

## **August 16, 2018 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 August 16, 2018 in accordance with the Public Meeting Act of 1975, Chapter 231.

**ATTENDANCE:** Commissioners Robert Callas, Peter DeNigris, Michael Dugan, Maria Florio and Tom Quirk were present.

Chief DiGiorgio, Administrator Schultz, Asst. Chief Martin, Lieutenant DeSimone and Hanover Township Committeeman Cahill were also in attendance.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** None.

**CORRESPONDENCE:** None.

### **APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES:**

**The minutes from the August 2, 2018 Regular Meeting were not available for review. Approval of the minutes was tabled until next meeting.**

**REPORT OF THE TREASURER:** Commissioner DeNigris reported that letters were sent to two residents about minor overcharges of \$1.74 and \$1.70. Commissioner Florio made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report. Commissioner Callas seconded the motion. All were in favor.

### **Report of Fire Commissioner Board Committees and Chief of Department:**

**CHIEF'S REPORT:** Chief DiGiorgio distributed his Bi-Monthly Report on August 30.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that this past Tuesday our Rapid Intervention Team was requested in the Mt. Tabor section of Parsippany for a structure fire. We were the first fire department on scene and had the first two lines on the fire. The Parsippany fire captains expressed their thanks. Commissioner Quirk asked if Parsippany was doing anything to address staffing issues highlighted by the fact that another town arrived first to the scene. Chief DiGiorgio was not aware that Parsippany perceived they had staffing issues and was not aware of any potential remedies. Commissioner Quirk asked if there has been any discussion about staffing levels at the Chief's Meetings. Chief DiGiorgio reported that staffing

issues were discussed in regards to the general difficulty to obtain members especially during the daytime. The staffing discussion recognizes that it is more difficult to obtain members and that more towns may have to be called in order to get the proper number of people working at an incident scene. Commissioner Florio asked if there were any paid firefighters in Mt. Tabor. Chief DiGiorgio reported that there are no career firefighters but there are full time fire inspectors that are usually volunteers. Commissioner Dugan noted that volunteer response time is pretty standard and depending on the location of the incident, neighboring towns may get to the scene first. Commissioner Quirk clarified that he was wondering if other towns were taking the same approach to this issue as our District and hiring people. Commissioner Florio asked Chief DiGiorgio if he could bring up the topic at a Chief's Meeting. Chief DiGiorgio said that he could ask the question but noted that 37 municipalities are represented at these meetings and only 3 have paid firefighters. Chief DiGiorgio felt that the Districts are doing everything they can to attract people and would hire if they were able. Chief DiGiorgio did not feel that these meeting were the place to ask if these municipalities recognize that they have staffing issues and if they planned to address it by hiring paid firefighters or keep pushing the mutual aid button. Commissioner Florio asked if it was fair to Cedar Knolls residents to increase taxes to provide for paid firefighters that may then not be able to respond to a local fire because they are already at a mutual aid scene. Chief DiGiorgio reported that no matter where the fire there is a standard number of people that you need to go fight the fire which ranges from 12 to 15 people. If the fire incident was in Hanover Township, the District would still require mutual aid to ensure that the standard number of people respond to the fire. Chief DiGiorgio reported that our District utilizes Morris Township and Madison because we know that we are going to get the manpower because it is in the fire house there also. While Cedar Knolls was providing mutual aid to Mt. Tabor, Whippany was covering Cedar Knolls. If Whippany had been call to Mt. Tabor also, then Morris Township would have moved into the Cedar Knolls firehouse to provide coverage. Commissioner DeNigris asked if the other municipalities had shared any recruiting tips that have worked for them. Chief DiGiorgio reported that some of the municipalities that are close to Picatinny Arsenal are relying on aid from them because Picatinny has a staff of 28 firefighters. Asst. Chief Martin reported that none of the surrounding municipalities are looking to hire anyone and less people are looking to volunteer.

Morris Township and Madison have paid firefighters but once you go west of Hanover, no one is looking to hire. Commissioner Florio asked what the reason was for not hiring firefighters. Commissioner Callas said it was money. Commissioner Florio asked if the people responsible for the fire protection in these districts felt that it was ok that another town responded first to a fire within their district. Asst. Chief Martin felt that it was not ok, but that it is the world we live in and like Chief DiGiorgio stated, mutual aid is needed by all districts. Commissioner Florio noted that the difference is that we are paying our department to be here on site and they were the first to respond to another district. Commissioner Florio questioned what the other district was doing to help themselves. Commissioner Quirk wanted to make sure that they were doing something to enable them to protect themselves and that we are not going to be the department that is protecting everybody. Commissioner Dugan noted that we were going to respond anyway as a RIT team and it just so happened that we got there first. Commissioner Quirk said that that his question was if there were other departments who took a proactive stance like we did. Asst. Chief Martin said that the answer is no. Commissioner Callas said that we chose to hire to protect our people and that mutual aid is a separate issue. Commissioner Dugan reported that if we give mutual aid it is the coordinators job to ensure that the mutual aid provider gets coverage and that is what happened. Commissioner Florio noted that we have been recognized as having one of the best departments in the county and we have our guys out there and we are left with covering personnel may not be as well trained. Commissioner Florio stated that she did not mean any offense but observed that we are sending our well trained, paid people out to fight other fires and we are back to whatever we have here in the house. Commissioner Florio felt that some of these other municipalities need to take a hard look at what they are doing to protect their people so that they can get a truck there first on scene. Commissioner Quirk said that he was not trying to cause trouble but was just curious if other towns were as concerned as we are and he guesses the answer is no. Asst. Chief Martin said that they are concerned but they are not doing anything about it partly because some of them have a hard time agreeing on what to do. Committeeman Cahill asked if ten years ago, before Hanover had any paid, if some of the districts that were paid had this same concern. Chief DiGiorgio noted that you would need to go back further than that because there were some paid personnel here in the 1980's. Lieutenant

DeSimone noted that call volume has also increases significantly over time. Commissioner DeNigris felt that Asst. Chief Martin was correct in that the concern is there but until something drastic happens, the action will not be there. Asst. Chief Martin reported that on Christmas night he went to a fire not unlike the fire from the other day. He was the second one there and the second floor had already collapsed. Asst. Chief Martin noted that the need could exist at any time of day.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that two individuals who just completed Junior Firefighter 1 and will be graduating tomorrow at the Hanover Rec Center. Chief DiGiorgio stated that our ladder truck will be displaying the American flag and the District will send representation.

**EMS:** Nothing to report.

**BUDGET:** Commissioner DeNigris distributed the July 2018 financial reports. Commissioner DeNigris reported that some of the same line items have issues but they are being managed. Commissioner DeNigris pointed out that there is \$188,000 committed to capital projects as outlined in the Capital Appropriations report. If these projects come to fruition at the projected rates, there will be a balance of roughly \$147,000 in the management account for any new projects. Commissioner DeNigris said that the Boar will have to be very judicious in how we spend the money.

Commissioner DeNigris asked Chief DiGiorgio if the additional \$6k cost for the new engine would be on top of the \$495,000 allocated. Chief DiGiorgio said it was an addition but that the original specs came in less than the allocated \$495,000.

Commissioner Dugan asked when the 2019 budget process would begin. Commissioner DeNigris said he was waiting to get August 2018 figures.

**PERSONNEL:** Nothing to report.

**NEGOTIATIONS:** Commissioner Quirk reported had nothing to report but asked to speak with Commissioner Dugan after the meeting.

**LIAISON TO THE VOLUNTEERS:** Nothing to report.

**BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS:** Chief DiGiorgio reported that he is waiting on the specs for the bay floors from Bowman.

**APPARATUS/EQUIPMENT AND MAINTENANCE:** Chief DiGiorgio reported that he met with customer service while in Wisconsin and showed them pictures of some rust issues with the ladder truck. Customer service recommended that the board open a ticket with the dealer. Lieutenant Belott has reached out to Fire & Safety to make them aware and we will start the process of what needs to be done. This entails grinding down the rust areas, test the strength of the ladder by sending different frequencies and waves through it, and finally coat and paint it. Commissioner Quirk asked if these were issues that should be caught in the ladder testing. Chief DiGiorgio reported that these items would be pointed out by Underwriters Laboratory and the District is trying to be proactive and address them prior to the next testing. Commissioner Quirk thought that Fire & Safety did the testing. Chief DiGiorgio said that Underwriters Laboratory does the testing and would send notes to Fire & Safety regarding issues that need to be addressed during the annual maintenance on the truck. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the opening a ticket process has been started and he will keep the Board apprised of the progress and any costs when they become known.

**INSURANCE:** Commissioner Florio asked if the VFIS risk analysis meeting was scheduled for August 21, 2018. Chief DiGiorgio confirmed that the meeting was set on that date at 1 p.m. Commissioner DeNigris asked if the Insurance Committee should be present. Chief DiGiorgio said that they were welcome but their presence was not required.

**COMMUNICATIONS:** Commissioner Quirk reiterated the clarification from last meeting that the Rave system and the Alert Hanover or Alert Morris systems were one and the same. The individual municipalities will market the new Rave system under the Alert Hanover name or whatever then name of the municipality is. In addition, Commissioner Quirk asked that the new system be advertised on the sign and the link be changed on the District website. Administrator Schultz said he would get the details after the meeting.

**BY-LAWS:** Nothing to report.

**WEBSITE:** Nothing to report.

**PLANNING COMMITTEE:** Commissioner Dugan reported that Commissioner Florio was alternate on the Planning Board and will be stepping up to be full time on the Planning Committee.

**LIASON TO EXEMPTS:** Nothing to report.

**RECORDS RETENTION:** Nothing to report.

**LIAISON TO HANOVER TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE:** Nothing to report.

**OLD BUSINESS:** Administrator Schultz reported that he met with Fire Co. Member Vagell and the Fire Co. is not planning to do anything until they meet with the Board's representatives.

Commissioner DeNigris asked Chief DiGiorgio how the staff cleaning of the firehouse was working out. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the staff has been cleaning the firehouse for the last two weeks and he is satisfied with the work. Commissioner Florio asked Chief DiGiorgio to extend the Board's thanks to the cleaning crews.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Commissioner Quirk asked if the Board was going to move or cancel the September 20, 2018 regular meeting to allow the Board to attend the softball game between Wegmans and Bayer. Commissioner Dugan said to just cancel the meeting. Administrator Schultz said he will take care of the notifications.

The next regular meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners will be held on Thursday, September 6, 2018 at 7:00 P.M.

The Joint Fire Prevention Board meeting will be held on Thursday, September 6, 2018 at 6:30 P.M. in Cedar Knolls.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** None.

**RESOLUTIONS:** Commissioner Callas read Resolution 18-08-16-69 authorizing change orders to the apparatus pumper. Commissioner Quirk made a motion to introduce the resolution, seconded by Commissioner DeNigris. All were in favor.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:** Commissioner Callas read Resolution 18-08-16-70 to enter into executive session. Commissioner Dugan made a motion to introduce the

**resolution, seconded by Commissioner Callas. All were in favor. The Board went into closed session at 7:36 p.m.**

Personnel matters were discussed. Action will be taken.

**The Board came out of closed session at 8:30 p.m.**

**ADJOURN: A motion was made by Commissioner DeNigris, seconded by Commissioner Callas, to adjourn the meeting. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:32 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted by

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Robert Callas, Secretary