

**Town of Ridgefield  
Fire Commission Meeting Minutes  
March 4, 2009**

**Commissioners Attending:** Rudy Marconi  
Andrew Bodner  
Barbara Manners  
Di Masters  
Joan Plock

**Representing RFD:** Chief Heather Burford  
Asst. Chief Kevin Tape  
Asst. Emergency Manager Dick Aarons  
Deputy Chief (RVFD) Tim Pambianchi  
RVFD Trustee Walt Wieland

**Representing Local 1739** President Mike Moore

**Meeting Called to order by Commission Chair Rudy Marconi at 6:30**

**Overview Volunteer Incentive Program**

Chief Burford introduced Trustee Wieland and Chief Pambianchi to discuss the RVFD incentive program. Capt. Wieland explained that the Town contributes \$25,000 yearly to the volunteer department to be allocated on the basis of activity and years-of-service. The allocations are assigned to individual accounts, but held until the member retires from active duty. A one-time distribution may be made to an individual to meet extraordinary financial needs. (See attachment for details.)

In response commissioner's questions Capt. Wieland and Chief Pambianchi said that 80- to 85-percent of volunteers meet the activity threshold to qualify for the incentive. Also, both RVFD officers said the incentive program has enabled the volunteer department to stabilize membership and thus optimize experience and training investment. Many new, younger members keep the average age stable.

The Commissions took no action other than to agree that the incentive program seems to be well founded and well managed.

**Day Firefighter Program**

Chief Burford and President Moore presented to the Commission the experiences with the Day Firefighter positions. Per the labor contract, an evaluation and recommendation was to be made to the Commission based on staffing the Day Firefighter position. Chief Burford explained that nine months of Day Firefighter staffing was experienced between July 1, 2007 and January 12, 2008 with two employees. Essentially the program allowed two firefighters to work day shifts (four on/four off) in order to increase staffing during daytime hours when most calls (particularly EMS) occur.

Chief Burford said that the Day-time program did save some overtime expense at earlier staffing levels, but does not generate significant savings at current staffing levels. Chief Burford and President Moore both stated that the daytime firefighters “float” from shift to shift and therefore miss training opportunities and are unable to develop the operational synchronicity that comes from being a member of a team (shift) that trains and operates together.

Chief Burford and President Moore recommended that the two firefighters assigned to Day Firefighter positions be placed on shift in light of the fact that staffing levels are such that the move would benefit the department. The Day Firefighter position is to remain in the contract to be utilized as necessary when staffing levels are such that the Day Firefighter position would benefit the department. When necessary, the shift staffing could be adjusted to cover firefighters out on disability, but the attempt would keep all four shifts in tact.

The Commissioners said by consensus that they would take the request under consideration in executive session.

### **Fire Ops 101**

President Moore invited Commissioners to sign-up for “Fire Ops 101” education and training sponsored by the Danbury and Ridgefield firefighters’ locals. The day gives community decision makers and media representatives to “live a day as a firefighter.” Participants put out a fire, rescue a victim, and perform defibrillation on a cardiac patient – all to understand the job of a rescue worker.” All Commissioners expressed interested. President Moore said details will follow.

Without further business, the meeting was adjourned by consensus at 7:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted.

Richard N. Aarons  
Assistant Emergency Manager  
Acting Secretary