

**April 18, 2019 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 April 18, 2019 in accordance with the Public Meeting Act of 1975, Chapter 231.

**ATTENDANCE:** Commissioners Peter DeNigris, Michael Dugan, Robert O’Hare, and Craig Vagell were present. Commissioner Robert Callas was absent.

Chief DiGiorgio, Administrator Schultz, Fire Dept. President James Hark Jr., Fire Dept. Vice President MaryLou DeSimone, EMT Thompson, and Hanover Township Committeeman Cahill were also in attendance.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** None.

**CORRESPONDENCE:** None.

**APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES:**

**The minutes from the April 4, 2019 Regular Meeting were reviewed.**

**Amendments to Previous Minutes: Commissioner O’Hare noted that in the Liaison to Hanover Township Committee report, Commissioner DeNigris reported that there is nothing new as far as what is going on with the firehouse sale. Commissioner O’Hare asked that the report be amended to clarify that the Whippany firehouse sale was being reported on.**

**Commissioner DeNigris made a motion to approve the amended minutes from the April 4, 2019 Regular Meeting. Commissioner O’Hare seconded the motion. All were in favor. Commissioner Callas was absent. Commissioner Vagell abstained.**

Commissioner Dugan deviated from the agenda to go over the Committee Assignments because there seemed to be some miscommunication regarding them. Commissioner Dugan reported that the Board of Fire Commissioners 2019 – 2020 committee assignments are as follows:

EMS Committee: Commissioners DeNigris and O’Hare

Budget Committee: Commissioners DeNigris and Dugan, Chief DiGiorgio,  
Administrator Schultz  
Personnel Committee: Commissioners Callas and Dugan  
Negotiations Committee: Commissioners Callas and Dugan  
Liaison to Volunteers: Commissioners Dugan and Vagell  
Building and Grounds committee: Commissioners O'Hare and Vagell  
Apparatus and Maintenance Committee: Commissioners Callas and Vagell, Chief  
DiGiorgio  
Insurance Committee: Commissioners DeNigris and O'Hare  
Communications Committee: Commissioners DeNigris and O'Hare  
By-Laws Committee: Commissioners Dugan and O'Hare, Administrator Schultz  
Website Committee: Commissioners Callas and Vagell, Administrator Schultz  
Planning Committee: Commissioners Dugan and Vagell, Chief DiGiorgio,  
Administrator Schultz, a Fire Co. President Hark  
Liaisons to the Exempts: Commissioners Callas and O'Hare  
Records Retention Committee: Commissioners DeNigris and O'Hare,  
Administrator Schultz  
Liaisons to the Hanover Township Committee: Commissioners DeNigris and  
Dugan

Commissioner Dugan reported that he would get a list of Committee Assignments to everyone and that we would return to the regular agenda.

**REPORT OF THE TREASURER:** No report.

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

**CHIEF'S REPORT:** Chief DiGiorgio distributed his Bi-Monthly Report on April 12, 2019 and updated it on April 18, 2019. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the new Engine 35 was officially placed in service at 1800 hours this evening. Chief DiGiorgio reported that someone from Fire & Safety is here doing the second training session on the use of the pump and the overall equipment. Chief DiGiorgio reported that more than 50% of our drivers have been trained to operate the vehicle and both he and Asst. Chief Martin felt comfortable enough to place the engine in service. Chief DiGiorgio reported that all of the equipment for Engine 35 was mounted in house resulting in a \$3,800 cost savings.

Chief DiGiorgio noted that former Commissioner Quirk was in charge of our NJ CAIR account with the Division of Motor Vehicles. Commissioner Quirk would go into the system bi annually to check the current member/employee driver's licenses. Chief DiGiorgio asked which member of the Board would be taking over this responsibility. Commissioner DeNigris asked what was involved in checking the licenses. Chief DiGiorgio reported that Commissioner Quirk was given online access to an account for the Fire District and he would input the driver's license number for all members/employees. The DMV would then provide a report of the status of all the driver's licenses. Commissioner DeNigris asked if this was done for all members. Chief DiGiorgio clarified that this was done for all of the drivers. Commissioner DeNigris volunteered to take this over. Commissioner Vagell also volunteered. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he would put a letter together to get the new users access to the DMV system and forward it to Commissioner Dugan for a signature.

Chief DiGiorgio asked the Board for permission to put a work group together to look into the purchase of another ambulance. Chief DiGiorgio noted that this would either be a replacement for an existing ambulance or an addition to the fleet. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the older ambulance is reaching the point where the maintenance costs are starting to add up and he felt it was time to explore the possibility of purchasing another ambulance. Commissioner DeNigris asked what was wrong with the ambulance right now. Chief DiGiorgio reported that currently six fuel injectors are being replaced because they were leaking fuel which was getting in the oil. Chief DiGiorgio noted that the head gasket had a leak due to the fuel separation and noted that the total repair bill would be about \$6,000. Commissioner DeNigris asked if this meant that the engine was questionable. Chief DiGiorgio said that this was not said to him, only that due to a rough ride, the vehicle was checked and the leaks were found. Commissioner DeNigris asked that Chief DiGiorgio let the Board know what the other alternatives were to purchasing an entirely new ambulance. Chief DiGiorgio reported that this would be explored by the work group as well as the possibility of adding a third ambulance. This would allow ambulances to be rotated in and out of service as needed without leaving the District down an ambulance. Chief DiGiorgio noted that the District has been down an ambulance for 6 weeks around Christmas and now has been down another two weeks with the fuel leaks. Commissioner Vagell asked if Chief DiGiorgio was asking for permission to put the

work group together to explore options to address the aging ambulance situation. Commissioner Dugan noted that this is probably the beginning of the end for the ambulance because these current issues parallel the other ambulance that went. Chief DiGiorgio noted that this ambulance has a different engine than the other ambulance, so the current issues may not mean the same outcome. Chief DiGiorgio felt that this was the time to start exploring options within a work group. The Board did not have a problem with forming to work group to explore options.

Commissioner Vagell asked Chief DiGiorgio about the item under Apparatus / Building Maintenance section of his report that states that a new contractor will be needed for the shed roof. Commissioner Vagell asked if Chief DiGiorgio was going to take on the role of project manager or if he would be delegating it to someone else. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he and Lt. Belott will meet with a new contractor next week to get a quote. After a contractor is hired, Lt. Belott will take the lead on the project.

Commissioner O'Hare asked if Chief DiGiorgio would give the Board a written report on what he learned at the Managing Disciplinary Challenges Course that he and Lt. McGuinness attended and how this information will be integrated into what we do now. Chief DiGiorgio noted that he would do this and noted that he has the course manual which provides samples and suggestions for policies.

Commissioner O'Hare noted that he has spent a lot of time going over the Policies and Procedures Manual and questioned why it was under review by Mr. Trimboli. Administrator Schultz reported that the current District Manual is a copy of the JIF Policy and Procedures Manual that was altered to meet the District's needs. The JIF Manual has subsequently changed and Mr. Trimboli felt that the district should review their Manual to make sure that it is in line with current statutes.

Administrator Schultz noted that contradictory statements within the Manual have also been brought to the Boards' attention and need to be addressed.

Commissioner O'Hare asked what the time frame was for this review and update.

Commissioner O'Hare noted that since the Manual is the "Bible" on how the District operates, it should be done sooner rather than later. Administrator Schultz felt that forming a committee to review the Manual would help speed things up. EMT Thompson asked if the District was a member of the JIF because they sometimes offer financial assistance to make sure items such as Policies and

Procedures manuals are up to date. Commissioner Dugan reported that the district is not a member of JIF but used their template to create the District Manual. Administrator Schultz noted that the District is considering JIF for Workers Comp insurance and this might entitle the District to assistance. Administrator Schultz suggested that this be brought up at a Workers Comp meeting with the JIF next week.

**EMS:** Nothing to report.

**BUDGET:** Commissioner DeNigris distributed the March 2019 financial reports. Commissioner DeNigris reported that the District was \$76,000 in the hole for the first quarter of the year. Commissioner DeNigris reported that the District had to pay more than was expected for pension this year. Commissioner DeNigris noted that this payment is calculated by the State and the District is billed each spring. Administrator Schultz added that the State has underfunded the pension fund and the employer contribution, which is calculated by the State actuaries, has increased significantly. Commissioner DeNigris reported that another reason for the first quarter deficit is that some payments made this quarter are for expenses that are paid annually. Commissioner DeNigris also noted that 62 % of the overtime budget was used in the first quarter. Commissioner DeNigris asked the Board to review the reports and get back to him with any questions.

Commissioner DeNigris reported that the Fire Prevention Invoices will be able to be paid online in the near future. Commissioner DeNigris noted that Lt. McGuinness and the bookkeeper are working on setting this up and alerting the customers.

Commissioner DeNigris reported that he was asked about how much plant money was available. Commissioner DeNigris reported that there was about \$65,000 in approved capital although the bay floors project has not been done yet. Commissioner DeNigris asked if there was a firm estimate for the paving of the parking lot across the street. Commissioner Dugan said there had not been any bids on it. Commissioner DeNigris indicated that as soon as the bay floors estimate is received, the Board will have a better feel for what can be spent to pave the parking lot.

Commissioner Dugan asked if there were any questions for the Treasurer. There were no questions. Commissioner O'Hare made a motion to accept the report,

seconded by Commissioner Vagell. All were in favor. Commissioner Callas was absent.

**PERSONNEL:** Nothing to report.

**NEGOTIATIONS:** Nothing to report.

**LIAISON TO THE VOLUNTEERS:** Commissioner Vagell reported that at the last Company meeting both he and Commissioner Dugan introduced themselves as the new liaisons. Commissioner Vagell reported that he reached out to the executive board to let them know that he would be the point person for the liaison to the volunteers. Commissioner Vagell reported that two members expressed a couple of concerns at the last Company meeting. One of these concerns was addressed with the individual during a meeting at their home. The second concern that was brought up will be addressed this week. Commissioner Vagell reported that he is working with the Company executive board to establish a benchmark time frame for addressing concerns from the members.

**BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS:** Commissioner Vagell reported that the original contractor was supposed to come this week to work on the shed roof but the contract was ceased. As Chief DiGiorgio reported, the District is working to schedule another contractor.

Commissioner Vagell asked Administrator Schultz if he had an update on the bids for a landscaper. Administrator Schultz reported that he has not received any bids for landscaping as of 4 P.M. today. Administrator Schultz noted that the District is required to get a certain number of proposals based on monetary thresholds. Administrator Schultz said that a non-responsive proposal is the same as a proposal. Administrator Schultz reported that based on this, the Board would be permitted to seek out a landscaper. Commissioner DeNigris asked if today was the deadline to receive the proposals back. Administrator Schultz said that it was. Administrator Schultz recommended that the Board approve an amount for landscaping so that it would not be on hold for two more weeks. Commissioner DeNigris made a motion to allow Administrator Schultz to seek out landscaping services not to exceed \$5,000 for the year. Commissioner O'Hare seconded the motion. All were in favor. Commissioner Callas was absent.

Commissioner Vagell reported that the Board has a memo stating that Webster Plumbing was contacted and heater parts were ordered. We are awaiting delivery of the parts.

**APPARATUS/EQUIPMENT AND MAINTENANCE:** Commissioner Dugan asked for a status on the ladder truck service. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he is waiting on a quote for the scraping and undercoating of the ladder truck. Chief DiGiorgio noted that when the truck goes for the undercoating, the ladder will also be painted.

**INSURANCE:** Administrator Schultz reported that the committee hopes to meet with JIF next week regarding Workers Compensation Insurance.

**COMMUNICATIONS:** Nothing to report.

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

**WEBSITE:** Administrator Schultz reported that the new website address is up and the new email addresses are active. Administrator Schultz noted that there are some updates to the website including listing the contact information for all compensated employees, a new EMS billing link, and everything is being forwarded to the new emails. Commissioner Vagell thanked Administrator Schultz for the seamless transition.

**PLANNING COMMITTEE:** Commissioner Dugan reported that the committee needs to pick dates and start to meet about 2 times a month.

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

**RECORDS RETENTION:** Nothing to report.

**LIAISON TO HANOVER TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE:** Commissioner DeNigris asked Committeeman Cahill if he could speak to him after the meeting about comments he received from a resident. Committeeman Cahill said that they could talk offline.

**100<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY:** Administrator Schultz reported that the committee is working with VFIS about certifying personnel to work the event. Administrator Schultz reported that everything else is moving along on schedule.

**OLD BUSINESS:** Commissioner Dugan asked if there were any bids on the parking lot repaving. Administrator Schultz suggested that the parking lot paving be put on hold until after the estimates for the bay floors came in so that the Board had a better feel for how much could be spent on the repaving.

Commissioner Vagell reported that there is now a secure way to access the computer and change the sign board messages remotely with a three level tier of security. Commissioner Vagell thanked Administrator Schultz for taking care of that.

**NEW BUSINESS:** Fire Dept. Vice President MaryLou DeSimone reported that there have been a lot of EMS standby requests coming through. Vice President DeSimone noted that one of the recent requests was for an 11 hour standby and asked the Board if it would be open to offer incentives, perhaps bonus call credits, to the members who do the standbys. Vice President DeSimone reported that without these incentives she would not be able to find members to do the standbys. Vice President DeSimone reported that she is going to have a meeting with the EMS volunteers to get their take on what is and what is not working for them. Vice President DeSimone noted that she felt the volunteers would be more forthcoming if the Chief and Board liaisons did not attend the meeting. Commissioner Dugan felt that this was a good idea and asked Vice President DeSimone to come up with a plan for the incentive program that she could present to the Board. Commissioner Vagell reported that he had attended an operations meeting prior to becoming commissioner during which there was a discussion about standbys, such as 4<sup>th</sup> of July, storm standbys, and standbys such as the 11 hour request. Commissioner Vagell reported that the discussion centered around how to incentivize the volunteer to come out for the standbys. Commissioner Vagell reported that he thought that parameters for an incentive program were outlined at the meeting. Chief DiGiorgio reported that in years past, the District has gotten requests for these different events and have been posting the events. These events include the Little League Parade, the Hanover Duck Race, three 5k events, and other things like these. Chief DiGiorgio noted that the specific 11 hour Little League Softball Charity event that Vice President DeSimone is talking about is not requiring that the District send an ambulance. They are sending the District the application informing us that an event is going on. Chief DiGiorgio reported that a good number of the events, including the



Little League Softball Charity event, are more PR events than someone asking or requiring an ambulance be on site for the event. Chief DiGiorgio noted that for some of the events, such as the 5K races, history has proven that there is a need for two ambulances at the event. Chief DiGiorgio reported that in the past, if a full time, part time or per diem crew is scheduled during an event, he has sent them to the event during their duty time. If a volunteer crew was scheduled, then an ambulance was not sent to the event. Chief DiGiorgio reported that there are other community events that the District is invited and encouraged to attend, such as the Touch a Truck event. Chief DiGiorgio reported that if a volunteer wanted to go to these events, the District could incentive it, but he was not certain if the discussion held at the Operations Meeting was specific to storm standby. EMT Thompson felt that the discussion pertained only to storm standby. Commissioner Vagell felt that the incentive possibility should be revisited. Commissioner Dugan suggested that the Board would be willing to consider an incentive plan but felt that it might need to be more than a couple of call credits. Vice President DeSimone noted that this was just one idea but felt that something was needed to get people to come out for several hours at a time. Vice President DeSimone asked for clarification on whether the standby requests could be declined because she was under the impression that they had all been accepted. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he has to sign off on these event applications to acknowledge receipt of the application, and that he is aware the event is taking place, acknowledge anything fire prevention related, and being aware of street closures etc. These event application forms are used to make sure that everyone who signs off is aware of what is going on. Chief DiGiorgio acknowledged that an ambulance is needed at some of the events such as the 5K races but noted that the District can decline some of them. Vice President DeSimone acknowledged that it would be great to be able to commit to all the requests but that the volume of requests means this would be committing to almost every weekend. Vice President DeSimone felt that the only way to commit people to attend every weekend will require incentives. Commissioner Dugan reiterated that he is still interested in an incentive program even if the District is not committed to attend all the events. Vice President DeSimone reported that she will be having the focus group meeting the first week of May and hopefully she will get some ideas from them and be able to put something together. Commissioner O'Hare noted that sometimes the District has been able to charge a fee for the standby events

held at a hotel but that it would be difficult to do this at a charitable event. Chief DiGiorgio reported that last year Asst. Chief Martin had asked to reestablish the bike team and that the EMS bike team volunteer members attend the 5K races are another group of people that should be considered. Commissioner Dugan asked if the fire standby fees were established by ordinance. Administrator Schultz said the fee schedules for fire and EMS standby along with apparatus and staff was established by resolution. Theoretically any organization outside the Township could be invoiced for services, but this would not be good public relations. Vice President DeSimone asked if she could get a copy of the list. Administrator Schultz said he would get a copy to her. Commissioner DeNigris asked if the Township subsidized some of these events. Committeeman Cahill reported that the Township does not directly subsidize the events but that it does indirectly subsidize some of them. For example, the township maintains the fields that the Little League uses. Commissioner O'Hare asked about the police presence at the 5K races. Committeeman Cahill reported that the sponsors are charged for the police now although there were not originally. Commissioner Vagell asked for a status report on the bike team and if it will be activated now that the weather is turning warmer. Commissioner Vagell noted that the bike team could be present at some of the events even if an ambulance is not and they could be incorporated into any incentive program that is developed. Chief DiGiorgio reported that Asst. Chief Martin updated the policy for the bike team but that it has not been migrated over to Power DMS yet. Chief DiGiorgio asked that everyone keep in mind that compensating police officers for these events is considered an off duty job and they will be present for the event. Chief DiGiorgio reported that in the events that the District covers, the event sponsor is made aware that if the District gets a call, they will leave the event. Chief DiGiorgio noted that if the sponsor is charged for the presence of an ambulance and personnel at an event, then the ambulance is dedicated to the event and cannot leave. Commissioner Dugan felt that if the police at the event were needed for a riot down the street, they would leave the event, but he understood the point the Chief made. Commissioner Dugan felt that the possibility of leaving could be built into any contract. Commissioner DeNigris felt that if the Township donated funds for the event, it could be passed on to the people working the event. EMT Thompson felt that the Fire Co. should be asked to contribute to any incentive program since they would be the direct beneficiary of the program. EMT

Thompson noted that when people make a donation, they do not make it to Fire District 3, they make it to the Fire Dept.

Administrator Schultz reported that he and Chief DiGiorgio had a discussion this afternoon following a flurry of social media commentary last night about EMS billing. Administrator Schultz reported that the commentary was not specifically directed at the District but that we got dragged into the middle of it. Administrator Schultz reported that most of these social media comments go unanswered and felt there should be a mechanism that would allow the District to contact someone instead of dragging it through social media. Commissioner Vagell noted that the District has a Facebook page and asked who manages the page. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he has access to it but does not know who manages it. Commissioner Vagell felt that the District could use this mechanism to reach out to an individual but he would have concerns with anyone reaching out on their personal accounts. Commissioner Vagell agreed that these comments should not go unanswered and the district should try to educate the public. EMT Thompson asked if the District website contained a complaint / compliment button where people could leave comments. EMT Thompson acknowledged that this would not prevent people from airing their grievances on social media but would give people with problems or complaints a place to post them directly and the District could reply to them directly as well. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the class he just took provided sample forms for complaints and feedback that could be added to a website. Committeeman Cahill noted that the Township frowns upon anybody in the Township commenting on non-official Facebook pages because by law they are considered an official statement. Committeeman Cahill reported that in anticipation of the social media flurry that may occur with the coming affordable housing agreements, the Township will be building a Q & A section on the Township website that will be updated consistently based on monitoring of social media comments. This will allow the Township to address misinformation with an approved official answer and allow Committeeman to individually respond to social media comments with a link to the official answer. Commissioner O'Hare noted that the district does have a frequently asked questions section for EMS billing on the website.

**REMINDERS:**

The next regular meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners will be held on Thursday, May 2, 2019 at 7:00 P.M.

The next Joint Fire Prevention Board Meeting will be held on Monday, June 10, 2019 at 6:30 P.M. at the Whippany Firehouse.

The Fire Department's 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration will be held on Saturday, September 7, 2019 starting at 6 P.M.

Commissioner DeNigris asked if there was a meeting scheduled for July 4. There was no meeting scheduled for July 4.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** Committeeman Cahill asked if there was any 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary information that he could include in his report beyond the date of the event. Administrator Schultz said that he will have Asst. Chief Martin reach out to him with the particulars to be advertised.

**RESOLUTIONS:** Commissioner Vagell indicated that the resolutions would be approved by consent agenda.

**Commissioner Vagell read Resolution 19-04-18-41 approving an MOA with the Fire Department for a shared services agreement for bookkeeping services.**

**Commissioner Vagell read Resolution 19-04-18-42 appointing Volunteer Member Kimberly Hughes.**

**Commissioner O'Hare made a motion to introduce the resolutions, seconded by Commissioner Dugan. All were in favor. Commissioner Callas was absent.**

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:** Commissioner Vagell read Resolution 19-04-18-43 to enter into executive session. Commissioner DeNigris made a motion to introduce the resolution, seconded by Commissioner O'Hare. All were in favor. Commissioner Callas was absent. The Board went into closed session at 8:05 p.m.

Personnel matters were discussed. Action will not be taken.

**The Board came out of closed session at 9:23 p.m.**

**ADJOURN:** A motion was made by Commissioner DeNigris, seconded by Commissioner O'Hare, to adjourn the meeting. All were in favor. Commissioner Callas was absent. The meeting was adjourned at 9:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by

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Craig Vagell, Secretary