

Safety Health & Service Committee Meeting

Monday, July 28, 2003

The Safety Health and Service Committee met in council chambers at 5:15 P.M. to discuss three separate issues, all concerning the New Philadelphia Fire Department. Present at the meeting were committee members Rob Maurer, Art Cicconetti and Chairman Sam Hitchcock. Guests presents were Councilwoman Sandy Cox, Fire Chief Jamie Snyder, Fire Captain Dan Fait and Mayor Ron Brodzinski.

The first issue discussed was the proposal by the fire department for a resolution or ordinance requiring all businesses or industry in the city to install "Knox boxes". A Knox box was described by Chief Snyder as a small "safe" that is used to contain keys to a location which would allow firefighters to perform a non-destructive entry to the business/ plant/ home using the Knox box system. The Chief further explained that the Fire Department would have a common key that would open any of the Knox boxes and this key would be kept at the Fire Department. He said that there would actually be three of these keys and they would be kept in lock boxes on each of the fire vehicles, accessible by firemen using a number code on a touch pad. He stated that the three boxes have already been ordered and will be paid for out of his existing budget.

Dan Fait said that about 40 of the Knox boxes have already been purchased by businesses and he has been getting good response in promotion of the idea. Chief Snyder said that he was requesting the ordinance or resolution to officially advise businesses that the Fire Department was no longer going to carry the many business keys they now carry and to make installation mandatory for all new construction in business and industry. The committee unanimously disagreed with making installation mandatory but agreed to request a resolution stating that the Fire Department would no longer carry the individual keys but would instead assist citizens in participating in the Knox box system. The motion for a resolution to be drawn up by the Law Director was made by Art Cicconetti, seconded by Rob Maurer and passed unanimously.

At 5:35 P.M., the committee moved to the next issue which was a request by Chief Snyder for council to pass legislation authorizing the New Philadelphia Fire Department to respond to disasters in any state agency, county, or political subdivision of this state, or to a governmental agency of an adjoining state, without contract. The Chief explained that this was in response to the Homeland Security organization. He said that the state fire marshal was compiling a list of available resources that could be called in the event of disaster. The chief, when asked by Chairman Hitchcock who would have the ultimate authority to decide when the fire department would respond to such a disaster stated that the decision would be his. Councilman Cicconetti responded that he believed that the mayor should have the responsibility for the call. Chief Snyder said that he was sure that state law gave him the responsibility to make decisions regarding mutual aid. Since the Law Director was not present, the motion was made, seconded and passed that this issue would be tabled until a legal opinion could be obtained.

At 5:46 PM, the committee moved to the final issue to be considered - a request for a resolution to be drawn up and presented to full council for the establishment of a new Section 6 in Article 15 of the current firefighter's contract which would establish a new classification of HAZ-MAT Technician and authorize .20 per hour to be added to the base wage of those who qualify; and for a new job classification of Dive Rescuer to be established with .10 added to the base wage of those who qualify. The above is the result of negotiations completed between the mayor and New Philadelphia Firefighters Local 1501. A motion was made by Rob Maurer in support of a resolution, seconded by Art Cicconetti and was unanimously passed.

At 5:54 P.M., with no further business to consider, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Sam R. Hitchcock, Chairman
SAFETY, HEALTH & SERVICE COMMITTEE
CITY OF NEW PHILADELPHIA