

# CITY OF NEW BRITAIN



Office of the Mayor

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## **An Historic Graduation for the New Britain Fire Department**

*Three female firefighters join the ranks*

**NEW BRITAIN**—Eight fire recruits, including three women, have joined the New Britain Fire Department following a graduation ceremony held on Friday, Dec. 11<sup>th</sup> at Central Connecticut State University.

The graduation is an historic one, as three women will be joining the New Britain Fire Department. In its entire history, only two women have served in the City's fire department: the first was hired in 1989 and retired in 2011, while the second individual was hired in 2007 and is still working.

Matthew Abdifar, Joshua Aponte, Petra Chesanek, Lauren DiMitruck, Eric Dutkiewicz, Katherine Galezowski, Hector Garcia, and Nicholas Raiola are the eight firefighters who graduated from the Connecticut Fire Academy's Recruit Class #56. The graduation exercises were held at CCSU's Welte Hall.

The firefighters were hired on Aug. 30<sup>th</sup> and have been in training for 15 weeks and will now attend four weeks of internal training and orientation with the New Britain Fire Department before being assigned to a fire company.

In addressing the firefighters, Mayor Erin E. Stewart said, "On behalf of the residents of New Britain, thank you for putting your lives in the line of harm's way to protect our community. We are extremely fortunate to have such dedicated men and women watching over us and we are grateful for all that you do."

She added, "A great trust has been placed in you by the residents of New Britain, so carry yourself with compassion, dedication, and respect for others."

"We are very proud of these newest members of our fire department," said Fire Chief Thomas G. Ronalter. "They are a fine group of individuals and will serve our city and its residents well. We have high expectations for them as they become New Britain firefighters. They are the future of our fire department."

In addition to the eight graduates who are joining the New Britain Fire Department, the City has also hired three lateral transfers. These individuals include volunteer firefighters who have paid their own way to attend the Recruit fire fighter training program, veterans who have used the GI Bill to attend, or firefighters coming from another fire department.

The hires bring the total number of New Britain firefighters to 126 members. The New Britain Fire Department was established in 1833.

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