



## ***Public Safety & Health Committee - Board of Representatives***

Gloria DePina, Co-Chair    Ralph Loglisci, Co-Chair    Anabel Figueroa, Vice Chair

# **Committee Report**

**Date:** Thursday, December 1, 2011  
**Time:** 7:00 p.m.  
**Place:** Legislative Chambers, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Government Center,  
888 Washington Boulevard, Stamford CT

The Public Safety & Health Committee met as indicated above. Present were Co-Chairs DePina and Loglisci, Vice Chair Figueroa and Committee Member Reps. Adams, Caterbone, Coppola and Mallozzi. Excused were Committee Member Reps. Giraldo and Pia. Also present were Reps. DeLuca, Fedeli, Fountain, Heaphy and Taylor; Mayor Michael A. Pavia; Lynn Arnow, Asst. to the Mayor; Ernie Orgera, Director of Operations; Peter Privitera and Jim Hricay of OPM; Michael Larobina, Esq., Director of Legal Affairs and Ray Whitbread representing the volunteers.

Co-Chair DePina called the meeting to order at 7:20 p.m.

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Committee Action</b>
1. <a href="#">PS28.035</a>	REVIEW; fire service agreement between the City of Stamford and Stamford Volunteer Fire Dept.	<b>HELD IN COMMITTEE 6-0-0</b>
<p>Chair DePina stated that Item No. PS28.035 was not ready to be heard. The Committee has not yet completed its review of the plans (Item No. PS28.011 below). Upon motion duly made and seconded, the item was held in Committee by a vote of 6-0-0 (Rep. Caterbone was not present for this vote).</p>		
2. <a href="#">PS28.011</a>	REVIEW; and presentation of additional details regarding fire protection plans; including detailed financial analysis of costs of various plans.	<b>HELD IN COMMITTEE 6-0-0</b>

Mayor Pavia noted that 17 questions were submitted by the committee, 16 of which had to do with financial information and one which dealt with hiring practices. The responses to those questions were provided to the Committee. Mayor Pavia introduced Chief Whitbread, who gave a power point presentation (see [attached](#)). Highlights of the presentation are:

- The presentation compares two plans: the Mayor's Plan and the Stamford Fire & Rescue (SFR) (or Peter Brown) Plan, referred to as the "Other Plan" in the presentation.
- The Mayor's Plan enhances fire protection and safety, is legally sound, is fiscally prudent, ends the conflict and is real and workable.
- Chief Whitbread displayed an organization chart with the Director of PSH&W at the top, a board of directors and a chief.
- This plan includes the Long Ridge, TOR, Belltown and Springdale departments. Members of these departments will serve on the Board of Directors.
- The Board of Directors is already established and functioning today.
- When the Mayor's Plan is approved, 58 career fire fighters will be hired, which includes a chief for the new department.
- Each of the 4 existing departments will become districts and will have district chiefs and assistant chiefs.
- The 58 newly-hired firefighters will be distributed among the six fire stations within the 4 companies. The stations will be staffed 24/7 with 2 career firefighters. During the work week, there will be a 3<sup>rd</sup> firefighter assigned.
- There will be 3 employees that staff a fire marshal's office.
- The chief will be responsible for administration, and he will have the support of volunteers (who already perform many administrative functions).
- The Chief will work a normal work week; at other times the district chiefs and assistant chiefs will cover.
- In referring to the SFR Plan, Chief Whitbread noted:
  - The plan is not practical, it redistributes the existing SFR forces throughout the city. As such, it will reduce fire protection in the downtown areas, especially the South End.
  - It cannot be accomplished at no cost.
  - It does not include any capital costs. Two existing SFR companies are in TOR in temporary quarters. Property will have to be bought, facilities will need to be built and equipment will need to be purchased.
  - There are no provisions to staff Belltown.
  - The Mayor's Plan provides for 16 fire companies; the SFR Plan provides for 13. The Mayor's Plan will have 24 pieces of apparatus, and the SFR Plan will have 13 pieces.
  - By union contract, SFR personnel can only work on the piece of equipment that they are assigned.
  - The volunteers are discounted in the SFR Plan, and this will diminish the ranks of volunteers over time.

Chief Whitbread went on to state that:

- During Hurricane Irene and the recent snow storm, volunteers provided 4,000-5,000 man hours of volunteer service.
- There is a rivalry between the volunteers and the career firefighters.
- The firefighters hired by the SVFD will be part of a union; however, they will be employed by the SVFD.

Rep. Mallozzi stated that by hiring unionized career firefighters, they may end up with the same rivalry (that exists now between the volunteers and SFR) within the one department. Mr. Whitbread felt that because the newly-hired firefighters will work for the SVFD, management will have control over this.

Rep. Figueroa stated that this plan doesn't seem to focus on solving the problems between the volunteers and the career firefighters but rather it separates the two groups.

Rep. Adams stated that it did not make sense that firefighters, a good number of whom were previously volunteers, would then become career firefighters and develop animosity toward the volunteers.

Chief Whitbread responded by stating that the IAFF bars its members from encouraging rival organizations, including volunteer fire companies, by joining or supporting any volunteer fire companies.

Chief Whitbread then went on to discuss costs. He stated he reviewed his numbers with Peter Privitera, who said they were basically sound.

- The SVFD will result in an excess of 40 firefighters in the downtown area. The Mayor has given his word that there will be no layoffs.
- Chief Whitbread expects a temporary increase in costs during a period of time of attrition of the excess 40 firefighters.
- He estimates 10 retirements in the first year. He also estimates that 10 of the SFR firefighters would opt to join the SVFD.
- There are currently 271 firefighters at a cost of \$46.4 million (which includes the volunteer companies). Due to attrition, he estimates about a \$2 million increase in Year 2 and a return to Year 1's costs in Year 3 (these numbers are in 2011 dollars). By 2014-2015, he expects SFR to have 220 career firefighters.
- According to Mr. Whitbread's estimates, the SFR Plan would result in approximately 400 firefighters in 2014-15, and the cost would increase by \$25 million.

Chief Whitbread stated that the SFR plan basically puts the volunteers in a subservient position. The officers will have no rank except within their company. Volunteers will quickly lose interest and abandon the companies.

Three years ago TOR had its budget cut from \$320,000 to \$40,000. For the current fiscal year, the boards reinstated the funding under the condition that TOR#2 be re-opened, which TOR accomplished.

Rep. Heaphy stated that the Board needs another presentation (similar to this one) on the SFR Plan so it can hear from both sides before any decisions are made. She added that this plan assumes that both sides can never work together. Two months ago, the Greenwich Fire Chief met with the Committee, and shared how the combined department works in Greenwich. She is not convinced that both sides could never work together. This plan rules out sharing space, equipment, etc.

Chief Whitbread responded that this problem is unique to Stamford. There are combined fire companies throughout the country. The two groups got along fine until about four years ago.

Chief Whitbread urged the Committee to seriously consider this plan. He added that TOR has a legal judgment that requires the city to provide 17 paid firefighters and to fund the department adequately. They have held off forcing the City to fund the judgment because of their confidence in this plan.

Co-Chair DePina asked Mr. Privitera if he agreed with the numbers. Mr. Privitera stated that all of his estimates are based on assumptions that are provided to him. To the extent that the assumptions are accurate, he does agree with the numbers in the presentation. In regard to the premise that the SFR Plan would cost nothing, Mr. Privitera explained that the assumption used in that projection is that the existing fire personnel will be moved from one part of Stamford to another. That would not cost more, but it would shift the tax burden from the downtown districts to the northern districts.

Mayor Pavia concluded by urging that the Committee schedule a public hearing.

Chair DePina stated that the Committee will need a meeting to review all of the information to date, prior to holding a public hearing. As such, no public hearing will be held before year end. A motion to hold Item No. PS28.011 was made, seconded and approved by a vote of 6-0-0.

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| 3. PS28.040 | PROPOSED ORDINANCE; <u>for publication</u> ;<br>amending Chapter 70, Alarm Systems, to transfer<br>the appeals process to the Police Commission. | <b>HELD IN<br/>COMMITTEE<br/>6-0-0</b> |
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Chair DePina stated that Item No. PS28.040 was not ready to be heard; upon motion duly made and seconded the item was held in Committee by a vote of 6-0-0.

4. PS28.041 PROPOSED ORDINANCE; for publication; amending Chapter 167, numbering of buildings, transferring the appeals process to the Police Commission. **HELD IN COMMITTEE 7-0-0**

Chair DePina stated that Item No. PS28.041 was not ready to be heard; upon motion duly made and seconded the item was held in Committee by a vote of 7-0-0 (Rep. Caterbone re-joined the meeting for this vote).

5. PS28.042 PROPOSED ORDINANCE; for publication; Amending Sections 146 -63 to 1) to provide a penalty for those who do not attend Level 1 hearings; 2) delete the definition of Appeals Board; 3) replace the phrase "Appeals Board" with "Anti Blight Committee;" and 4) including the anti-blight officer's stipend, mailing and copying costs, etc., in the examples of proper associated costs of enforcement and administration. **HELD IN COMMITTEE 7-0-0**

Chair DePina stated that Item No. PS28.042 was not ready to be heard; upon motion duly made and seconded the item was held in Committee by a vote of 7-0-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Submitted by,

Gloria DePina, Co-Chair

*This meeting is on [video](#).*