

14

CITY OF DANBURY
FIRE DEPARTMENT
19 NEW STREET
DANBURY, CONNECTICUT 06810

Geoffrey Herald
Fire Chief

Phone 203-796-1555
Fax 203-796-1533

June 30, 2010

Mayor Mark D. Boughton
City Council
City of Danbury
155 Deer Hill Ave.
Danbury, Ct. 06810

**Re: Statement of Condition and Property, Danbury Fire Department
City Code of Ordinances 8-13**

Dear Mayor Boughton and Members of the Common Council,

In accordance with Section 8-13 of the City Charter the following report is offered as to the listing of property and a general statement of condition and affairs of the Department.

The Danbury Fire Department continues to operate as the largest combination Department in the State with five career and 12 volunteer stations. The City owns and maintains six of the volunteer stations, with the remainder privately owned. The current table of organization represents 123 positions of the career department. As of this date we have 119. Current membership rosters of the 12 volunteer companies have approximately 110 certified suppression responders.

The fire department continues to hold the certificate of operation for the ambulance service and function in a first responder ALS EMS modality. The ambulance and paramedic services are currently contracted to Danbury Health Care Associates. The department hosts the City's Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) for all 911 calls in the City. During the year 2009 over 40,000 calls were received.

Facilities and Property

The following City owned fire stations and facilities are currently in operation.

The Joseph J. Bertalovitz Fire Headquarters - 19 New Street

Melody/Halas Station 23 - Osborne Street

Commerce Park Station 24 - Eagle Road

West Side Station 26 – Kenosia Ave. Extension

Fire Training Center - Plumtrees Road

Padanaram Hose # 3 – North Street

Independent Hose # 4 - Hoyt Street

Wooster Hose # 5 - Coal Pit Hill Road

Citizens Hose # 6 - Jefferson Avenue

Water Witch # 7 - Locust Avenue

Phoenix Hose # 8 - Well Avenue

The Department also has a 20 year rental agreement for Station 25 located on South King Street. This rent is paid to the King Street Volunteer Company #14 on an annual basis. The current annual payment for this property is \$20,525. The Fire Marshal's Fire Prevention Bureau operates out of offices at City Hall. The Bureau is responsible for Prevention, Public Education and Inspection activities in the City of Danbury.

Status and Condition

All city fire stations are operable at this time. We continue to work with the Public Buildings Department and private contractors on matters of repair and maintenance.

The Fire Training Facility on Plumtrees Road is available for drills and exercises. During the past year, the facility has seen much use by many agencies. These include all 12 of the Danbury Volunteer companies and the career department. Other agencies that used the facility include the Danbury Police, the FCI, and departments from our mutual aid partners and our region. Department members, public works and city engineers are currently working on additional improvements for the grounds.

This spring we completed the installation of additional lighting on poles installed last year. The wiring was run under ground so as to allow aerial operations. The poles for this effort were donated and installed by A, T & T. The excavation for the underground conduit was performed by the public works department through Duke Hart. The wiring, conduits and lighting installation was completed in house by members of the fire department.

At this writing a consortium of donors of cash and labor are constructing a roof training prop on the grounds. This critical addition will allow for training in roof access and ventilation techniques. Mr. Hart was again instrumental in excavating for our roof prop concrete pad as well. This cooperation between departments has saved the city considerable potential outlays. Improved parking and safety improvements to Plumtrees Road, some of which are completed, will further enhance the area. We continue to seek additional funding on the local, State and Federal levels for a permanent classroom building and other training mock-ups.

Fire Headquarters continues to suffer severe space constraints. Despite the fact that we have added no staffing since 2007, the need for additional conference rooms, training and office space has grown due to mandatory requirements. The addition of various apparatus and trailers through Homeland Security grants, state issuance and City purchases has stressed our vehicle storage capacity. This has reached severe levels. As a result, many vehicles and trailers remain parked out side of the buildings in the weather. Others are stored at the airport facility which could cause delays in response.

During the last several years some improvements have been completed in this structure which is 40-years old. Through a very generous donation by Doctor Robert Bedoukian, we were able to renovate our classroom last year. This was complete tear out and rebuild of the space, originally a locker room. The electronics, HVAC system flooring, desks, chairs and lighting were all replaced.

Station 23 Osborne Street is currently operating without major structural issues. All systems are operable. This building was completed nearly 20 years ago. There is an issue with the brick facade which is being investigated to determine what must be done to repair it.

Station 24 Commerce Park is currently operating. This structure was constructed and donated to the city by Powers Construction in the 1970s'. We have had a few issues with the structure but the private engineering firm hired to evaluate sinking areas of the landscaped property and issues of concrete block separation has been completed. This evaluation of the structure indicates that though there are some serious and several less serious issues, the structure is not at risk of imminent failure as was our concern. The parking lot was repaved through the generous donation of labor by American Pavement Specialists.

King Street Station 25 is operating out of the rented facility. This facility continues to meet the needs of the King Street district with the assignment of Engine 25. The facility, though connected to Engine 14, is independent with a back –up emergency generator, diesel exhaust system and a new septic system. The City has a long term agreement for the rental of the space from King St. Volunteer Company # 14.

Station 26, West Side – The West Side Fire Station housing Engine 26 is fully capable. This station is on a City owned site off of Kenosia Avenue extension. This most recent addition to the department was completed and opened in the early fall of 2007. This station and its strategic placement have proven successful in addressing the needs on the west side of the city.

911 PSAP and Emergency Dispatch Center continue to operate out of the first floor of fire headquarters. Advancements in technology and staffing demands within the communications arena have long ago rendered this facility obsolete. Relocation needs are even more immediate than have been identified in the past. New equipment has been installed in the new Police Department headquarters but is not currently being used as the PSAP by the Fire Department. E-911 equipment in use at Fire HQ that can be moved should be moved promptly to the new facility. This will provide the greatest level of customer service and care that our citizens deserve.

Many radios and components in operation at Headquarters have reached the end of their life cycle. In June of 2009, a major component of the dispatching system was acquired and installed. This year we have continued to have breakdowns and failures of the components operating in our current location. Luckily we have not had catastrophic failure but it is growing in likelihood that we will. To ensure continued operations many other parts must be replaced as soon as possible. Components to repair and maintain this facility are no longer readily available and a failure will be catastrophic.

Much of the equipments' condition is so marginal that the people who installed it many years ago have recommended that we not try to move it to the new Police Headquarters facility on Main Street. This site at Fire Headquarters will need to be maintained until a permanent location within the new Police facility is fully operable. The remaining equipment, if supported, will then provide a redundant emergency communications system as a back up to the primary communications system. However, keeping the current equipment in good working order is increasingly difficult.

Volunteer Station # 3 Padanaram, continues to operate on North Street. The building was constructed in 1950. This structure is in a poor location for a fire station, on a curve on a very busy street. There is inadequate parking and access to the station from the street is usually difficult due to traffic. Additionally, there are a number of repairs needed that will be costly. These include extensive roof repairs, replacement of windows and casings. The fire escape is unsafe and needs repair or replacement as do the gutters of the structure. As Chief, I recommend that this company along with Engine 5 and Squad 6 be moved to a new, modern station.

Engine #5 Wooster Hose and Squad #6 Citizens are currently operating. However, though there are no individual major issues, functionally and cosmetically they remain antiquated and marginally meet the operating needs of the companies. Engine 5 on Coal pit hill was built in 1883 and Squad 6 in 1923. Some repairs have been completed but many others are needed. Additional roof repairs to Citizens Hose may be needed as well as a new overhead door. The main roof of #6 Citizens Hose was replaced a few years ago. Asbestos siding, boiler concerns, lack of insulation and the need for modern windows on these two structures all indicate that the funds needed to properly repair and restore these structures will be difficult to sustain. As Chief, I recommend that these two

stations be stricken from the city property lists and the property sold. These companies would be moved to a modern station that will meet the needs of today's fire service.

Volunteer Stations # 4 Independent Hose and #7, Water Witch currently are operating. Repairs to these two stations have been relatively minor. These stations, built in 1977 and 1992 respectively, are approximately 20 years old and we should expect an additional 20 years from these buildings. Needs for roof repairs, and indications that the boilers may be near the end of their serviceable life, gives warning to the potential costs looming however.

8 Phoenix continues to operate from Well Ave. The building was built in 1958. This station is in good order generally. Maintenance issues have been within expectations and the structure is sound.

All of these stations owned by the city need electrical upgrades to improve efficiency and reduce costs. Additional engineering to correct heating and air conditioning issues will be needed to improve these costs as well. Restrictions on spending due to the fiscal pressures have made it increasingly difficult to improve and modernize these facilities. This is due to the age of the structures as well as the demands placed on the department for new and more versatile apparatus.

Regarding the status of the volunteers' stations, as Chief I believe it to be prudent to continue to evaluate the usefulness of the existing volunteer fire houses with an eye toward consolidation and replacement of the properties. This is directed toward all of the quarters of the City Volunteer component. Four of these structures are over 50 years old. Though quaint in appearance, they are not at all suited for use by modern fire departments. A Task Force has been formed by the Mayor to investigate the facility needs of the department. Potential recommendations may include the purchase of new property, construction of new stations, or construction of a single larger structure housing multiple companies: i.e. 5, 6 and 7.

Were this accomplished it would facilitate response by having the companies share quarters and cross train on the apparatus. A new station could also incorporate a state of the art training class room and electronic teaching facilities. This resource is sorely needed as the educational requirements of the volunteers has greatly expanded and will continue to expand in the future. The economy of scale with reduction in number of structures and separate heating cooling and associated maintenance costs will benefit the budget drains of the city. Sales of the various properties currently housing the volunteers would reduce the outlay by the city to complete the consolidation. An added benefit would be returning these properties to the tax roles of the city.

Fleet Inventory and Condition

The Mayor and City Council have approved the acquisition of two new fire pumpers. These have been ordered and we are expecting to take delivery of these in the late fall. This is a critical purchase and the fore sight and support of the Mayor and Council is greatly appreciated. These two vehicles are vital to our operations and will replace two older apparatus that are not dependable.

The department continues to use standardized specifications for the fleet for better efficiency in training and maintenance. A new vehicle, an SUV, temporarily serving as Car 1 (Chief), was placed in service last year. A new sedan has been acquired which will allow this vehicle to replace our incident command vehicle.

Several State and Regional vehicles are in service here in the City. Several trailers for various purposes as well as a Hazardous Material Response Vehicle, a Heavy Rescue vehicle (Squad 1) and a state issued foam trailer through the state wide regional response plan. Certain command vehicles have been fixed with tow hitches and will play a roll in our emergency plan by towing emergency trailers in times of disaster.

In the coming budget cycle we hope to retire and replace three of our oldest sedans with new vehicles. These will be used by the Command Staff and Fire Marshals. The continued replacement of fire apparatus is also necessary. With the good care which we provide, fire apparatus have a usual life span as a primary response unit of ten years. An aerial ladder will need to be replaced in the next cycle as our 2000 ladder is nearing its useful life as a first line apparatus.

Apparatus and fleet vehicles owned by the department are detailed below.

Marker#	Year	Make	Model	VIN #	Mileage	Hours	Condition
52DA	85	Chevrolet	Step-van	1GBJP32M4F3315333	28950		FPB-Fair
54DA	95	Chevrolet	Tahoe	1GNEK13K7SJ413654	103540		Backup C30-Fair
34DA	97	Ford	Crown Victoria	2FALP71W0VX178445	66269		Fair
43DA	97	Ford	Crown Victoria	2FALP71W2VX178446	75655		Fair
251DA	99	Chevrolet	Cavalier	1G1JC1242X7162093	73057		Fair
216DA	99	Chevrolet	Cavalier	1G1JC1243X7162197	22447		Good
44DA	01	Chevrolet	Tahoe	1GNEK13T11J217863	62940		Fair
NA	94	Pierce	Arrow	4P1CA02D2SA000127	99782	11714	Out of Service
NA	96	Pierce	Sabre	4P1CT02U7TA000426	102575	10639	Reserve Fair
NA	00	Pierce	Sabre	4P1CT02U6YA000232	88804	9952	Reserve Fair
NA	00	Pierce	Sabre	4P1CT02U5YA000237	98358	11602	E24-Fair
NA	00	Pierce	Dash	4P1CT02S8YA000750	33311	4931	T2- Fair
NA	03	Pierce	Sabre	4P1CT02UX3A002798	85068	9676	E25-Fair
NA	04	Pierce	Dash Platform	4P10D01H74A004530	39796	4762	T1-Fair
29DA	03	Ford	Pick-Up	1FTNX21L13EB32200	19100		Good
59DA	03	Ford	Taurus	1FAFP52U73G154371	49413		FPB- Good
142DA	03	Ford	Taurus	1FAFP52U53G154370	56048		FPB-

							Good
26DA	03	Ford	Taurus	1FAFP52U93G154369	63817		FPB Good
51DA	03	Ford	Taurus	1FAFP52U73G154368	85372		FPB Fair
2247	03	Advanced Containment Systems Inc	Decon-Trailer	1A9VFLT2031247556	NA		Fair
317DA		Sullair	Compressor	004-142661	NA	28	Good
297DA		Ingersol- Rand	Light Tower	342308JA0789	NA	83	Good
313DA	01	5-Starr	Boat Trailer	5A4XJRJ1X12001639	NA		Good
	01	14' Quicksilver	Inflatable Boat/25HP	KR-USA99650F001	NA		Fair
56DA	89	Pennsylvania	Utility Trl.	1P9C614D2KL016559	NA		Good
B.S.I. 2520	09	Ford	E-350	1FDWE35P09DA26375	16739		Excellent
B.S.I. 880	05	Ford	E-350	1FDWE35P85HA60616	73519		Good
B.S.I. 883	05	Ford	E-350	1FDWE35P35HA60619	72317		Good
B.S.I. 135DA	08	Ford	Expedition	1FMFU16568LA03482	19791		Excellent
B.S.I. 68DA	01	Ford	Crown Vic	2FAFP71W11X187226	74300		Fair
B.S.I. 1274	09	Ford	E-350	1FDWE35P09DA82431	12370		Excellent
B.S.I. 2309	01	Ford	E-350	1FDWE35F21HB34162	108348		Fair
2265	06	Freightliner	M2	1FVACXDAX6HV52384	3322	268	Excellent
60DA	06	Ford	Explorer	1FMFU73E46UA52724	25349		FPB Excellent
69DA	06	Ford	Explorer	1FMFU73E66UA52725	31715		Excellent
145DA	06	Ford	Expedition	1FMFU16546LA50690	36150		Good
250DA	06	Ford	Expedition	1FMFU16576LA83327	26750		Training Excellent
258DA	06	Ford	Expedition	1FMFU16596LA83328	32657		E.M.S Excellent
N/A	06	Pierce	Dash	4P1CD01S76A006681	37683	4296	E-22 Excellent
N/A	06	John Deere	Gator	W06X411D005068		47	Excellent
70-23	06	Fire 1	Foam Unit	1S9RT192160407186	N/A		Excellent
344DA	07	American	Trailer	5N6200G2271016808	N/A		Excellent
N/A	07	American	Trailer	5N6200G2471016809	N/A		Excellent
345DA	07	Alcom	Trailer	1A9BE16217W726759	N/A		Excellent
B.S.I. 22DA	07	Ford	Expedition	1FMFU16547LA34454	18538		Excellent
	07	International	4400	1HTMKAZR77H522397	3653	165	Excellent
N/A	07	Pierce	Dash	4P1CD01H77A007352	30813	2736	E-26 Excellent
N/A	08	Pierce	Dash	4P1CD01H47A007700	4552	604	Squad -1 Excellent

N/A	08	Pierce	Dash	4P1CD01H48A007701	27210	3059	E-21 Excellent
N/A	08	Pierce	Dash	4P1CD01H68A007702	25759	2703	E-23 Excellent
66DA	09	Ford	Expedition	1FMFK16569LA12397	7188		Excellent

Equipment

The department continues to purchase and replace equipment to meet the needs of an ever evolving fire service. Over the last several years, the department has received substantial funding and equipment from the City, State and Federal sources in the last few years. As an example the Department of Homeland Security has provided funding to assist our City in preparing for natural disasters and terrorist activity. Currently we are experiencing a significant reduction in homeland security and preparation funding. We will continue to apply for grants and to pursue other non traditional funding sources. Previously awarded grant funding has made a dramatic impact in the quality of equipment the department is using. The Mayor and City Council have continuously provided support to enhance these initiatives. Working with the finance department to find funding is a continuous process.

Additional acquisitions and initiatives to purchase include the following:

1. The continued purchase of vehicle extrication equipment to meet the new materials and construction we encounter at accident scenes.
2. The continuing addition of technical rescue equipment and training for new hazards being encountered.
3. The continued scheduling of advanced rescue, WMD and National Incident Management classes in an in-house format to maintain our high level of preparedness.
4. The continued purchase and training of rope and other rescue equipment for low and high angle rescue situations.
5. The continued purchase and training of hazardous materials response equipment. The upgrade to a technician certified team has evolved on a Regional level.
6. The delivery and implementation of two Multi casualty trailers as well as other vehicles to enhance our capabilities to better serve the community.
7. The replacement and repair of all front line Haz-mat metering and monitoring equipment.
8. The replacement of Fire Response Vehicles to ensure up to date equipment
9. The replacement of Command Staff vehicles to allow for towing of the various trailers and upgrading of Fire Marshals vehicles.

- 10. Acquisitions of washing machines to maintain and preserve turn out gear.
- 11. Improvement in exterior lighting to the fire training facility on Plumtrees Rd.

General Statement of Affairs

The conventional operations of our department are sound. With our modern equipment and current facilities the department will continue delivering quality emergency services. Funding for apparatus on the local level has been and continues to be directed to maintaining our capabilities and is appreciated. The support of the City Administration and City Council has made a visible and functional difference in the Fire Department over the past several years. Our concern for facilities, fire apparatus and radio infrastructure will be our highest priority in the coming budget cycles. Due to the aging of the radio components, conditions are now considered critical and replacement must occur soon to ensure continued safe operations.

The Department continues to prepare and train for the prospect of future incidents related to the potential use of weapons of mass destruction. Despite the challenge to our Department's response capabilities we will continue to explore all options on a local regional and State wide level. The continued challenges will be in the arenas of preparedness, staffing and finance. We will continue to take advantage of training opportunities provided and funded by the Department of Homeland Security where and when available. Grant opportunities will continue to be explored and pursued diligently. The development of certain Regional response initiatives is being earnestly encouraged by State and Federal agencies. We are participating on State and Regional levels for the benefit of our community. The state of Connecticut is putting forth plans to regionalize some aspects of emergency response. This will potentially have a significant impact.

The status of our volunteer contingent remains a focus of concern, as this component is critical to the success of delivering quality service. Membership in the volunteers has remained steady over the past year. Possible consolidation is being explored and will be implemented when possible. Historically, in times of crisis, our volunteers have stepped forward to assist our community. We must encourage this commitment with facility improvements and construction.

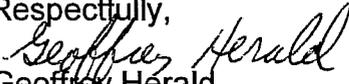
There remains a concern on adequate staffing in working emergency incidents. The current administration has noted this concern and the opening of the Westside station addressed a major shortcoming in our response coverage. OSHA safety standards and NFPA recommendations will inevitably increase staffing requirements.

We have seen with increasing frequency the difficulties encountered with our current minimum staffing levels. Our administrative staffing has not kept pace matching the needs of our department and the city. As the seventh largest City in the State, we must constantly assess the challenges of expanding our department to meet the changing needs of the community. Areas of development both commercial and residential are stretching current resources,

and analysis of future growth and services required to support these trends is vital.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment as per section 8-13 of our City Code of Ordinances. Your comments as to the format or considerations with regards to this report and our Department are appreciated. If you require any additional information please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Respectfully,


Geoffrey Herald
Fire Chief