



# TOWN OF HAMDEN

## OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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*Mayor*

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### *Media Release*

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## **Hamden Fire Chief Retiring After 12 Successful Years; Transition Process Underway within Department**

**HAMDEN** – Mayor Curt Balzano Leng and Fire Chief Berardesca are issuing a joint announcement today regarding the Chief’s retirement. Chief Berardesca has served as Hamden’s Fire Chief for 12 years, since first being appointed on August 15, 2006 by Mayor Craig Henrici. Previously, Chief Berardesca served the Town of Wallingford as Deputy Fire Chief.

In his experiences serving the Towns of Hamden and Wallingford, Berardesca has served the public as a fire profession for decades. Chief Berardesca retired effective September 30, 2018, per the approval of the Retirement Board. He will conclude his employment with the Town of Hamden in two weeks, during which time he will assist in the smooth transition of departmental public safety and emergency management services, working closely with Deputy Fire Chief Gary Merwede through October 12<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

Commenting, Mayor Curt Balzano Leng said, “Chief Berardesca (Chief B as we know him) has been an excellent leader in the Hamden Fire Department and in his role as Hamden’s Director of Emergency Management. We have counted on him to provide fire & emergency management services for over a decade and through his tenure, our medical, fire and emergency management response efforts have strengthened and improved, despite dramatic increases in call volume the Department receives.”

Mayor Leng continued, “His efforts to modernize the Department’s aged fire apparatus, modernize the department’s technology and increase fire safety inspections in our community are just three of the many areas where Chief Berardesca’s leadership has been particularly impactful. Chief B played a major role as the Director of Emergency Management and as a key member of the Town’s Emergency Storm Response Team, helping ensure Hamden is equipped to tackle major emergency situations and severe weather events. I personally offer my absolute best wishes for his retirement and want to thank him for leaving Hamden with a stronger and more equipped Fire and Emergency Management Service.”

Throughout his tenure as Fire Chief and Director of Emergency Management, Berardesca strongly advocated for and pursued the purchase and provision of modern fire safety equipment, major apparatus and emergency tools in an overarching effort to improve Hamden’s emergency response efforts and readiness. Chief B replaced all major fire apparatus including paramedic rescues within his tenure as Chief, and three new Paramedic vehicles and a new Fire pumper are slated for delivery within the next few months.

Chief Berardesca was instrumental in modernizing the Fire Marshall's Office and increasing fire prevention inspections, as well as modernizing the Department's permitting operations by moving much to an easily accessible and more efficient online system.

Chief B was also on the forefront of ensuring that other helpful technologies were adopted for public safety; including implementation of electronic patient care reporting for medical incidents via the use of iPads in paramedic vehicles, iPads in all fire apparatus to assist with mapping, preplanning, hazardous material referencing and more. Furthermore, the Chief replaced all portable radios through the "Assistance to Firefighters Grant" or AFG.

Other areas of focus during Chief B's tenure included the implementation of an aggressive fire safety/ protection program geared towards elementary students and the elderly. He elevated the Department's training division through the addition of a well-coordinated approach of requiring mandatory training hours as implemented by the Department's Training Officer.

Commenting on his career with the Hamden Fire Department, Chief Berardesca said, "I have been blessed to have been able to serve as Chief of the Hamden Fire Department. The citizens of Hamden are most fortunate to have such a professional and caring group of individuals to protect them. Thank you to all."

Fire Commission Chairman Henry Candido commented, "Chief Berardesca has helped bring the Hamden Fire Department to become one of the best in the State of Connecticut. The increased training and improved technology our Department has received under his leadership undoubtedly increases the safety of our residents and our community. On behalf of the entire Commission, we thank Chief Berardesca for all his efforts and know that the Department will continue to build on this success in the days ahead."

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