

November 17, 2016 Meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners

District #3 in the Township of Hanover

County of Morris, Cedar Knolls, New Jersey

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. on November 17, 2016 in accordance with the Public Meeting Act of 1975, Chapter 231.

ATTENDANCE: Commissioners Robert Callas, Tom Quirk, Michael Dugan, and Peter DeNigris were present. Commissioner Florio was absent.

Also in attendance were Chief DiGiorgio and Administrator Schultz.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: None

CORRESPONDENCE: A letter from the Cedar Knolls Post Office had been distributed to the Commissioners regarding parking lot repairs. Commissioner Dugan noted he has reached out to contractors and he is moving forward with the process.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES:

Commissioner Callas made a motion to accept the minutes from November 3, 2016 with noted amendments, seconded by Commissioner DeNigris. All in favor.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER:

Commissioner DeNigris noted he received the October invoice from Revenue Guard. It includes the \$2,000 rebate. In addition, it reflects the new rate reduction for their services reduced to 8% from 9%, as well as the implementation of the rate increase to \$900.00/call and \$20.00/mile. **Commissioner Quirk made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report, seconded by Commissioner Callas. All in favor.**

REPORT OF THE CHIEF AND BOARD COMMITTEES:

Chief DiGiorgio highlighted several items in his bi-monthly report.

- The Chief noted he has received the 2017 EMS Department of Health License renewal certificate as well as the updated stickers for the ambulance.

- Captain Lake reported the ladder truck will be going to Fire and Safety on December 5th for preventive maintenance.

BUDGET:

Commissioner DeNigris referred to the October report he distributed to the Commissioners. He noted some adjustments in overtime and legal need to be made but overall everything is okay. The Commissioners also received copies of the Bank and Capital Statements.

Commissioner DeNigris noted the 2017 budget has been completed and has been submitted to Vince Montanino. Once finalized copies will be distributed at the December 1, 2016 meeting. The budget for 2017 is approximately \$1,700,000.00, not including another \$300,000.00 for Capital, putting the overall budget at \$2,000,000.00

LABOR RELATIONS: Nothing to report.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES: The Chief stated everything is in the final stages for completion and there are just several questions remaining to be answered by Mr. Trimboli. Commissioners Callas and Quirk asked for a meeting to be set up with the Board as soon as possible for their review.

LIAISON TO THE VOLUNTEERS:

Building Usage Agreement: Commissioner Quirk noted he spoke with President Dobson regarding insurance requirements for events that happen in the building. VFIS confirmed that anything taking place on the property should have a Contract of Agreement, a Certificate of Insurance, and a Hold Harmless document. These are the three main documents although there could potentially be others.

Christmas Tree Lighting Event: Fire Company Vice-President Joe Martin reviewed with the Commissioners plans for the December 3rd Tree Lighting Event. There will be a magic show at 6:00 p.m. and the tree lighting will begin at 6:45 p.m.

Commissioner Quirk reached out to Police Department Lt. Lock and Lt. Lock will assign road coverage from the shift for that evening.

Commissioner Quirk also noted that at the event last year, just prior to the start, there was a call and left minimal help at the event. Commissioner Quirk asked if there could be an assigned crew specifically for December 3rd. Chief DiGiorgio said he would remove the key personnel for the event from the crew on that evening.

Additional details were discussed and finalized including Santa's arrival, hot cocoa being donated by Dunkin Donuts in Morris Plains, cookies from Employment Horizons, and candy canes being donated by Commissioner Quirk and Elizabeth Quirk. **Action Item: Additional Chairs and several pieces of indoor/outdoor carpeting for the engine bay will be ordered from A Party Pleasing Rental.**

BUILDING AND GROUNDS:

Roof Project: Commissioner Dugan stated the project remains at a stand-still. Administrator Schultz explained an agreement had been signed by both parties for remaining items that needed to be completed. For the most part the workmanship has been completed but not the paperwork.

Apron Project: Commissioner Dugan reports the project continues to move along. The pillar for the bell has been built. Slate will be put on top and then holes drilled for the mount. After the legs go out to be sandblasted it will be up to the Fire Company to decide how to finish the project.

APPARATUS AND MAINTENANCE:

Chief DiGiorgio previously reported the ladder truck is going out for repair on December 5th. In addition, repair items for the ambulances are scheduled, and the command vehicles have been sent out for oil changes and maintenance.

Doors are being replaced in the ladder bay.

COMMUNICATIONS: Nothing to report.

BY-LAWS: Nothing to report.

WEBSITE: Nothing to report.

OLD BUSINESS:

BUDGET: Administrator Schultz reviewed the schedule requirements with the Board. December 1, 2016 at the Regular Meeting the Budget will be introduced and approved by the Board. December 3, 2016 is the Special Meeting for the Capital Improvement Money Movement.

A lengthy discussion followed due to changes made to the budget that the Board was not aware of until this evening. The changes were made by the Chief and Administrator Schultz to allow for the purchase of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). The Board deferred to the recommendation of Chief DiGiorgio and agreed to the purchase of 10 sets of PPE, however the Board stands with the original Capital Appropriations they approved at the November 3, 2016 meeting. **By a vote of 3-1 (Callas, Dugan, and DeNigris voted yes, Quirk voted no, Florio absent) the Board stands with the original Capital Appropriation they voted to approve on November 3, 2016.**

NEW BUSINESS:

The next Regular Meeting will be held on December 1, 2016 beginning at 7:00 p.m.

There will be a Special Meeting on December 3, 2016 from 2:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

The Christmas Tree Lighting Event will be held December 3, 2016 beginning at 6:00 p.m.

RESOLUTIONS:

Commissioner Callas read **Resolution 16-11-17-109** appointing Patrick C. Thompson as a Volunteer Member of the Cedar Knolls Fire Department. **Commissioner Quirk made a motion to accept the Resolution, seconded by Commissioner Dugan, all in favor.**

Commissioner Callas read **Resolution 16-11-17-110** accepting the resignation of Dinah Schill as Recording Secretary. **Commissioner Dugan made a motion to accept the Resolution, seconded by Commissioner DeNigris, all in favor.**

RE-OPEN MEETING TO PUBLIC:

Commissioner Dugan re-opened the meeting to the public at 8:00 p.m.

Thomas Harrington, 82 Mountain Avenue, Cedar Knolls asked Commissioner DeNigris for a copy of the revenue report for EMS. Commissioner DeNigris said he would provide the report at the end of the meeting. Mr. Harrington also expressed concern that all money seems to be going into Capital and no amount has been specifically designated for replacement of equipment. Commissioner DeNigris responded to his concern by explaining there is money in the General Fund Account. Mr. Harrington also expressed concern about what he feels is over hiring of Career Fire Fighter staff and feels it would better serve the community to hire EMTs. He notes there are eight Fire Fighters on duty during the day; more than Morristown. He opposes the plan to hire additional Fire Fighters especially when County Dispatch provides back up to the fire calls. His concern is how tax dollars will be impacted.

Commissioner Dugan stated while he respects Mr. Harrington's opinion, the Board has had lengthy discussions and stands by their decision. Commissioner Callas added the Board is not prone to making radical decisions and feels that hiring Fire Fighters is the way to go for the safety of the residents.

Vincent Donofrio, 80 Mountain Avenue, Cedar Knolls asked the Board if they took into account Mutual Aid Dispatch. Chief DiGiorgio explained an Adequate Staffing Plan was done in 2015 that provided immediate and long term goals. He also noted they referred back to the Kramer study done in 2011 and the study in 2004 from Dr. Carter. Mr. Donofrio asked if there were any outside opinions offered. Commissioner DeNigris stated the Volunteer Officers came and expressed their views on what they felt their needs were.

Gary Keyser, 16 Lynn Terrace, Whippany expressed his opinion that more EMTs were needed. He referred to the Kramer and Carter reports and states those reports reflected Hanover Township as a consolidation. He asked for the number of fire responses in 2015. Commissioner Dugan asked Chief DiGiorgio to provide Mr. Keyser with the report.

Mr. Keyser asked the Board why they forgave the last 5 years of pay per call for EMS. He stated his concern about the money lost from forgiving that debt and questions why the Board didn't sell off the debt to a collection agency to recover some of that loss. Commissioner DeNigris explained that the agreement with Revenue Guard was to send two follow up letters. However, the Board has since

decided to go after uncollected debt. In addition, they have negotiated a better price with Revenue Guard.

Mr. Keyser wanted to know why the Board went on the outside to hire another Fire Fighter/EMT and why someone from within the ranks of the Cedar Knolls Fire department who had the qualifications was not hired for that position. Chief DiGiorgio told Mr. Keyser there is a lot of misinformation and would welcome the opportunity to discuss this with him.

ADJOURN:

A motion was made by Commissioner Dugan made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner DeNigris, all in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by

Robert Callas, Secretary