

August 5, 2021 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 5, 2021 in accordance with the Public Meeting Act of 1975, Chapter 231. The Board observed a moment of silence for all those who have given their lives in service of their communities and nation.

ATTENDANCE: Commissioners Steven Cornine, James Davidson, Mary Lou DeSimone, and Robert O'Hare were present. Commissioner Michael Dugan Jr. was absent.

Chief DiGiorgio, FF Sulpy, EMT Bergman, EMT Perrone, and Hanover Township Committeeman Cahill were also in attendance.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: None.

CORRESPONDENCE: None.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES:

The minutes from the July 15, 2021 Regular Meeting were reviewed.

Amendments to Previous Minutes: None.

Commissioner Cornine made a motion to approve the amended minutes from the July 15, 2021 Regular Meeting. Commissioner DeSimone seconded the motion. All were in favor. Commissioner Dugan Jr. was absent.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER: Commissioner Davidson reported that the Board had checks #12374 to 12401 totaling \$30,810.01 in front of them to be signed. Commissioner Davidson reported that EMS revenue continues to be underperforming. Commissioner Davidson reported that the salary line continues to be in line with the percent of year expired. Commissioner Davidson reported that he has had some preliminary conversations with Chief DiGiorgio about the budget in light of some unanticipated expenses that are coming down the line. Commissioner Davidson reported that the District will continue to make staffing a priority.

Report of Fire Commissioner Board Committees and Chief of Department:

CHIEF'S REPORT: Chief DiGiorgio submitted his Bi-Monthly Report on July 27, 2021.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that Ambulance 32 arrived on Monday from First Priority. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the Work Group did an excellent job and were dedicated to meeting the District's needs. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the District is working through the Motor Vehicle phase. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the District is waiting for our certificate of origin so the ambulance can be registered and get license plates. Chief DiGiorgio reported that after this the vehicle can be taken to Motor Vehicle to be inspected. After inspection the radios will be installed and then the licensing process can start. Chief DiGiorgio reported that Lt. Belott has been working on the registration and insurance while FF Sulpy has been working on the licensing process. Chief DiGiorgio had a goal of September 1 to have these items completed. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the District has called a representative from Stryker to set up some training on the new stretcher system. Chief DiGiorgio noted that there will also be driver training as has happened for each new piece of apparatus.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that the Board has a resolution for a MOA for storage of one of our ambulances in the Whippany Firehouse. Chief DiGiorgio had follow up meeting to discuss the pros and cons of shared usage of the stored ambulance. Chief DiGiorgio explained to Committeeman Cahill that when District 3 approached District 2 about storage of the ambulance, District 2 had no issue with that but indicated that they would also like to utilize the ambulance. Chief DiGiorgio reported that it was left up to him and Chief Perrello to work out the details of how and when, etc. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he met today with Chief Perrello and Mr. Bradley from the FMBA to discuss the shared usage of the ambulance. Chief DiGiorgio reported that both his vision of the shared usage and their vision for shared usage were discussed, as well as the licensing requirements, State requirement, and training requirements. Chief DiGiorgio reported that a second meeting was set to try and write out a proposal, at which point a meeting will be set to meet with the work group. Chief DiGiorgio noted that the work group consisted of Commissioner Davidson, Commissioner Dugan Jr., Commissioner Cobane, and Commissioner Gethins. Chief DiGiorgio hopes to have this moved on in early October.

Chief DiGiorgio concluded his report. Commissioner O'Hare asked if anyone had any question for Chief DiGiorgio. Commissioner O'Hare asked for clarification on the repair issues for Truck 33. Commissioner Davidson asked to defer the discussion until the Apparatus Committee report.

EMS: Nothing to report.

BUDGET: Commissioner Davidson reported that he has been talking with Chief DiGiorgio about his visions for staffing in 2022. Commissioner Davidson reported that the 2022 budget process will continue after he comes back from vacation.

PERSONNEL: Commissioner O'Hare reported that the Board had items to discuss in Executive Session.

NEGOTIATIONS: Nothing to report.

LIAISON TO THE VOLUNTEERS: Chief DiGiorgio reported that the Volunteers will hold a virtual meeting on Monday night, 8/9. Commissioner Davidson reported that he spoke with President Hark Jr. today about the District absorbing some of the cost associated with the Holiday Tree Lighting extravaganza. Commissioner Davidson reported that Administrator Schulz and the bookkeeper indicated that there are some costs that the District typically pays for. Commissioner Davidson reported that the costs are historically in the \$750 to \$1000 range. Commissioner Davidson felt that President Hark Jr. is looking for a \$1000 to \$1500 commitment from the District this year to cover the police, crossing guards and other miscellaneous expenses. Commissioner Davidson noted that while this budget line is overspent for the year, the whole budget category is underspent and the District could absorb up to \$1500. Commissioner O'Hare asked for clarification that the Tree Lighting Ceremony was going to take place this year. Commissioner Davidson reported that the ceremony will be held and that the Volunteers have multiple contingency plans to get lights on and off the tree.

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS: Commissioner O'Hare reported that the bushes have finally gotten trimmed. Commissioner DeSimone reported that they did a horrible job and that the weeds and brush along the fence have not been taken care of. Commissioner O'Hare agreed that the bushes did not look very good. Commissioner DeSimone felt that the check to them that is being signed tonight should be held until the job is finished. The Board agreed to hold the check.

APPARATUS/EQUIPMENT AND MAINTENANCE: Commissioner Cornine reiterated that Ambulance 32 has come in and thanked everyone who participated in making it happen.

Commissioner Cornine reported that Truck 33 has been having ongoing issues for the past 6 months as outlined in Lt. Belott's reports. Commissioner Cornine reported that to date the Committee has sat back and let the repair process run its course, but that the bills are mounting and the District has been left without a ladder truck. Commissioner Cornine reported that the Board is looking at the budget and making sure that there are the funds to pay for additional repair bills. Commissioner Davidson reported that his primary concern was what the total cost to repair Truck 33 would be. Commissioner Davidson reported that he has been working with Lt. Belott to gather information on the needed repairs. Commissioner Davidson reported that he spoke with the warranty manager who is overseeing this project along with a couple other people at Fire & Safety to try to get a true feel for what the issue is. Commissioner Davidson reported that right now Fire & Safety has about 120 hours invested in repairing the vehicle, plus the cost of parts. Commissioner Davidson reported that they are discounting their labor rate by 25%, which means that the rate is \$75 / hour instead of \$100. Commissioner Davidson reported that between parts and labor, the District is in the hole for about \$12,000. Commissioner Davidson reported that he was concerned when they asked for approval to spend another \$6,000 to replace the major component for the aerial electronics. Commissioner Davidson reported that Fire & Safety first asked if the aerial device had ever been struck by lightning or come in contact with high voltage power lines. Commissioner Davidson reported that neither of these things has occurred. Commissioner Davidson asked them why they were asking this question. Commissioner Davidson reported that Fire & Safety found that the aerial electronics component suffered a catastrophic voltage surge that nobody knows where it came from and cannot be replicated. Commissioner Davidson reported that the surge basically fried the computer and all the associated modules for the aerial device. Commissioner Davidson reported that looking for a replacement part is as difficult as it would be to find parts for a 2002 Windows computer. Commissioner Davidson reported that 2021 components are not compatible so Fire & Safety wants to put in 2012 components, which are readily available and compatible. Commissioner Davidson reported that the entire aerial component will be rebuilt. Commissioner Davidson

explained there a whole set of components that run the aerial device and a different whole set of components that run the truck. Commissioner Davidson reported that after the repair, the aerial component will be upgraded to 2012. Commissioner Davidson asked the representatives for their gut feeling if this would fix the truck. Commissioner Davidson reported that while the representatives could not 100% guarantee the repair, they felt that this is what all the diagnostics were pointing to. Commissioner Davidson reported that he authorized the repair and felt that the total repair bill would be between \$18,000 to \$20,000. Commissioner Davidson reported that Administrator Schultz is talking to Mr. Braslow because NJ purchasing requirements state that anything over \$17,000 require getting different quotes. Commissioner Davidson reported that he is approaching this, and he feels Mr. Braslow will agree, that this was an unforeseen catastrophic failure. Commissioner Davidson reported that the State has clear purchasing guidelines under such situations that will allow the bidding process to be circumvented in order to get the repairs done. Commissioner Davidson reported that Administrator Schultz is also going to talk to Ms. Lee to see if we can absorb this cost within our budget or if an emergency appropriation will be needed. Commissioner Davidson reported that Fire & Safety felt the truck will be back before September 1. Commissioner Davidson reported that the part will be ordered tomorrow, it should be in by Monday or Tuesday, and it takes a week to install the part and program everything. Commissioner Davidson explained that there are about 60 sensors and limiting switches that allow the ladder to know where it is in the air so that it does not crush the cab, etc. that need to be programmed. Commissioner DeSimone asked what the life expectancy of the truck is. Commissioner Davidson reported that typical life expectancy is 20 years for an engine and 25 years for a ladder truck but felt that the electronics are what is going first now and shortening the life expectancies. Commissioner Davidson felt that a discussion on what to do about the ladder truck should be held at a later time and felt that the truck was not worth much if it was not repaired.

INSURANCE: Nothing to report.

BY-LAWS: Nothing to report.

WEBSITE: Up to date.

PLANNING COMMITTEE: Commissioner Cornine reported that the committee met once and there was another meeting scheduled for today that got pushed back until Administrator Schultz returns from vacation.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that the bunk space has been officially moved up to the 3rd floor and vacated the 2nd floor.

LIASON TO EXEMPTS: Nothing to report.

RECORDS RETENTION: Commissioner Davidson reported that the records destruction project is ongoing. Commissioner Cornine asked if anything had been found out about the question Chief DiGiorgio had about the need to save old yellow attendance sheets. Commissioner Davidson reported that he remembered it and has not acted on it yet.

LIAISON TO HANOVER TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE: Committeeman Cahill asked the Board to let him know if there was anything he could do to help foster any improved efficiencies or further cooperation between the two Districts.

Committeeman Cahill reported that a few weeks ago the Township Committee elected to promote Lt. Mike Locke to Chief of Police and he will be sworn in at the September 12 Township Committee meeting.

Chief DiGiorgio asked about the concerns that the School Board had about diverting tax money due to the River Park PILOT program and wondered if tax money to the fire districts would be affected. Committeeman Cahill reported that when the topic of PILOT first came up the Township put forth a resolution that stated that the percentage of any PILOT money coming in would remain almost the same for the Board of Education and the fire districts. Commissioner Davidson asked for clarification that the PILOT program is only for residential and not commercial property. Committeeman Cahill confirmed that this was correct.

CONSOLIDATION: Commissioner Davidson reported that the joint committee, Chief DiGiorgio, and Chief Perrello met a couple of weeks ago to discuss the storage of the ambulance and potential usage. Commissioner Davidson felt it was a productive meeting and a very frank and open discussion. Commissioner Davidson reported that he and Chief DiGiorgio delved into the economics of EMS revenue and highlighted for Whippany that this is not a windfall of money. Commissioner Davidson reported that Commissioner Cobane was initially

opposed to storing the ambulance but changed his mind when he heard that there was the potential to utilize it in certain situations as well. The Committee broke down the process into phases with the first phase being a place to store the ambulance and the second phase would be how could Fire District 2 possibly utilize the ambulance. Commissioner Davidson reported that the joint committee left it to the two chiefs to figure out what their visions were and once they felt comfortable with a plan they should present it to the joint committee.

Commissioner Davidson reported that the joint committee would discuss the plan and then bring it back to their respective Boards to discuss it further.

Commissioner Davidson reported that Chief DiGiorgio has started working with OEMS to see what those unique regulations would be to allow the Whippany EMTs to ride on a District 3 licensed ambulance. Commissioner Davidson reported that it can get somewhat complicated. Commissioner Davidson reported that Administrator Schultz has reached out to VFIS about how the whole thing gets insured. Commissioner Davidson reported that once the plan gets approved by both Boards, it will go to VFIS to have their underwriters review it and come back with concerns or tell us what we need to do. Commissioner Davidson reported that there was discussion that one of the payback of this for District 2 would be in the form of balance billing being forgiven. Commissioner Davidson reported that there was some discussion about whether District 2 could make any money from the plan but felt that this was something to be discussed further down the line. Commissioner Davidson pointed out that one cannot expect to get something for free but felt that if District 2 was supplying labor on an ambulance call there has to be a model created to help to reimburse that based on revenue from that call.

OLD BUSINESS: Commissioner O'Hare asked Chief DiGiorgio the status of the FF/EMT hiring process. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he is waiting to hear back from the Career Chiefs to see if they will provide a written test for the hiring process because the Academy has indicated that they will not supply the written component of the FF/EMT test. Commissioner Davidson asked if the board should move forward with the resolution before it tonight about third party recruit testing. Chief DiGiorgio felt that the Board should move on it because it was only one component of the process and not affected by the snag.

Commissioner DeSimone asked if the FF2 requirement for any new hires would also be a requirement for promotions. Chief DiGiorgio reported that it was

something that would need to be considered. Chief DiGiorgio reported that when he applied for a grant through the AFG, one of the questions that he had to respond to was if he was not already at 100% capacity of FF2 level trained firefighters, what was his plan to get everyone trained to the FF2 level. Chief DiGiorgio reported that his response was that the majority of the firefighters coming in have to have FF2 before becoming an officer. Chief DiGiorgio reported that this highlighted that if the federal government is recommending that everyone be trained to FF2 level, then it is time that the District encourage new hires to have FF2. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he would like the one or two current volunteer or career officers that do not have FF2 level to get the training. Commissioner Davidson noted that in the future officers will be required to have Fire Officer 1 NJ certification and you cannot get this without having FF2.

Commissioner O'Hare reported that he and Administrator Schultz met with the engineer and a representative from the vendor that did the bay floors, reviewed that problem in the ambulance bay and set a date for them to come fix it in early September. Commissioner Cornine asked if the vendor was just going to wipe out the balance owed. Chief DiGiorgio reported that was one option that was looked at but it was decided that the floors should be fixed.

NEW BUSINESS: None.

REMINDERS:

The next regular meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners will be held on Thursday, August 19, 2021 at 7:00 P.M at the firehouse.

The next Joint Fire Prevention Board Meeting will be held on September 13, 2021 at 6:30 P.M. at the Whippany Firehouse.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: None.

RESOLUTIONS: Commissioner O'Hare asked if the Board had any objections to approving the resolutions by consent agenda. Commissioner O'Hare noted that there were seven Town residents that the Board is recognizing as Eagle Scouts, which is a tremendous accomplishment and duly noted in the resolutions. The Board agreed.

Commissioner Cornine read Resolution 21-08-05-77 recognizing Eagle Scout Ryan Walker.

Commissioner Cornine read Resolution 21-08-05-78 recognizing Eagle Scout Nicholas Romanowsky.

Commissioner Cornine read Resolution 21-08-05-79 recognizing Eagle Scout Joshua Danus.

Commissioner Cornine read Resolution 21-08-05-80 recognizing Eagle Scout Steven Fasono.

Commissioner Cornine read Resolution 21-08-05-81 recognizing Eagle Scout Tyler Feret.

Commissioner Cornine read Resolution 21-08-05-82 recognizing Eagle Scout Jacob Lieto.

Commissioner Cornine read Resolution 21-08-05-83 recognizing Eagle Scout Timothy Wainscott.

Commissioner Cornine read Resolution 21-08-05-84 authorizing third-party recruit testing.

Commissioner Cornine read Resolution 21-08-05-85 authorizing a MOA for storage of ambulances.

Commissioner Davidson made a motion to introduce the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Cornine. All were in favor. Commissioner Dugan Jr. was absent.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Commissioner Cornine read Resolution 21-08-05-86 to enter into executive session. Commissioner Davidson made a motion to introduce the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Cornine. All were in favor. Commissioner Dugan Jr. was absent. The Board went into closed session at 7:40 p.m.

Personnel matters were discussed. Action will not be taken.

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

The Board decided to reach out to Joe Gorgio to discuss possible shared services for HR. Commissioner DeSimone will contact EMT Makar regarding FLMA.

ADJOURN: A motion was made by Commissioner DeSimone, seconded by Commissioner Cornine, to adjourn the meeting. All were in favor. Commissioner Dugan Jr. was absent. The meeting was adjourned at 8:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by

Steven Cornine, Secretary