

May 7, 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 7, 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 gave their lives to their community and nation.

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

Chief DiGiorgio, Administrator Schultz and Hanover Township Committeeman Cahill were also in attendance.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: The Board recognized Committeeman Cahill, who reported that the Township is maintaining status quo regarding access to public buildings. Committeeman Cahill reported that the Township will have their first public zoom meeting next Thursday.

CORRESPONDENCE: None.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES:

The approval of minutes from the April 16, 2020 Regular Meeting was postponed until next meeting.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER: Administrator Schultz reported that the Treasurer was not online. Administrator Schultz asked the Board to adopt a formal procurement policy, which is a memorialization of the policy that is already in place. Administrator Schultz reported that the COVID expense recovery process requires that the District have a written procurement policy. Commissioner Quirk made a motion to adopt the procurement policies, seconded by Commissioner Callas. All were in favor. Commissioners Dugan Sr. and Dugan Jr. were absent.

Administrator Schultz reported that late this afternoon he received an email from Mr. Braslow advising the District that a State Bill has made it to the Governor’s desk allowing municipalities to withhold tax payments to fire districts.

Administrator Schultz reported that Mr. Braslow will keep the District apprised of whether the Bill is signed. Administrator Schultz noted that Chief DiGiorgio informed him today that the second quarter tax payment from the Township would not be delayed.

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 reported that the District has seen a reduction in COVID calls over the last two weeks. Chief DiGiorgio reported that this has allowed our staff to focus on outstanding maintenance and the operational responsibilities that were put on hold. Chief DiGiorgio reported that our members and staff continue to do an outstanding job during this crisis and he commended them on all their hard work.

Chief DiGiorgio gave the following operational updates pertaining to week eight of the pandemic.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that Governor Murphy continues to sign executive orders and has reached Executive Order 138. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the District continues to follow any orders that pertain.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that our PPE stock continues to be a challenge. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the District has received some items that have been on backorder since the beginning of the pandemic. Chief DiGiorgio thanked EMT Houser for securing cleaning supplies on eBay.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that the staffing excel spreadsheet has been updated and the list includes one employee recently added to self-isolation. Chief DiGiorgio noted that all other employees are working and in good health. Chief DiGiorgio reported the career modified 24/48 shifts began on April 6 and puts career staff in the firehouse six days a week. Chief DiGiorgio reported that 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 this schedule has been meeting our needs for coverage. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the District has encountered its first challenge with this schedule trying to cover EMS shifts on Mother's Day. Chief DiGiorgio reported that Lt. Belott is soliciting staff and hopes

to get one or two members to cover the open shifts. 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 the District is keeping track of these shifts for possible reimbursement. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he met with the career officers last Wednesday to discuss options for the current and future shift schedules which include 7 day a week coverage and returning to our previous schedule. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he met with the Personnel Committee today to discuss the shift scheduling options. Chief DiGiorgio reported that with guidance from the Personnel Committee, he will prepare a draft schedule to begin on June 1 utilizing the current staff. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he will also have a schedule based on the survey results of the Fire and EMS volunteers for the Board to review. Chief DiGiorgio noted that based on the current survey responses, he is concerned about the June 1 shift schedule because it could potentially leave various open gaps in coverage. Chief DiGiorgio noted that once more volunteer responses come back the District will be in a better position to gauge the shift coverage.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that the Board sponsored lunch concluded on May 1 and he thanked the Board for providing lunch during the challenging days were welcome and appreciated. Chief DiGiorgio noted that the District continues to receive food donations from family, friends and local business for which everyone is very thankful.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that the 3-month (February, March and April) EMS call volume for 2020 has exceeded our 2019 numbers by approximately 16 calls. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the EMS transports for this period were down 38 as compared to last year possibly due to residents refusing medical attention based on the stay at home waiver policy which gives some guidance to the residents to avoid transport to the hospital. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the District did transport over 110 presumptive positive patients during the three-month timeframe.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that the both the Fire District and the Cedar Knolls Fire Department Facebook pages continue to be updated with information.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that the District is continuing to monitor the temperatures of the staff and members at the beginning and end of their shifts.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that he met with Chief Cortright to discuss options for assistance with staff and Chief Cortright indicated he would speak with the District 2 Board of Fire Commissioners and get back with the response.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that on May 1 he distributed an email containing a memo and survey to membership and staff to gauge the return of the District volunteer EMS Division members. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the survey is due back by May 11 phase in periods for the members to return. Chief DiGiorgio reported that phase one return is projected to be May 18 and phase two is projected to be June 1. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he would have the results out next week. Chief DiGiorgio noted that he sent personal reminder emails to EMS Division members who had not already completed their survey.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that Lt. McGuinness has scheduled the Life Hazard Use Fire Inspections and the Fire Inspectors are meeting with the building owners on a one on one basis to complete the inspections. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the inspections began on Monday. Chief DiGiorgio noted that most of the inspected buildings are unoccupied because they are schools and day care centers.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that during the 10-week COVID period, the members and staff have joined together and created a bond and team effort to work to support one another and their passion for the emergency services job. Chief DiGiorgio noted that sometimes when things are at their worst, people are at their best and that this crisis and the response of the staff and members have illustrated this. Chief DiGiorgio could not stress it enough how everyone has stepped up in many different ways and capacities. Chief DiGiorgio thanked everyone for all the hard work and sacrifices they have made during this pandemic. Chief DiGiorgio noted it has been truly outstanding all the time and effort that everyone has put into this organization to make sure that our District is continuing to operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Chief DiGiorgio concluded his report.

Commissioners Dugan Sr. and Dugan Jr. joined the meeting. Administrator Schultz asked Commissioner Dugan Sr. if he had an update for the Treasurer's

Report. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the District is pretty much in the same position as last meeting and that the items marked off in red on the financial reports are still running way over budget. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the District could see some relief if some equipment purchases that were budgeted for are not made this year. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that Chief DiGiorgio had highlighted the potential savings on the equipment purchases at a budget meeting. Commissioner Dugan Sr. noted that at this point it looks like the District will be over budget and it is just a matter of how much.

Commissioner Dugan Sr. noted that hopefully the Board will get a data entry person in house to assist with the FEMA reimbursement applications and this will allow everything will be submitted sooner.

Administrator Schultz thanked Commissioner Dugan Sr. and asked if anyone had questions for the Chief.

Commissioner Dugan Sr. asked Chief DiGiorgio about the current staff reference in his report and whether it was the six FF/EMTs and one FT EMT or if it was the staff in place before the pandemic. Chief DiGiorgio asked if this question pertained to the 24/48 shifts. Commissioner Dugan Sr. said that it did. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the current 24/48 shifts have a fire officer and a firefighter working Monday beginning at 6 AM through Sunday at 6 AM. Chief DiGiorgio reported that a FT EMT works on Monday, Wednesday and Friday while a PT EMT works on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday.

Commissioner Dugan Sr. noted that if Chief Cortright was going to speak to the District 2 Board of Fire Commissioners about helping with EMT calls, Chief Cortright should be asking the District 2 Board if they would allow the District to help. Commissioner Dugan felt that Chief DiGiorgio and Chief Cortright should work out the details of how they could help. Chief DiGiorgio reported that one of the possibilities that he spoke with Chief Cortright about was District 2 assisting as a RAD officer, the officer that has been following the ambulance with decontamination supplies and extra PPE. Chief DiGiorgio reported that this would free up the career firefighter or officer who are currently following the ambulances. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the second item that he discussed with Chief Cortright was that OEM has allowed EMTs who are not part of the agency or under the agency license. Chief DiGiorgio noted that the question would be if District 2 was fully staffed and District 3 was under staffed, would

District 2 be willing to provide District 3 with an EMT. Chief DiGiorgio reported that Chief Cortright indicated that District 2 is staffed with 2 firefighters and one flex person per shift. Chief DiGiorgio noted that the flex person would move into the 2nd firefighter spot if one of the scheduled firefighters was out. Chief DiGiorgio reported that if District 2 could potentially loan District 3 the flex person to ensure that District 3 could get an ambulance out on a call.

Commissioner O'Hare asked Chief DiGiorgio about the downward trend of EMS call from January 2020 through April 2020 and asked if this was reflective of what is happening nationally or if this is typical for this time period each year for our District. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he ran the call numbers for 2020 and 2019 and the District was on an upward trend from January through March 2020 as compared to 2019. Chief DiGiorgio believes that the transport numbers are down this year is because of the COVID-19 crisis and people being educated about their options to stay home. Commissioner O'Hare asked for confirmation that 110 of the transports in January through March 2020 were COVID. Chief DiGiorgio confirmed that 1000 were presumptive positive for COVID.

EMS: Nothing to report.

BUDGET: Nothing to report.

PERSONNEL: Commissioner Quirk reported that the committee met today and there is a lot to discuss as a full Board.

NEGOTIATIONS: Nothing to report.

LIAISON TO THE VOLUNTEERS: Nothing to report.

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS: Commissioner O'Hare reported that he saw that someone was in to look at the tiles in back room on the second floor. Commissioner O'Hare reported that no asbestos was found so the project is able to go forward if the members choose to do so.

Commissioner O'Hare reported that removal of the trees is still pending.

Administrator Schultz reported that after the bay floors were resurfaced, there was some issues that arose and more work was supposed to be done in April. Administrator Schultz reported that the vendor has proposed that the outstanding work not be done and that the District keep the balance of what is

due on the project. Administrator Schultz thought that the vendor was paid 90% up front and this would leave about \$5,200 outstanding. Administrator Schultz reported that the Board will have to decide how to handle this once the outstanding balance is confirmed and a walk through of the remaining work occurs.

APPARATUS/EQUIPMENT AND MAINTENANCE: Chief DiGiorgio reported that one of the topics that was discussed at the career staff meeting was the shift in responsibilities. Chief DiGiorgio noted that building maintenance, and the apparatus / equipment maintenance has been shifted to Lt. DeSimone. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the ladder truck maintenance and service was completed in house. Chief DiGiorgio reported Engine 35 went to Fire & Safety for its annual maintenance and some warranty items were discovered. Chief DiGiorgio reported that both ambulances received their annual PM at VCI.

INSURANCE: Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the medical health policies have been renewed. Administrator Schultz noted that all the insurance policies, including health, liability and workers compensation, were renewed in April.

COMMUNICATIONS: Nothing to report.

BY-LAWS: Nothing to report.

WEBSITE: Nothing to report.

PLANNING COMMITTEE: Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that there have been no meetings for a while but felt that meetings could resume if special precautions are taken.

LIASON TO EXEMPTS: Nothing to report.

RECORDS RETENTION: Nothing to report.

LIAISON TO HANOVER TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE: Nothing to report.

INSPECTION DINNER: This event has been postponed.

FEMA REIMBURSEMENT: Administrator Schultz reported that the process is moving forward.

OLD BUSINESS: Administrator Schultz reported that the workmen's compensation insurance audit has begun and he hopes that the District will see the same reduction in cost as last year.

NEW BUSINESS: Commissioner Dugan Sr. asked when in person meeting will be able to be held. Commissioner Dugan Sr. felt that given the average number of attendees at the meetings, one of the bays could be set up to guarantee social distancing during an in-person meeting. Administrator Schultz reported that he would look into the matter and let everyone know. Commissioner Dugan Sr. asked if Administrator Schultz would also look into how to have a closed session, possibly separately from the public meeting. Administrator Schultz reported that this would be a Special Meeting and could be held about a week after the date was decided upon due to legal reporting requirements. Commissioner Callas agreed that there was a need for a closed meeting. Commissioner O'Hare reported that he was hoping to have the next regular meeting at the fire house and at the same time conduct an executive session. Commissioner Dugan Sr. felt that would be great as long as it does not violate any law or executive order. Administrator Schultz reported that he would check with Mr. Braslow.

REMINDERS:

The next regular meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners will be held on Thursday, May 21, 2020 at 7:00 P.M. Administrator Schultz advised checking the website to see where the meeting will be held.

The Joint Fire Prevention Board Meeting will be rescheduled.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: None.

RESOLUTIONS:

Administrator Schultz read Resolution 20-05-07-44 creating the position of Data Entry Technician. Commissioner Dugan Sr. made a motion to introduce the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Dugan Jr. All were in favor.

Administrator Schultz clarified that this is the first reading for both this and firefighter position being proposed next. Administrator Schultz reported that the second reading has to be held followed by a public hearing before the positions can be published and posted in the paper.

Administrator Schultz read Resolution 20-05-07-45 creating the position of Firefighter. Commissioner Callas made a motion to introduce the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Dugan Sr. All were in favor.

Administrator Schultz asked for Chief DiGiorgio for the name of the person selected to make a conditional offer of employment for the Fulltime EMT in Resolution 20-05-07-46. Chief DiGiorgio reported that after interviewing two candidates, the interview committee does not have a candidate to bring forward to be given a conditional offer of employment. Administrator Schultz asked if there were any candidates for the Part-time EMT position. Chief DiGiorgio indicated that he did not have any candidates for either Part-time or Per Diem EMTs and clarified that the interviews were only for Fulltime EMT. Administrator Schultz noted that there would be no other resolutions. Commissioner O'Hare asked for clarification on how many candidates were interviewed for the Fulltime EMT position. Chief DiGiorgio reported that two candidates were interviewed. Commissioner O'Hare asked for clarification that neither candidates passed muster. Chief DiGiorgio confirmed that after the interviews, the interview committee did not approve either candidate. Commissioner Dugan Sr. asked if the interview committee submitted a report outlining their reasons for either recommending or not recommending the candidate. Chief DiGiorgio reported that historically the interview committee has not submitted a report but indicated that both verbal and email communication occurred between the interview committee, Administrator Schultz and himself. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he could request the interview committee send something to him directly if this is what the Board would like. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that he would like to see some sort of report indicating the reason for declining a candidate. Commissioner Dugan Sr. clarified that it is not that he does not trust the interview committee, but that he would like to see if there are any trends in the type of candidates that are coming in. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he will ask the interview committee to provide a synopsis of why the candidates were declined. Commissioner O'Hare agreed that the information would be helpful. Commissioner Quirk noted that this was discussed at the Personnel Committee meeting today and the rationalization behind rejections would be helpful.

Commissioner Dugan Sr. asked if Committeeman Cahill had been given a chance to address the Board. Committeeman Cahill reiterated that everything was moving along and that the quarterly tax payment would be made by the Township with no delay for the 2nd quarter.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: None.

ADJOURN: A motion was made by Commissioner Quirk, seconded by Commissioner O'Hare, to adjourn the meeting. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by

Thomas Quirk, Secretary