chairman Sandak thanked the fire personnel who attended the meeting and spoke to the mission of the committee to ascertain whether the Charter language served the needs of fire service in Stamford. The question was then raised as to whether there should be one Fire Marshal office in Stamford. State statute 29-297 was introduced as well as section 1-29-45 which called for the Chief in Volunteer companies to appoint a Fire Marshal. A discussion followed on the pluses and minuses of one Fire Marshall for the city which covered the aspects of a single set of policies and procedures, single interpretation, and variations. It was suggested that the goal would be to have more communication between Fire Marshals, and agreed that the policies and procedures for all are set by the state.

The state of the Fire Marshal structure was described as follows:

1. All Fire Marshals are certified/trained by the state.
2. The SFRD Fire Marshal is appointed by the Fire Commission. There are two assistants and nine paid deputies.
3. The SFRD Fire Marshal reports through CoC to the SFRD chief.

4. The Independent Fire Marshal reports to the Volunteer Chief[s] and is paid by the LRFD under collective bargaining.

LRFD and TORFD have an independent fire marshal.

GFD and BFD and SFD and SFRD report to the Fire Commission and the BFD has the service of the SFRD Fire Marshal.

5. GFD, BFD, and SFD have an agreement with the SFRD to utilize the City Fire Marshal.

Chair Sandak summarized that the goal of the committee was to identify the things in the city that are not working and identify whether the change should be in the Charter, legislative, or management. The issues discussed focused on setting up a structure that works without having to be settled in court and keeping in mind that the Volunteer Companies should not be put in jeopardy. Reports from the committee's survey of other companies mentioned that management agreements work and are successful in other communities.

A break was called at 8:17. Upon returning at 8:29 a discussion on the need for communication and the role of management began. How to structure a combined fire department made up of career and volunteers was discussed and the points included in the minutes of April 3[pg 2] were shared. (See [separate attached sheet](#) showing Proposed Fire Chief Structure with Existing Fire Marshal Structure and Confederated Fire Service and Fire Marshal Service.) Questions still not fully discussed were: uniform policies, volunteers having a seat at the table of command, comparable status of ranks in companies, structure for appeal in Volunteer companies if there is a "super chief".

In the following discussion it was stressed that all the fire fighters in Stamford are professional and the fire companies are communities. It was suggested that having a unified system made of districts or battalions would try to maintain as much individual control as possible. Individuality is most important. The goal would be to figure out how to work within the structure.

A motion was made, seconded, and approved to adjourn the meeting at 9:30.

Respectfully submitted,
Gail Okun

This meeting is on video.