

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION 8-17 OF THE NORWICH CODE OF ORDINANCES

WHEREAS, the providing of fire protection is a public function that falls within the state’s police power and Connecticut has delegated this function to local municipalities through Gen. Stat. Section 7-148(c)(4)(B) which statute provides that any municipality shall have the power to:

“[p]rovide for fire protection, organize, maintain and regulate the persons providing fire protection, provide the necessary apparatus for extinguishing fires and do all other things necessary or desirable for the protection of the municipality from fire” . . . ;and

WHEREAS, the City of Norwich is responsible for the protection of life and property from fire and for the enforcement of all laws, ordinances and regulations relating to fire protection and fire safety within the City of Norwich; and

WHEREAS the Charter of the City of Norwich, in Chapter 10, Section 4, provides that there shall be a fire department consisting of the fire chief and such other officers and employees of such ranks and grades as maybe prescribed by ordinance, which fire department shall be responsible for the protection of life and property within the city from fire and for the enforcement of all laws, ordinances and regulations relating to fire prevention and fire safety; and

WHEREAS, the City of Norwich also relies upon five (5) volunteer fire companies located within different sections of the City of Norwich for the provision of fire protection and, the Charter, at Chapter X section 6, provides:

“Nothing in this charter shall be construed to affect the organization, status or property of any volunteer fire company now established or which may hereafter be established in the city. Whenever paid and volunteer companies are acting together, they shall be under the command of the fire chief.”; and

WHEREAS, the fire department and the five (5) volunteer companies are collectively described herein as the “Fire Service”, and all utilize and rely upon apparatus and equipment provided by the City of Norwich in connection with their fire protection, fire control, and fire prevention responsibilities; and

WHEREAS, the City of Norwich commissioned an analysis of the Fire/EMS services in Norwich by McGrath Consulting Group, Inc., which prepared a detailed report of its analysis and made a number of recommendations relative to supporting, improving, and updating the provision of fire protection, fire control, fire prevention, and other fire related services in the City of Norwich, including the delivery of the most efficient and cost effective services to all of Norwich, the council agreeing with its recommendation that such services be provided with a focus on **“WHAT IS BEST FOR THE INDIVIDUAL NEEDING THE SERVICE”**; and

WHEREAS, the city of Norwich is in the process of updating its communication and dispatch services to, among other things, improve communications among the components of the fire service; and

WHEREAS, this Ordinance is intended to amend and supplement Ordinance 8-17 of the Norwich Code of Ordinances with a goal of providing the best, most efficient and cost-effective service for all of Norwich, acknowledging that the primary focus of the Fire Service of the City of Norwich should be and remain the **“WHAT IS BEST FOR THE INDIVIDUAL NEEDING THE SERVICE.”**

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORWICH that the following amendment to section 8-17 of the Norwich Code of Ordinances be and hereby are adopted.

Sec. 8-17 – Responding to Alarms and calls for service

- (a) The city manager may permit the fire department established in Chapter X, section 4 of the Charter of the City of Norwich (the Norwich Fire Department) to respond to alarms and other incidents as determined by the city manager outside the limits of the city consolidation district, and the volunteer fire companies to respond in cases of serious emergency or otherwise to assist the fire department in responding to alarms in the city consolidation district.
- (b) The city manager may permit the use of fire apparatus belonging to the city in places outside of the city. He may confer upon the fire chief and the chiefs of the respective volunteer fire companies' authority to permit such use, subject, however, to such regulations and instructions as the chief executive officer may impose.
- (c) The city of Norwich shall institute and have an automatic aid policy pursuant to which:
 - (1) The Norwich Fire Department (sometimes referred to as the career fire department or the paid fire department) shall be on automatic aid assignment to all reported structure fires and other such calls as directed by current policy established by the city manager;
 - (2) The Norwich Fire Department shall be on automatic aid assignment to all re-tones of a volunteer fire company established within the city of Norwich for a fire or other emergency occurring within the boundaries of the city of Norwich;
 - (3) The Norwich Fire Department shall be on automatic aid assignment for all fire calls and all calls pertaining to situations or conditions posing a risk of causing serious damage to or the disabling of city assets, including, but not limited to, all structures and properties which are owned by the city, leased by the city, or operated by the city or any of its departments;
 - (4) The Norwich Fire Department shall receive automatic aid from the volunteer companies as prescribed in an automatic aid policy as established by the city manager;
 - (5) For purposes of such automatic aid policy, a "response" is defined as a fire apparatus enroute and staffed by at least two (2) certified interior fire fighters;
 - (6) For purposes of such automatic aid policy, a "re-tone" is defined as an emergency call when there is no response within five (5) minutes, or sooner as current policy dictates, from the time of the original dispatch.

President Pro Tem Joseph A. DeLucia
Alderman Tracey Burto