

May 21, 2020 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 May 21, 2020 in accordance with the Public Meeting Act of 1975, Chapter 231. This meeting was held on the Zoom.com platform.

The Board observed a moment of silence for all those who had passed due to COVID-19.

ATTENDANCE: Commissioners Robert Callas, Michael Dugan Sr., Michael Dugan Jr., Robert O'Hare, and Thomas Quirk were present.

Chief DiGiorgio, Administrator Schultz, EMT Houser, EMT Mockler and Mr. Fawcett were also in attendance.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: None.

CORRESPONDENCE: None.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES:

The minutes from the April 16, 2020 Regular Meeting were reviewed.

Amendments to Previous Minutes: None.

The minutes from the May 7, 2020 Regular Meeting were reviewed.

Amendments to Previous Minutes: None.

Commissioner O'Hare made a motion to approving the minutes from the April 16, 2020 Regular Meeting and the May 7, 2020 Regular Meeting. Commissioner Callas seconded the motion. All were in favor.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER: Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the District is working on a few plans to try to limit expenditures and hopes to know more by next meeting, once the reopening schedule and the staffing levels are known.

Commissioner Quirk made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report, seconded by Commissioner O'Hare. All were in favor.

Report of Fire Commissioner Board Committees and Chief of Department:

CHIEF'S REPORT: Chief DiGiorgio said that he hoped everyone present and their families were doing well and enjoying their time home. Chief DiGiorgio wished all the EMTs in the organization a happy and healthy EMS Week. Chief DiGiorgio thanked Commissioner O'Hare for the kind words in the email he distributed to the District and thanked the Board for providing lunch and cake this week.

Chief DiGiorgio gave the following operational updates pertaining to the pandemic.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that over the last two weeks the District has seen a reduction on COVID calls however the District is seeing an upward trend in routine medical calls and fire calls. Chief DiGiorgio reported that there has been an increase in motor vehicle accidents as more people are getting back out on the road.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that the reduction in calls has allowed the staff to focus on some of the outstanding maintenance and operational responsibilities that were put on hold. Chief DiGiorgio reported that our members and staff continue to do an outstanding job during this crisis. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he recently distributed the reports of the career division lieutenants. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the majority of the work that they are doing is being put into the District log book in the Emergency Reporting System, however a paper copy was distributed to the Board for their review.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that Governor Murphy continues to sign executive orders and has reached 147 two days ago. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the organization continues to follow the orders that affect public safety and health.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that our PPE stock continues to be a challenge. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the District is doing okay and has been working to stockpile some of the items and use the items with discretion in case there is a shortage in the Fall if COVID increases again. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the District is starting to receive some of the supplies that were on backorder. Chief DiGiorgio reported that following a phone conference with East Hanover OEM yesterday, a representative from the NJ State Police indicated that there were PPE supplies coming to Morris County. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the representative gave him the name of the contact at Morris County and he called the County. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the County did not give him the same

information that he received from the State Police but the District has been added to the list and will be contacted when the supplies come in. Chief DiGiorgio reported that his understanding is that the County will be forwarding some of the supplies to the health care community first and subsequently to the responder community. Chief DiGiorgio reported that supposedly the health care community had reached full capacity for supplies and some were starting to trickle down to the responders. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he will follow up with the County.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that the career modified schedule that began on April 6 with the career firefighter on duty is assigned as the second EMT on the ambulance on the overnight from 10 PM to 6 AM. Chief DiGiorgio noted that the career firefighter sometimes is assigned as the second EMT at other times should the need arise. Chief DiGiorgio reported that this schedule has been meeting our needs for coverage. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the firefighter volunteer members continue to sign up for standby and operational periods and shifts and continue to respond to fire related calls. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the District has not received any interest in the incentive program to date from EMTs in the EMS Division. Chief DiGiorgio reported that openings in shifts are continuing to be monitored by Lt. Belott as standby members continue to sign up for those shifts. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the District continues to record staff temperatures at the beginning and end of each shift.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that he met with Chief Cortright following the District 2 Commissioners Meeting and the District 2 Commissioners have granted permission to Chief Cortright to provide assistance manning the RAD safety car when they are staffed with 3 personnel. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the same assistance could be provided as a second EMT if and when it is needed. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the Whippany staff was trained on May 13 & 14 and have covered three shifts to date. Chief DiGiorgio reported that our District is keeping track of the RAD calls that they have responded to. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the equipment is being moved from the District 3 vehicle to the District 2 vehicle. Chief DiGiorgio noted that the District is reviewing how this is panning out and how best to move forward. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the District has begun to look at making some room on the ambulance so that the equipment can be carried as needed because the current process has created some shortfalls. Chief

DiGiorgio reported that the results from the May 1 roadmap to reopen the District are in and the survey results have been compiled. Chief DiGiorgio reported that a copy of the results has been emailed to the Board and Division Officers. Chief DiGiorgio reported that based on the survey results, the District has been able to lay out Fire, EMS, and Career Division schedules beginning June 1, which is the beginning of phase 2 of the District reopening. Chief DiGiorgio reported that copies of the schedules have been emailed to the Board and the Division Officers.

Chief DiGiorgio asked if anyone had any questions on the COVID portion of his report. There were no questions. Chief DiGiorgio reported the following items were non-COVID:

Chief DiGiorgio reported that this past Saturday, the Fire and Career Division members assisted the Whippany Park Parent and Teacher Association with distribution of 40 Senior Graduating signs. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the Town was split into 4 zones and Fire and PD units along with Whippany Park teachers posted the signs at the seniors houses. Chief DiGiorgio noted that the event went viral on Facebook and everyone was thankful for the District's participation.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that he distributed a memo titled "Time Off – Career Division Employees" to the Board on May 14 in which he outlined the dates he has assigned the Career Division Firefighters beginning the week of June 8. Chief DiGiorgio reported that his recommendation to the Board in the memo was to include EMT Mockler, EMT Houser, and EMT Waldron in this incentive due to their efforts and in consideration of their work on the front lines. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he has not received any feedback from the Board as to what direction to go in regarding his recommendation. Commissioner O'Hare reported that he would endorse the idea. The Board agreed. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he would inform the EMT Mockler, EMT Houser, and EMT Waldron.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that he distributed two additional personnel memos on the completion of an internal investigation and the resignation of a Per Diem EMT for the Board to review.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that a memo was sent out on May 13 titled "Overtime EMS Day Shifts" removing all the overtime and personnel in an overtime position

per the Boards direction. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the staff was notified that afternoon and any personnel in an overtime position were removed from the ambulances and from any shifts going forward. Chief DiGiorgio reported that some of the shifts were able to be filled with Per Diems and on shifts where there was a FF / EMT that person was moved over to ride on the ambulance. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he did not get any feedback from the Board and asked if they had any questions on the direction. Commissioner Dugan Sr. felt that this was something that was supposed to be done a long time ago. Commissioner O'Hare asked for clarification on the Board direction to the Chief. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the Board had told the Chief at a prior meeting that if the Chief had personnel in an overtime position during a day when there was a FF / EMT in the firehouse, that FF / EMT was to be moved over to ride the ambulance to eliminate the overtime. Commissioner Dugan Sr. noted that this would drop the FF down to one on the apparatus during the 6 AM to 6 PM weekday shift. Commissioner O'Hare reported that he did not remember that discussion but felt that the Board had told the Chief that if he needed to move the FF / EMT to ride the ambulance, he could. Commissioner O'Hare noted that he could not find the discussion in the minutes that he looked back through, but he did recall the topic being discussed at committee meetings. Commissioner O'Hare reported that the Chief was told to do what he had to do during the pandemic and the District would catch up later. Commissioner O'Hare felt that Chief DiGiorgio was doing what he had to do and that this was the direction that the Board gave him. Commissioner Dugan Sr. felt that this was something that was talked about months ago and asked if Commissioner Quirk remembered anything about the discussions. Commissioner Quirk recalled that the reason the District was hiring FF / EMTs was so that they were available to ride the ambulance and agreed with Commissioner Dugan Sr. Commissioner Dugan Sr. asked Commissioner Callas if he remembered any discussion on this topic. Commissioner Callas recalled discussions on eliminating overtime by hiring FF / EMTs like Commissioner Quirk just said. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that he had nothing else on the topic. Chief DiGiorgio reiterated that moving the FF / EMT to ride the ambulance has been put into effect going forward and hoped that this would eliminate some overtime issues.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that there were some interviews conducted this week by Asst. Chief DeSimone and Captain Thompson interviewed two candidates and he

believed that there was one candidate for Per Diem EMT being presented to the Board tonight.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that he met with EMT Ryan Houser this week to discuss the open fulltime position that was posted in the fire house internally. Chief DiGiorgio noted that EMT Houser has been temporarily filling the fulltime EMT position. Chief DiGiorgio reported that his goal in offering EMT Houser the fulltime position is to benefit the District in an EMT Flex role and an EMS coordinator role. Chief DiGiorgio noted that EMT Houser will work on a flexible schedule that has an 80 hour pay period and flex his time to cover open shifts. Chief DiGiorgio reported that there have been a lot of gaps in the schedule and in order to maintain our billable transports, and to step in for training in the absence of Lt. Miskch. Chief DiGiorgio felt that EMT Houser would be an asset to the organization in this capacity as he has proven, not only during the pandemic, but over the last few years. Chief DiGiorgio strongly recommended that the Board P/T EMT Houser is appointed to a F/T EMT position to continue to meet our needs both operationally and administratively. Commissioner Dugan Sr. asked for clarification that there was currently one F/T EMT on staff. Chief DiGiorgio agreed that there was currently one F/T EMT on staff. Commissioner Dugan Sr. asked if there was a resolution before the Board to hire another F/T EMT tonight. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the resolution before the Board tonight was for a Per Diem EMT. Commissioner Quirk reported that the resolution states that the Board would be appointing an interim F/T EMT. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he has information on both EMT Cobleigh and EMT Houser and that based on a discussion that he had about moving the schedules and filling some of the voids, that it would be acceptable to have three F/T EMTs. Chief DiGiorgio asked if there was any concern about moving EMT Houser from his current P/T EMT position to a F/T EMT position. Commissioner Dugan Sr. did not feel that the Board had created the position. Commissioner Quirk reported that he had zero concern doing it but that he was not sure the position was available. Commissioner Callas felt that there might be some issues with this that should be discussed in closed session. Chief DiGiorgio clarified that this would be for a F/T EMT position, not FF / EMT. Commissioner Dugan Sr. asked if the position would be interim. Chief DiGiorgio reported that it would be at the Board's discretion whether the position would be interim or continue going forward. Commissioner Dugan Sr. clarified that the District does not know where the staffing is right now and what it is going

to be because as he noted at a meeting this week, the Board's idea of the current staff level and Chief DiGiorgio's idea of the current staff level might not be the same. Commissioner Dugan Sr. felt that any current staffing level discrepancy should be cleared up before moving forward. Chief DiGiorgio suggested that he skip ahead and talk about the stakeholders meeting. Chief DiGiorgio reported that a Division Stakeholders Meeting was held last night with Asst. Chief DeSimone, Asst. Chief Martin, Lt. Belott, Commissioner Dugan Sr., Commissioner Callas and Administrator Schultz. Chief DiGiorgio reported that a review of the Fire Division and EMS schedules beginning June 1 was discussed at the direction of the Personnel Committee. Chief DiGiorgio reported that at the direction of the Personnel Committee, he prepared a schedule returning the career staff back to the sixteen-hour schedule in place on March 1. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the schedule included interim FF / EMT Sulpy as this was his understanding from the Personnel Committee. Chief DiGiorgio reported that over time the Board has directed him as Chief of the Department to find solutions, fix them and report to the Board with his findings and this was the purpose of the Stakeholder Meeting. Chief DiGiorgio reported that after much analysis and going over all the schedules, he strongly recommends that the Board moving Interim FF / EMT Sulpy to a permanent position as FF / EMT in the new schedule. Chief DiGiorgio reported that whether in the sixteen-hour schedule or any other schedule, he believes that at this point Interim FF / EMT Sulpy has proven himself. Commissioner Quirk noted that this is adding another firefighter to the department. Chief DiGiorgio reported that this would be moving him into the schedule where he is currently working. Commissioner Quirk noted that his current position is interim and to keep him in the position permanently would require another firefighter position be added to the department. Chief DiGiorgio agreed. Chief DiGiorgio reported that it is his recommendation, in constructing the schedule moving forward and to continue to fill the voids, to add the FF / EMT position and to have three F/T EMT positions filled by the personnel identified earlier. Commissioner Dugan felt that this is something that needs to be discussed in closed session. Commissioner Quirk felt that it should be discussed in open session because closed session would be used to discuss specific personnel while staffing levels would be a more general discussion. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that he will bring up something now that would normally go under Negotiations. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that as far as

the schedule is going now, the Board was approached by the FMBA with an offer of an MOA proposal for a schedule. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that he, Commissioner Callas and Administrator Schultz met this morning and he and Commissioner Callas would like the Board to consider postponing the phase 2 opening for an additional two weeks. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that this will allow further discussion with the FMBA to see if a mutually beneficial agreement can be reached as far as scheduling and staffing. Commissioner Dugan Sr. noted that unfortunately the Chief was not aware of these developments prior to tonight because the meeting with the FMBA did not conclude until 5 pm today. Commissioner Dugan Sr. apologized for the confusion this created. Commissioner Callas reported that if he did not think that something beneficial could come out of continuing to negotiate, he would not recommend the two-week continuance. Commissioner O'Hare asked what schedule would be utilized for the next two weeks. Commissioner Dugan Sr. recommended maintaining the current schedule for ease of continuity. Commissioner Quirk asked what the MOU states about an expiration date. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the MOU is in effect for the entire COVID state of emergency period. Commissioner Quirk said he was in favor of delaying phase two of the reopening for an additional two weeks. The remainder of the Board agreed. Chief DiGiorgio reported that based on the Board's decision, he would hold off on his request.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that some other items were discussed at the Stakeholder Meeting, predominantly from the Fire Division. Chief DiGiorgio reported that Asst. Chief Martin felt that returning to the sixteen-hour shift would be a step backwards. Chief DiGiorgio reported that this would mean that the District would go back to having no fire coverage on Friday evenings, and every fifth and eleventh week there would be no fire coverage on Saturday or Sunday. Chief DiGiorgio reported that Asst. Chief Martin felt the incentive program for the enhanced standby seems to be working. Chief DiGiorgio reported that enhanced pay for call would conclude on May 31 and asked the Board to extend the enhanced standby for the additional two weeks. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that enhanced standby would be included in continuing to operate on the same schedule for an additional two weeks. The Board agreed. Chief DiGiorgio reported that Asst. Chief Martin noted that returning to the sixteen hour shifts would mean the crews would not be filled with at least 4 members on overnights. Chief DiGiorgio reported that a draft staffing policy was also

discussed at the Stakeholders Meeting and distributed to those at the meeting as well as the Board. Chief DiGiorgio reported that every member at the Stakeholders Meeting approved the draft and he now needs the Board to approve the draft policy. Chief DiGiorgio felt it would be beneficial to wait the two weeks to see how the negotiations proceed and present the draft staffing policy and recommendations together at the next meeting. The Board agreed that this would be the best way to do it.

Chief DiGiorgio concluded his report.

EMS: Commissioner O'Hare reported that the Board salutes and applauds all the EMTs in the department for the outstanding job they are doing. Commissioner Quirk went on record thanking everyone as well.

BUDGET: Nothing to report.

PERSONNEL: Commissioner Quirk indicated the need for an executive session.

NEGOTIATIONS: Commissioner Callas reported that there has been the one discussion with the FMBA noted above and the committee will open up discussions on the new contract soon.

LIAISON TO THE VOLUNTEERS: Nothing to report.

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS: Commissioner Dugan Jr. reported that the trees along Mountain Rd. have been brought down by Greenwood.

APPARATUS/EQUIPMENT AND MAINTENANCE: Chief DiGiorgio reported that the District is moving along with maintenance as indicated. Chief DiGiorgio noted that the ladder truck is due for annual maintenance and he gave the approval for the rear brakes on Truck 33.

INSURANCE: Nothing to report.

COMMUNICATIONS: Commissioner Quirk reported that the Township has approved a hefty budget for a communications system for the police department. Commissioner Quirk reported that he spoke with the police department and it is his understanding that it will not affect anyone but the police department. Commissioner Quirk asked the police department to let him know if this changes.

BY-LAWS: Nothing to report.

WEBSITE: Up to date.

PLANNING COMMITTEE: Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that there has been no meeting as of yet but felt that the committee should start to meet again while maintaining social distancing because there is a lot to discuss given everything the District is going through. Administrator Schultz reported that he would try to set up a meeting the week after next. Commissioner Quirk reported that he could attend virtually much easier than in person. Commissioner Dugan Sr. felt that something could be worked out, even if Commissioner Quirk was the only one attending virtually.

LIASON TO EXEMPTS: Nothing to report.

RECORDS RETENTION: Nothing to report.

LIAISON TO HANOVER TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE: Nothing to report.

INSPECTION DINNER: Postponed.

OLD BUSINESS: Administrator Schultz reported that 95% of the documents required for the workers' compensation insurance audit have been submitted and the remainder should be submitted by Monday morning.

Administrator Schultz reported that the District is still compiling data to submit to FEMA for reimbursement.

NEW BUSINESS: None.

REMINDERS:

The next regular meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners will be held on Thursday, June 4, 2020 at 7:00 P.M.

The Joint Fire Prevention Board Meeting will be rescheduled.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: None.

RESOLUTIONS:

Administrator Schultz read Resolution 20-05-21-46 which was the second reading creating the position of Data Entry Technician. Commissioner Dugan Sr. made a motion to introduce the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Dugan Jr. Administrator Schultz reported that it was open for discussion and there will

be a public hearing on it. Commissioner Quirk asked if the position was being created to handle COVID data entry. Administrator Schultz confirmed that this was the intent. Commissioner Quirk noted that this type of position is not something that the District will be reimbursed for. Administrator Schultz concurred. Commissioner Dugan Sr. felt it was important to get the data submitted while not tying up the Chief, the Administrator or himself with the data entry and was alright with not getting reimbursed. Administrator Schultz asked if any member of the public wished to speak on this position. No one spoke. Administrator Schultz called for a Board vote. All were in favor.

Administrator Schultz read Resolution 20-05-21-47 which was the second reading creating the position of F/T Firefighter. Commissioner Callas made a motion to introduce the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Dugan Jr. Administrator Schultz asked if the Board had any questions regarding the position. Commissioner Quirk asked where the job description came from. Administrator Schultz reported that it was an existing job description that the District already had. Administrator Schultz asked if anyone from the public wished to comment on the position. There were no comments. Administrator Schultz called for a Board vote. All were in favor.

Administrator Schultz read Resolution 20-05-21-48 accepting the resignation of EMT Bergen. Commissioner Dugan Jr. made a motion to introduce the resolution, seconded by Commissioner O'Hare. Commissioners Callas, O'Hare and Quirk were in favor. Commissioners Dugan Sr. and Dugan Jr. were against.

Administrator Schultz read Resolution 20-05-21-49 authorizing a conditional offer of employment for Per Diem EMT to L. Sevillano. Commissioner Dugan Sr. made a motion to introduce the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Dugan Jr. All were in favor.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Administrator Schultz read Resolution 20-05-21-50 to enter into Executive Session. Commissioner Callas made a motion to introduce the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Dugan Jr. All were in favor. The Board went into closed session at 7:48 P.M.

The Board discussed personnel matters in closed session in the matter of Tim Fawcett and the resolution terminating him. Commissioner Dugan Sr. made a motion to rescind the resolution terminating EMT Fawcett and to accept his

resignation from the EMT position. Furthermore, Tim Fawcett will be reinstated as a volunteer firefighter with time served as suspension and a six-month probation. Commissioner Dugan Jr. seconded the motion. Commissioners Callas, Dugan Sr., Dugan Jr. and Quirk were in favor. Commissioner O'Hare was against.

The Board came out of closed session at 9:29 P.M.

RESOLUTIONS:

Administrator Schultz read Resolution 20-05-21-51 appointing Interim F/T EMT Cobleigh. Commissioner Dugan Sr. made a motion to introduce the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Dugan Jr. All were in favor.

ADJOURN: A motion was made by Commissioner Callas, seconded by Commissioner Dugan Sr., to adjourn the meeting. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 9:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by

Thomas Quirk, Secretary