

MINUTE OF SPECIAL MEETING - WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 10, 1990

A Special Meeting of the 21st Board of Representatives of the City of Stamford, Connecticut was held on Wednesday, October 10, 1990, pursuant to a "Call" issued by President Sandra Goldstein, in the Legislative Chambers of the Board of Representatives, Government Center, 888 Washington Boulevard, Stamford, Connecticut. The Call was for 8:00 p.m.

The meeting was called to order at 8:45 p.m. after both political parties had met in Caucus.

INVOCATION was given by Rep. Audrey Maihock, 19 District.

"At a time when we are enjoying a delightful, glorious autumn in Stamford, we are mindful of threatening clouds of disaster that hover on the horizon in the Middle East.

We remember our valiant servicemen there serving their country and each of us under very dangerous and uncomfortable conditions. They are living a day at a time as the balance of peace tilts precariously back and forth and with it their safety, our safety, and the welfare of the world.

Let us pray for our servicemen.

The experience of the shutdown of our federal government temporarily this past week because of Congress' difficulties to solve its momentous budget problems has made fiscal responsibility more urgent to legislators throughout our nation. The plethora of problems engulfing the historic City of Philadelphia, which is facing the specter of bankruptcy presently, makes each of us determined to do our best to keep Stamford a progressive City with a desirable quality of ~~live~~ life.

Let us pray for our nation and our City.

We realize that all the efforts we put forth on this Board depend not only on us ourselves but on a loving God, our creator.

Let us praise the Lord.

God bless all people everywhere and preserve in this beautiful world we are so privileged to live in. Amen."

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG was led by President Sandra Goldstein.

The "Call" of the Special Meeting was read by President Goldstein.

"I, Sandra Goldstein, President of the 21st Board of Representative of the City of Stamford, Connecticut, and pursuant to Section 2-10-4 of the Stamford Charter, hereby call a Special Meeting of said Board of Representatives on Wednesday, October 10, 1990, at 8:00 p.m. to consider and act upon the Ratification of Agreement between the City of Stamford and the International Association of Firefighters, Local 786.

ROLL CALL was taken by Clerk Annie M. Summerville. There were 30 members present and 10 absent. Absent were Maria Nakian (excused), Dominick Cardillo (excused), Garry Clemmons, Gloria DePina, Naomi Schoenfeld (excused), Elaine Mitchell, John Hogan, Patricia McGrath, Joseph Lovallo (excused) and Frank Mollo (excused).

The Chair declared a quorum.

PAGE was Michael C. Fedele, Jr., 5th grade student at Hart School and son of Rep. Michael C. Fedele.

PRESIDENT GOLDSTEIN thanked Michael Fedele, Jr. for coming to the meeting and serving as Page.

MACHINE TEST VOTE: Test votes were taken by the President and the machine was in good working order.

LABOR RELATIONS COMMITTEE - John Hogan, Chairman

Mr. Boccuzzi Chaired the Committee.

Mr. Johnson left the Floor and did not participate in any discussion or vote.

MR. BOCCUZZI said the Labor Relations Committee met on Friday, October 5, 1990. Those attending the meeting were Reps. John Boccuzzi, Ruth Powers, Peter Nanos, James Rubino, John Zimmerman, Richard Lyons, and John Zelinsky; Thomas Barrett, Labor Negotiator; Daniel Hunsberger, President of the Firefighters Union; and Jason Beckwick, representing the actuary, Mercer, Inc.

Mr. Boccuzzi stated the Committee reconvened this evening with Reps. Richard Lyons, Ruth Powers, James Rubino, Sandra Goldstein, John Zimmerman, Scott Morris, Michael Larobina, and John Boccuzzi attending.

Mr. Boccuzzi on behalf of the Committee and the Board thanked the new researcher, Eva Weller, for the work she did on the report concerning the firemens agreement; a copy was sent to all Board members. Mr. Boccuzzi said there was very little time to assemble all the information needed to complete the report. He said her work was appreciated and hoped that in the future, her tasks will be easier and with more time to complete her research.

1. RATIFICATION OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF STAMFORD AND THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIREFIGHTERS, LOCAL 786. AGREEMENT IS FOR THREE YEARS, 7/1/90 TO 6/30/93; 6-1/2% increase in first year effective 7/1/90; 2% effective 7/1/91; 2-1/2% effective 1/1/92; 2% effective 7/1/92; 2-1/2% effective 1/1/93; and other related issues. Action must be taken within 30 days from 9/10/90. Board of Finance will issue advisory opinion. Submitted by Mayor Thom Serrani, 9/10/90. Returned to Committee 10/1/90.

Mr. Boccuzzi said the Committee met twice. He said at the Friday meeting, there was a disagreement on some of the numbers in Exhibit I; one was the amount of money in vested new pension and longevity. Mr. Boccuzzi said the actuary went over the figures again and when the new figures came in, some adjustments were made; one number was down but the longevity numbers went very high, therefore, the figures were higher than originally presented.

Mr. Boccuzzi said the total increase for the first year was 9.32%; total increase for the second year was 15.28%; and the total increase for the third year was 20.99%. These figures were in Exhibit II. Mr. Boccuzzi said with the financial conditions presently in the northeast and probably the entire country, it was difficult for the Committee to accept a final number of 20.30%. He said the Committee felt that there were some areas of the contract where changes could be made so the impact for the end of the three years would be less than the 20.30%

LABOR RELATIONS COMMITTEE: (continued)

MR. BOCCUZZI said the Committee voted five no and zero yes votes to reject the contract. Mr. Boccuzzi Moved to approve the agreement between the City and the International Association of Firefighters, Local 786. Seconded.

Mr. Boccuzzi said regarding the vote, it was difficult and agonizing for the Committee to come to that decision. Mr. Lyons, Ms. Powers and Mr. Rubino worked hard trying to find what could be done to change the overall numbers but could not find a reason to vote to approve the contract.

MR. ZELINSKY requested his remarks be recorded verbatim. "Thank you, Madam President. First let me begin by saying we are very fortunate in Stamford to have outstanding fire department personnel. Over the years, we have seen the valiant efforts by these city employees who expose themselves to dangers involved in fighting all types of fires in our city and saving the lives of our citizens and their property. The firefighters contract before us this evening is not perfect. It does not benefit one side over the other. The consensus of some of my colleagues regarding the changes in the pension plan are valid and I, too, am very concerned as well about the final cost. However, I strongly believe the contract is fair to both the city and the firefighters. The firefighters agreed on a three-year contract from the present two-year contract, thus, allowing the city one extra year before negotiating again. The wage increase of 6.5% for the first full year, the 2% starting the second year July 1, '91 for six months and 2-1/2% starting January 1, '92 and the same for the third year is very fair and equitable. What price do we put on a firefighter saving a human life? Can this be measured in dollars and cents? These firefighters put their lives on the line everytime the alarm goes off at their station and the fire trucks roll to fight a fire and to possibly save lives and property.

If this contract is voted down this evening, it goes to binding arbitration. At that point, the negotiations are open again and we really don't know where they will lead. They could lead to costs far and above what we have here tonight. We will have no control whatsoever with that decision. The only control we have is what is before us this evening. I will vote in favor of this contract and I urge my colleagues to do also. Thank you very much."

MR. STORK said that this evening he was going to set aside his personal feelings and concerns for the state of the economy in the city and do the job that he was elected to do; represent the 15th district constituents. He said the Belltown area was blessed with numerous city firemen as well as retired city firemen. He said the long time dedicated professionals reached out to him for support for their fight for a successfully negotiated contract. Mr. Stork said he pledged his support. He said he only received one phone call against the contract and that was not enough to persuade him to vote no.

Mr. Stork said as far as the contract being too expensive, an argument could be made in the affirmative; also, he asked, "If the firemen were being greedy in their demands?" He said, "possibly." Mr. Stork said the key question was, "Are the firemen being treated in a manner unlike that of the city policemen if the contract is turned down?" Mr. Stork said his answer was a resounding "yes."

LABOR RELATIONS COMMITTEE: (continued)

MR. STORK said if the Legislative Body is upset about maintaining parity between the police and firemen from contract to contract, he said it was not the responsibility of the Legislative Body to stop the parity. Mr. Stork said the city needed a strong, able bodied, professional negotiator to bring the contracts under control and he said the message has to be sent to the Mayor's Administration loud and clear. Mr. Stork said that, at present, we do not have a negotiator of this quality, and there has not been one for over a decade.

Mr. Stork stated to his colleagues to vote the contract down if they have to, but the Firemens' Union will go to binding arbitration and that will mean a win for the union and a loss for the city; translated, Mr. Stork said that would mean less firemen and he did not want that on his conscience. He said he would vote in favor of the contract.

MR. RUBINO said he agreed with Mr. Boccuzzi. Mr. Rubino stated the Board worked hard to find a way to approve the contract. He said the Committee met several times; the city's actuary and labor negotiator were grilled and then there were more extensive deliberations.

Mr. Rubino said the Committee came to a decision that each member hated to make, but being public officials, they have a responsibility. Mr. Rubino said the salary increases in the contract were fair; the pension enhancements pushed the contract beyond what could be afforded. Mr. Rubino said to ratify the contract would mean layoffs of other city workers.

Mr. Rubino stated that changes in the 100% survivor benefit could bring the contract into an acceptable range. He said that in the private sector, the 100% survivor benefit is available but at a cost; employees are given a choice of a high-based pension payment or the lower survivor benefit or a lower-based pension payment with a higher survivor benefit. Mr. Rubino said a refinement could bring the contract in an affordable range. He said he would vote against the contract hoping the parties could come together again and find some creative refinements to the pension enhancements.

MS. POWERS said that as a member of the Committee, she urged her colleagues to turn the contract down. She said the effective increase over three years would be 20.99% which is really 21%. She said the researcher did some work and found that the surrounding towns negotiated lower increases in better economic times; She said Bridgeport, Norwalk and Greenwich negotiated effective July 1, 1988; that time was in the middle of the economic boom in this region.

Ms. Powers stated that 50 city workers were laid off this year and the grand list is flat. She said the increases in the contract would most likely result in additional lay offs or tremendous increases in taxes. Ms. Powers said the taxpayers are the ones being laid off by the employers. She stated that on the parity issue, the uniform services if on the same parity, should be negotiated at the same time. She said she was most concerned with the pension enhancement stating that the salary increase could be afforded but the pension enhancement were out-of-line. She urged the union and the city to continue to negotiate before the contract goes to binding arbitration.

LABOR RELATIONS COMMITTEE: (continued)

MR. LYONS said he agreed with Ms. Powers. He said the uniformed services should be at parity, but the negotiations came in different economic times. He said the economic climate today is not what it was when the police contract was negotiated. Mr. Lyons said it was negotiated in an election year; that had an affect. Mr. Lyons said a 21% salary increase, regardless if it were in his own family, he could not accept. He said if the contract goes to binding arbitration and it costs the city more, the arbitrators made the decision. He said he could not vote for a 21% increase on any contract in this day and age.

Mr. Lyons spoke regarding the service of the actuary. He said the Committee felt that the numbers received were in error and that should not have happened. Mr. Lyons said the Committee asked that the President of the Board write a letter to the parties involved stating that any numbers sent forward to the Board on any matters and especially on contract negotiations, be researched, verified and double checked. Mr. Lyons said that it should not be the responsibility of Committee members to seek and verify numbers. Mr. Lyons said the Committee also felt that if the contract is rejected, the Board should send a letter outlining the concerns and recommendations on what could possibly be renegotiated before binding arbitration.

Mr. Lyons stated the percentage increase in the area of 13, 14 and 15% was acceptable for the uniform services but perhaps not acceptable for the other unions, but a 21% increase could not be accepted. Mr. Lyons said that was why he voted no and he said if every member of the Committee found a reason to support the contract, they would have.

MR. DeLUCA said that no person would deny that the firefighters are valiant and dedicated people. He said that if the contract was rejected, the same people would save lives if they had to. He said money was not conducive with the dedication of the people. Mr. DeLuca said reality must be faced; the economic conditions are difficult, and in the past year, the budget sessions were difficult resulting in a heavy cut to the Board of Education budget and cuts to other departments which resulted in lay offs.

Mr. DeLuca said that as Ms. Powers and Mr. Rubino stated, he was also concerned with the pensions regarding survivorship. Mr. DeLuca stated that in private industry, an employee receives three options. Mr. DeLuca said if the contract is renegotiated, there could possibly be savings for the city.

Mr. DeLuca said he was bothered by the longevity increases. Originally, after 10 years, longevity payment was \$200.00, 15 years, \$400.00, etc. and now the contract has five years, \$500.00; 10 years \$1,000.00, etc. Mr. DeLuca said these increases alone add up to \$133,000. Mr. DeLuca said he would vote against the approval of the contract. He said it was better to stay at a 6% increase and have employment and benefits instead of being without a job.

LABOR RELATIONS COMMITTEE: (continued)

MR. BLUM asked what the give-backs were on part of the firemen? Mr. Blum stated that he received calls from some retirees and said that some widows receive \$200.00 per month and retired firemen who retired years ago are only receiving \$400.00 a month; this was less than their social security pensions. He said to be retired on a small pension is difficult. Mr. Blum said looking at Exhibit I, the actuary's figures for '89/90 base, were \$2,086,186, and for three more years, the increase would be \$342,639. Mr. Blum said that people want to have a decent pension when they retire. Mr. Blum quoted the rate of increases to be received as submitted in the contract. He stated that on parity, the police and firefighters should be the same. He said he intended to vote for the contract.

MR. BOCCUZZI said that members of the Committee expressed their feelings in their votes concerning the dollars and cents in the contract. Mr. Boccuzzi said he understood binding arbitration and minimum manpower and what affect it could have on the city. He said he would hate to see high numbers come back from arbitration that could force the city to close a firehouse. He said he hoped that would never happen, but it could possibly happen.

Mr. Boccuzzi said regarding the pensions, he agreed with what the union was trying to do. He said that today people cannot live on what they could years ago. Mr. Boccuzzi stated that there are people in the city that worked 35 and 40 years and do not have a pension. He said these people knew that upon retiring they would receive social security and they made some provisions to enter in some kind of a program to build up a reserve.

Mr. Boccuzzi said he did not think it fair to ask people that were laid off or on fixed incomes to come up with more money to pay for what this contract costs. If the contract is not approved, he said he was hopeful that negotiations would continue. He said he hoped the union understands the situation that the city is in; 50 people were laid off and the contract is asking for over \$2 million for a three-year period. Mr. Boccuzzi stated that he had a problem with laying people off and people losing their jobs.

Mr. Boccuzzi stated that when there are salary increases, there are increases in overtime, differential, holidays and benefits and if the city's tax base does not increase and the city cannot afford the increases, lay offs will have to be made; not only in one union but also in other unions. Mr. Boccuzzi said that we should keep in mind that there are many people without employment and the city does not want any lay offs. Mr. Boccuzzi asked that all unions have patience and understanding, and to work hard to keep the city financially sound with a good work force to provide services for the taxpayers.

MR. ZELINSKY - "Thank you again, Madam President. Some of the comments I've heard pertaining to the following that tonight this contract is approved, then automatically, our taxes are going to be raised; if this contract is approved tonight, automatically, many, many city workers will be laid off; if this contract is approved tonight, there's a possibility that a firehouse may be closed. Well, I guess that is a possibility, however, tax may still go up, people may still be laid off and firehouses may be closed even if we don't approve this contract this evening. So let's not confuse the issue that we're voting to lower taxes or to save jobs; we're voting on a contract, we're voting on a contract that was negotiated not just with the firefighters union; not just with their input and not just beneficial to them; this was a two-sided negotiation.

LABOR RELATIONS COMMITTEE: (continued)

MR. ZELINSKY: (continuing) "The City of Stamford negotiated through the city negotiator for the best interest for the City of Stamford and its taxpayers. May I remind my colleagues that for the fiscal year just ended, the City of Stamford ended up a \$160,000 surplus. Comparing a firefighter and his job to private industry that is someone working in a nice office with air conditioning or in a company fully can't reflect the stress that is placed on these firefighters when they have to go out on a call and fight a dangerous fire, possibly a chemical fire. In the past, four of these valiant firefighters were seriously injured fighting a chemical fire, and I know the cost of the pension is high; there is no question about that. However, I think we have to weigh everything. The people who decide to become firefighters know that their lives may be in jeopardy; they may take years off their lives; they may not even live; they may not even live to enjoy these pension benefits that we are talking about here this evening, so I would really have you consider these thoughts when you vote tonight and again I would urge you to vote in favor of this contract. Thank you."

MR. LYONS stated that he wanted the record to note that he understood Mr. Boccuzzi's remarks referring to lay offs and possible closing of fire stations or any other departments. Mr. Lyons stated that it was not on the approval of the contract; that it was on the possibility of coming back from binding arbitration at a much higher rate than presently in the contract. Mr. Lyons said that he did not think Mr. Boccuzzi meant that if the contract is approved that firefighters and city employees will be laid off or fire stations will be closed.

MR. BLUM asked why 50 city employees were laid off in April? He questioned if the city wanted to show a surplus? He said he received calls from his constituents stating that the city had a surplus and the taxes were raised 5%.

MR. BOCCUZZI stated that a decision was made to reduce the work force, the projection in tax revenue was down; there were large taxpayers that had no way of paying their taxes. Mr. Boccuzzi said that one large company, had someone come in to help them pay the taxes and these taxes came to over \$3 million. Mr. Boccuzzi said the city was not prepared for this to happen. Mr. Boccuzzi wondered if Mr. Blum thought that \$160,000 surplus would have saved 50 employees? Mr. Boccuzzi said, if that were so, he would be glad to appropriate the sum to get the people back on the payroll.

Mr. Boccuzzi said in making his remarks, he did not say that the contract, if approved, would make all the things happen that he referred to. He wanted it understood that if unions do not help the city, that there will be more lay offs. He said in other unions, personnel is laid off but with the firemen, a firehouse has to be closed because of minimum manpower. Mr. Boccuzzi said he spoke in general terms and hoped that it was taken in that way.

LABOR RELATIONS COMMITTEE: (continued)

PRESIDENT GOLDSTEIN took the prerogative of the Chair to make a statement not in regard to the issue discussed.

She said that there were very few unions in the city for whom she has had a higher regard than the firefighters. She said there were few union in the city that she has seen with a leader as distinguished as the leader of the firefighters. President Goldstein stated that she hoped the firefighters understood that the Board is not very far apart in position and if the contract does not get approved, that both sides can still be in a negotiating mode and she, as President of the Board, stood ready to call a Special Meeting of the Board to meet any time clock, including the weekend, if that would help the situation.

PRESIDENT GOLDSTEIN proceeded to a vote to approve the agreement between the city and the firefighters union keeping in mind, the Committee voted negatively. The Agreement was DENIED by a vote of 24 no and 5 yes votes with one not voting.

President Goldstein said that she has seen few research reports as comprehensive and complete as the one received done by Eva Weller, the Board's researcher. She said Eva received very short notice to research the figures and background for the report. President Goldstein stated that she and the members of the Board are pleased and fortunate to have Eva.

President Goldstein announced that she has called a meeting for Tuesday, October 30, 7:00 p.m. to hear a report by the Blue Ribbon Panel studying the Law Department. President Goldstein stated that this was not a Special meeting but somewhat like a Meeting of the Whole. She stated that most likely the Board of Finance would also be present.

MR. BOCCUZZI said with the decision and discussion this evening, he asked that the President and Leadership of both parties, send a letter to Mr. Barrett, the Mayor, and the President of the Firefighters union stating the concerns that would help all parties to come together with a contract that would be acceptable to all. Mr. Boccuzzi Moved for the approval of his motion. Seconded.

PRESIDENT GOLDSTEIN called for a vote on the motion that a letter be sent to the Mayor, Labor Negotiator and Leadership of the Firefighters to articulate the reasons for the contract being denied. The motion was APPROVED by a voice vote with no dissenting votes and one abstention, Mr. Zelinsky.

MS. SUMMERVILLE and the Board applauded Michael C. Fedele, Jr. for the wonderful job he did serving as a Page and asked him to return. On behalf of the President and the Board, Ms. Summerville presented Michael with a certificate of appreciation.

LABOR RELATIONS COMMITTEE: (continued)

ADJOURNMENT - There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 9:45 p.m. after the motion to adjourn was made, seconded and approved.

*Anne A. Kachaluba*

Anne A. Kachaluba, Administrative Assistant  
and Recording Secretary  
21st Board of Representatives

Note: A copy of the backup report done by Eva Weller, researcher, will be attached to the official copy of the Minutes, the Library's copy and the Town & City Clerk's copy.

APPROVED:

*Sandra Goldstein*

Sandra Goldstein, President

## STAMVOTE - ATTENDANCE

20:53:02

10-10-1990

NO	NAME
1	PRS EVANKO, JUDITH
2	N/P NAKIAN, MARIA
3	PRS PIA, THOMAS
4	PRS OWENS, BOBBY
5	N/P MC GRATH, PATRICIA
6	PRS LYONS, RICHARD
7	PRS ZIMMERMAN, JOHN
8	PRS RYBNICK, GERALD
9	N/P MOLLO, FRANK
10	N/P LOVALLO, JOSEPH
11	PRS MAIHOCK, AUDREY
12	PRS MARTIN, DAVID
13	PRS DE LUCA, ROBERT
14	PRS ESPOSITO, STANLEY
15	PRS STORK, PHILIP
16	PRS FEDELE, MICHAEL
17	PRS RUBINO, JAMES
18	PRS MELLIS, ELLEN
19	PRS WHITE, W. DENNIS
20	PRS SUMMERVILLE, ANNIE

NOT PRESENT 10

NO	NAME
21	N/P DE PINA, GLORIA
22	PRS DOMONKOS, CARMEN
23	N/P CLEMMONS, GARY
24	PRS NANOS, PETER
25	PRS PERILLO, MILDRED
26	PRS PAVIA, NICHOLAS
27	N/P MITCHELL, ELAINE
28	N/P CARDILLO, DOMINICK
29	PRS MORRIS, SCOTT
30	N/P HOGAN, JOHN J.
31	PRS ZELINSKY, JOHN
32	N/P SCHOENFELD, NAOMI
33	PRS LAROBINA, MICHAEL
34	PRS POWERS, RUTH
35	PRS BLUM, DAVID
36	PRS JACHIMCZYK, DAVID
37	PRS RINALDI, MARY LOU
38	PRS JOHNSON, FRED
39	PRS BOCCUZZI, JOHN
40	PRS GOLDSTEIN, SANDRA

PRESENT 30

## STAMVOTE - VOTE PROCESSING

10-10-1990

20:53:51

TEST VOTE YES

NO	NAME
1	YES EVANKO, JUDITH
2	N/P NAKIAN, MARIA
3	YES PIA, THOMAS
4	YES OWENS, BOBBY
5	N/P MC GRATH, PATRICIA
6	YES LYONS, RICHARD
7	YES ZIMMERMAN, JOHN
8	YES RYBNICK, GERALD
9	N/P MOLLO, FRANK
10	N/P LOVALLO, JOSEPH
11	YES MAIHOCK, AUDREY
12	YES MARTIN, DAVID
13	YES DE LUCA, ROBERT
14	YES ESPOSITO, STANLEY
15	YES STORK, PHILIP
16	YES FEDELE, MICHAEL
17	YES RUBINO, JAMES
18	YES MELLIS, ELLEN
19	YES WHITE, W. DENNIS
20	YES SUMMERVILLE, ANNIE
	N/P 10 N/V 0

NO	NAME
21	N/P DE PINA, GLORIA
22	YES DOMONKOS, CARMEN
23	N/P CLEMMONS, GARY
24	YES NANOS, PETER
25	YES PERILLO, MILDRED
26	YES PAVIA, NICHOLAS
27	N/P MITCHELL, ELAINE
28	N/P CARDILLO, DOMINICK
29	YES MORRIS, SCOTT
30	N/P HOGAN, JOHN J.
31	YES ZELINSKY, JOHN
32	N/P SCHOENFELD, NAOMI
33	YES LAROBINA, MICHAEL
34	YES POWERS, RUTH
35	YES BLUM, DAVID
36	YES JACHIMCZYK, DAVID
37	YES RINALDI, MARY LOU
38	YES JOHNSON, FRED
39	YES BOCCUZZI, JOHN
40	YES GOLDSTEIN, SANDRA
	YES 30 NO 0 ABS 0