

October 7, 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 October 7, 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, Mary Lou DeSimone, Michael Dugan Sr., Michael Dugan Jr., and Robert O'Hare were present.

Chief DiGiorgio, Administrator Schultz, Asst. Chief Martin, Lt. Belott, Lt. McGuinness, FF Gilson, FF Ujfalussy, and EMT Thompson were also in attendance.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: None.

CORRESPONDENCE: None.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES:

The minutes from the September 16, 2021 Regular Meeting were reviewed.

Amendments to Previous Minutes: None.

Commissioner Dugan Jr. made a motion to approve the amended minutes from the September 16, 2021 Regular Meeting. Commissioner Cornine seconded the motion. All were in favor. Commissioner O'Hare abstained.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER:

Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the bookkeeper sent out the list of checks to be approved for payment prior to the meeting. Commissioner Dugan Sr. asked Chief DiGiorgio the amount that the Board approved to spend on the hiring process. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the Board passed a resolution authorizing a contract with a 3rd party testing agency for \$6,000 but once the Academy informed the District that they were unable to provide the written exam Commissioner Davidson approved another \$2,500 for test booklets and someone to administer the test. Chief DiGiorgio reported that once the numbers came down the \$2,500 came down to \$1,900 and that is how the total invoice came in

at \$7,900. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the cost of the utilizing the Academy for the physical test was not factored in because historically the usage fee has been \$100. Chief DiGiorgio reported that because the District and Academy planned for more candidates to test and made arrangements to that end, the bill was higher than expected at \$2,500.

Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the September 2021 financials show that through 75% of the year the District has spent 67% of the budgeted expenses. Commissioner Dugan Sr. noted that revenue is still down.

Commissioner DeSimone made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report, seconded by Commissioner Dugan Jr.

Report of Fire Commissioner Board Committees and Chief of Department:

CHIEF'S REPORT: Chief DiGiorgio distributed his Bi-Monthly report on September 30, 2021 and updated it today.

Chief DiGiorgio highlighted the following updates to his report.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that as requested he updated the call volume numbers to add the prior year call volume. Chief DiGiorgio reported that there were 149 EMS calls and 63 fire calls for the month of September 2021 as compared to 101 EMS calls and 49 fire calls in September 2020. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the District is starting to see an increase in calls and had the benefit in recent weeks of 4 person staffing so the District is getting 2 ambulances out allowing the District to answer calls as necessary.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that one of the questions from last meeting was about a training report and he had FF Ujfalussy put together a report showing every member's training status and call volume. Chief DiGiorgio reported that this report was sent to all members so they know where they stand regarding the Volunteer Incentive Program. Chief DiGiorgio reported that due to the number of members that are shy of qualifying for VIP the per call amount will be higher than in the past unless some members respond to more calls in the near future. Chief DiGiorgio commended FF Ujfalussy for getting the information out to the members. Commissioner O'Hare asked if the District was going to alert members that they are in danger of not qualifying for VIP. Chief DiGiorgio reported that it was sent out once already and will continue to do so on each month.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that there was also a question from the last meeting about EMT certifications and where people were with certifications and expirations. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he has sent this information out to all the EMTs and there is only one EMT who has an expiration date of 12/31/2021, everyone else is pushed out until sometime in 2022 or later.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that based on the minutes from the last meeting there is a question about the amount of training that is going on and may be a reason that members are leaving the organization or not attending training drills. Chief DiGiorgio noted that he also heard some comments about this and that there are some career departments that are not doing as much training as we are at the last Fire Co. meeting. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he did a survey of the County and has received responses from 14 departments regarding the amount of training they do. Chief DiGiorgio reported that there are some departments that do less training than we do but there are also departments that do double or triple the amount of training that we do. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the District requires Fire Division members to attend training 4 times a year which includes one live burn. Chief DiGiorgio reported that all the other mandatory training can be done online from anywhere. Chief DiGiorgio did not feel that requiring members to come to the firehouse 4 times a year was too much and noted that the District Volunteer Incentive Program is tied into the training, meaning the District will give members pay per call as long as they make the 4 training drills. Chief DiGiorgio reported that for the EMS Division, it is 6 training drills and some of them are inclusive of the mandatory required drills. Chief DiGiorgio noted that the EMS training can be done online also. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he found out from his survey that there are departments that do not have any ability for members to do any training from home. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he will leave the survey results spreadsheet for the Board to look at and he will continue to update it as more departments respond.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that he sent a few memos out over the last couple of weeks. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the District approved the turbo and the muffler being replaced on Truck 33 and are waiting for the parts to come in. Commissioner O'Hare asked if this was in addition to the injector situation. Chief DiGiorgio confirmed that this was in addition to the injectors and is being done since the top end of the engine is open and felt it was smart to do it all at once.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that he sent out a memo about Ambulance 32 being damaged by the garage door and noted there was damage to the garage door also. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the District is waiting on an estimate on the cost to fix the garage door and First Priority, who the District purchased the ambulance from, is coming in to look at the damage and give an estimate on the cost to fix it. Chief DiGiorgio reported that after reviewing the reports on how the damage occurred, he felt it was purely an accident and that the garage door opener was in a stuck position when he looked at it the morning after the incident. Chief DiGiorgio felt there was a problem with the door button and the door came back down. Chief DiGiorgio reported that there was also damage to Engine 34's ladder that he felt was also an accident. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the ladder was being use to take down some bunting and was damaged when the Engine was moved. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the District has received an estimate and he will speak with Administrator Schultz to see if we can put in an insurance claim.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that the FF/EMT process has been completed and he sent a memo to the Board with the status and hiring recommendation. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the interview process was held last Thursday night and he, Commissioner DeSimone, Lt. Belott, and Lt. McGuinness sat on the interview panel.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that it was brought to his attention that earlier in September the District EMS Manager system, where we do our rig checks, had a glitch. Chief DiGiorgio reported that some of the daily rig checks that were done from phones were not uploading into the system so it appeared that they were not being checked daily. Chief DiGiorgio reported that there were also some checks that were done on paper and not entered into the system. Chief DiGiorgio reported that Lt. Belott and Lt. McGuinness have caught up back until June 1 in the system.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that the District is at review time and asked the Board if he should start the process or hold off since there was some discussion on the forms to be used in the process. Commissioner DeSimone felt that the form needs to be looked at because the way it is written now the rating of the individual does not correspond to the definition as provided below. Commissioner DeSimone felt that the District should look for a different type of

performance appraisal form and that perhaps there is one that is used at the Academy that might work for us. Chief DiGiorgio asked if the District would use the old form this year while another option is being researched because the reviews are normally turned in to the Board in December and it will take some time to revamp and approve the new forms. Commissioner DeSimone asked for clarification that the performance reviews for this year are turned in by the end of the year and not done in January. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the Board asked that they be forwarded to them by December 1. Commissioner DeSimone noted that this would mean that a performance review for the year would be done before the year is complete. Commissioner O'Hare felt that the Board asked for the reviews by December 31 in order to match up with some other parts of the calendar. Commissioner DeSimone asked if the contract sets a date when increases need to go through. Chief DiGiorgio reported that most of the collective bargaining staff get their increase on their anniversary date. Commissioner DeSimone noted that the increase is not based on when the performance appraisal is given. Chief DiGiorgio noted that their increase is not based on their performance review but on the collective bargaining agreement. Commissioner DeSimone felt it would be better to have the reviews done at the end of January so that the entire years performance could be captured. Commissioner DeSimone noted that it would give Chief DiGiorgio time to look for a new form. Commissioner DeSimone asked Administrator Schultz if he could provide a copy of the form that the Academy uses. Administrator Schultz reported that he could get the form to the Board by next week. Commissioner DeSimone asked Chief DiGiorgio to look for another form to use for comparison and then a decision could be made on which one to use. Commissioner DeSimone asked if everyone would still do a self-evaluation. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the self-evaluation is based off the same form and that he will circle back with the Town about the evaluation form that they are using. Chief DiGiorgio noted that the current District performance evaluation form came from the Town because the Board did not like the one that the District was using.

Chief DiGiorgio concluded his report. Commissioner O'Hare asked if anyone had any questions for Chief DiGiorgio.

Commissioner DeSimone asked if Chief DiGiorgio where he pulled the data for the call volume numbers that are included in his report. Chief DiGiorgio reported that

he got the numbers from ERS. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he runs two reports to get the numbers and the first report gives the number of fire calls and EMS calls. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the second report shows the calls by CAD type so that the fire division can get credit for overlapping calls. Commissioner DeSimone asked to meet with Chief DiGiorgio to look at the reports together.

Commissioner O'Hare asked if anyone had any other questions for Chief DiGiorgio. There were no other questions.

EMS: Nothing to report.

BUDGET: Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that there was a 2022 budget meeting between himself, Chief DiGiorgio, Administrator Schultz, Lt. Belott and the bookkeeper, and are making progress. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that another meeting is scheduled for Tuesday.

PERSONNEL: Commissioner O'Hare reported that the Board would need to go into executive session.

NEGOTIATIONS: Nothing to report.

LIAISON TO THE VOLUNTEERS: Nothing to report.

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS: Commissioner O'Hare reported that the Bay Floor Project is complete and the paperwork to close out the project is before the Board tonight.

Commissioner O'Hare reported that the phone tree system for the Dialer Program is being worked on. Administrator Schultz reported that system upgrade needs to be installed which should be complete in about 2 weeks.

Commissioner O'Hare reported that he was told that the lights are off the tree. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he reached out to the Acting Chief in East Hanover and asked if they could assist us. Chief DiGiorgio reported that they came last Sunday and had an operator in the truck while our members were up in the bucket removing the lights. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he sent thank you letters to the Chief, Acting Chief, and Mayor of East Hanover.

APPARATUS/EQUIPMENT AND MAINTENANCE: Commissioner Cornine reported that Chief DiGiorgio covered most of this in his report. Commissioner Cornine felt

that the biggest thing pending is the ladder truck and that will be a budget discussion.

INSURANCE: Nothing to report.

BY-LAWS: Commissioner DeSimone reported that she and Commissioner Dugan Sr. reviewed the By-Laws and have some edits they would like to see made. Commissioner DeSimone reported that she will prepare a draft for the Board to review for the next meeting.

WEBSITE: Up to date.

PLANNING COMMITTEE: Nothing to report.

LIASON TO EXEMPTS: Nothing to report.

RECORDS RETENTION: Nothing to report.

LIAISON TO HANOVER TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE: Nothing to report.

CONSOLIDATION: Commissioner Dugan Jr. felt that this committee should be folded into the Planning Committee. Commissioner O'Hare noted that it was brought to the Board's attention that the Committee in in the By-Laws as a recognized committee. Commissioner O'Hare did agree that it made sense to fold it into Planning Committee. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the By-Laws Committee would add this to the list of recommended changes.

OLD BUSINESS: Chief DiGiorgio reported that he forwarded an email out to the Board about the Professional Standards Unit Policy. Chief DiGiorgio commended Asst. Chief Martin for all the time and effort he put into the program and the manual. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he sent a draft directly to Commissioner DeSimone because of potential overlap with By-Laws. Chief DiGiorgio asked what direction the Board would like to go regarding reviewing the draft. Commissioner DeSimone felt the entire Board should review it and make sure they are comfortable with the process. Commissioner DeSimone reported that the draft was very thorough and asked Asst. Chief Martin if he used a template or built it himself. Asst. Chief Martin reported that he built it around a template. Commissioner DeSimone liked the forms that were attached to it and noted that it is a lot of information and the Board should take the time to read it through.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that this is something that has been on the agenda for a very long time and felt it was important to deal with it now.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that the FF / EMT hiring process is complete and he put together a template document that was reviewed the other night during the interviews. Chief DiGiorgio felt that there were some very successful candidates the other night and he made his recommendation to the Board on moving forward with the three candidates in the ranking order that the District received them via memo earlier today. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the District received from the Career Chiefs Association had Kyle Colin ranked number 1, Timothy Hinson was ranked number 2, Nicholas DiGiacomo was ranked number 3, and Joseph N. Martin was ranked number 4. Chief DiGiorgio asked the Board's permission to make conditional offers of employment to those individuals. Commissioner O'Hare asked if the Board wanted to have any discussion on the request. Commissioner DeSimone had an issue with the number of people the Board would want to hire at the moment and did not feel that the Board needed to hire all three right now. Commissioner DeSimone thought the Board should consider hiring one. Commissioner DeSimone felt that hiring 3 was not needed at the moment looking at the way the calls are running with most of the calls coming during the day. Commissioner DeSimone thought that readjusting some of the FT EMTs work schedule would provide coverage. Commissioner DeSimone could see one coming on at the moment but not three. Commissioner Dugan Sr. asked if the District was short any because he was coming in late to the hiring process. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he presented to the Budget Committee a plan to maintain the current full-time staffing. Chief DiGiorgio reported that adding the 3 additional full-time employees will allow him to get back to the 10 full-time employees that were approved and budgeted for. Chief DiGiorgio understood Commissioner DeSimone's concern about where the calls are and the timing but felt that there were two things that should be taken into consideration; the District paid 137 hours of overtime the last two weeks and paid 72 hours the week prior to that. Chief DiGiorgio reported that by adding these three FF / EMTs the District will see the benefit of them working a 24/48-hour schedule, which increases the number of hours available, giving the District 16 extra hours beyond where we currently are. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the District will then put them out on each one of the shifts which will give us 3 full-time employees on the shift. Chief DiGiorgio reported that with the 2 full-time EMTs the District would

be back to the approved number of staff. Commissioner Dugan Sr. asked what other fulltime employees the District beyond the 6 firefighters. Chief DiGiorgio reported that currently the District has 2 FT Lieutenants, 3 FT Firefighters, and 1 FT EMT. Commissioner Dugan Sr. asked where the other EMTs were. Chief DiGiorgio reported that there are two out on long-term medical and one spot that the Board did not fill. Commissioner Dugan Sr. asked where the 3rd Lieutenant was. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he retired. Commissioner Dugan Sr. felt that the Board needed to have a conversation in closed session because he was not notified about any retirement of anyone for pension. Commissioner Dugan Sr. felt that if the District is down personnel maybe the Board should hire two now but also wanted to hear more about the real staff the District has. Commissioner O'Hare reported that the point is that the Board went into the hiring process knowing that the District was down 3 slots and would fill them to make the District whole. Commissioner O'Hare reported that staffing levels have been an ongoing thing for any number of years where the District just gets ideal staffing but like a house of cards where when one person is pulled it falls apart. Commissioner O'Hare reported that the goal of the hiring process was to put the District back to where they were originally and what was budgeted for. Commissioner Dugan Sr. noted that the budget included 4 EMTs and asked if the Board wanted to replace the full-time EMTs with FF / EMTs. Commissioner O'Hare reported that many people thought that hiring FF /EMTs gave the District more flexibility so in this go around the Board decided to go with 2 FT EMTs and the other personnel would be FF /EMTs. Commissioner DeSimone asked if there were 3 people on an overnight with 2 going on a medical call in the ambulance, could the 3rd person go on the call in a separate vehicle to see if they needed help and then come back instead of having them stay here and sleep. Chief DiGiorgio acknowledged that it was possible. Commissioner DeSimone reported that she cannot see paying people to stay here at night when the call volume is less and allowing one person to sleep. Chief DiGiorgio reported that there are 3 nights when there are fire crews and 3 nights when there are no fire crews. Chief DiGiorgio reported that by putting a 3rd person on an EMS call, there would be no one in the firehouse. Commissioner DeSimone asked if the District was no longer recruiting part-time and per diem help. Chief DiGiorgio believes that these conversations have been going on for a very long time and that the District has realized how they have exhausted the pool of per diems and part-timers. Chief

DiGiorgio reported that after many discussions the Board felt that moving to a FF / EMT position gave the benefit of not only having the extra hours but also having a dual role position. Commissioner DeSimone did not deny that but wanted to know if the District was still actively looking for part-timers and per diems. Commissioner DeSimone asked if hiring for these positions was active on Indeed and if it was posted on the website. Commissioner DeSimone reported that she knows the District is no longer looking for volunteers because she has not seen anything on the electronic sign in months. Commissioner DeSimone also reported that she has seen nothing on social media that the District is looking for part-time or per diem help and asked if the District has stopped looking for that kind of staffing. Chief DiGiorgio reported that it is still sitting on the District social media page and website but felt that the District has learned that they have exhausted that pool. Commissioner Dugan Sr. asked if we had any per diem or part-time applicants. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the District has had applicants that were interviewed by then Asst. Chief DeSimone and then Cpt. Thompson but did not find a successful candidate prior to this hiring process. Commissioner DeSimone felt that the issue was because of the starting rate and they recommended that the starting pay be increased. Commissioners Dugan Sr. and O'Hare reported that the Board did increase the pay rate. Commissioner DeSimone did not know if the new hourly rate is being advertised. Chief DiGiorgio confirmed that the pay rate is part of the advertised job description. Commissioner Cornine felt that there have been conditional offers made recently. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the part-time and per diem staff was supplementing the career staff and we have learned that by having the full-time positions, we are meeting the needs of the District. Chief DiGiorgio reported that with two people filling each one of the shifts the District is getting two ambulances out and that it is the nature of the beast that people are going to be at the firehouse because no one can time when a call is going to go out or when we should fully staff because that is the time of day that people go to the hospital. Commissioner DeSimone noted that after looking at the calls for July and August she felt that most of the calls came between 6 am and 6 pm. Commissioner DeSimone reported that there may be 20-25 calls between 6-10pm but not very many on the overnight. Commissioner DeSimone could not see being heavily staffed on an overnight when the District needs to be staffed more during the day but if there is going to be a 3rd person here on an overnight, they should go out on any call to see what help that crew needs.

Commissioner DeSimone reported that there was recently an instance where a second ambulance did not get out because staff said they did not hear the call. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he would have to look into that because it was never brought to his attention. Commissioner O'Hare asked for clarification that there was a second ambulance was staffed but did not get out. Commissioner DeSimone reported that supposedly there was a second call dispatched that was not heard by staff. Chief DiGiorgio felt that this should have been brought to his attention before this conversation. Commissioner DeSimone reiterated that if there was going to be extra people here, they are going to have to go on the calls and are not going to be able sit here and sleep all night while the duty crew is out taking the medical call. Commissioner DeSimone reported that they are going to either take the apparatus or take 36 to see if that rig needs help in getting that patient down the stairs and into the ambulance. Chief DiGiorgio did not necessarily disagree with that but felt that it should be a crew-by-crew thing and that if a crew feels they need help, they can ask for it. Chief DiGiorgio did not believe the District needs to roll a fire engine or all these other people and vehicles for stomach pains in the middle of the night. Commissioner DeSimone reported that it was done during the day. Chief DiGiorgio reported that it is not done during the day but that Whippany chooses to that during the day. Commissioner DeSimone says that there is still extra apparatus going. Commissioner DeSimone did not see supporting 3 hires at this time and asked what the rest of the Board thought. Commissioner Cornine reported that this process started with the hiring of one and then Commissioner Davidson during his tenure recognized that the Board was not providing enough staffing to cover hours that we are covering. Commissioner Cornine reported that Commissioner Davidson identified a very big short in manpower that could not be filled with the existing staff we have. Commissioner Cornine reported that Commissioner Davidson brought forth the fact that an FF / EMT could run a 24-hour schedule which provides substantial flexibility when creating the schedule. Commissioner Cornine noted that an EMT can only work a 40-hour work week. Commissioner O'Hare noted that this would cut down on the overtime. Commissioner DeSimone acknowledged that it would. Commissioner Cornine that 2 of the recommended FF / EMT hires would be to replace 2 FT EMT positions and asked if they would be assigned to the EMS Division. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he thought that he would rotate them on shifts, with them riding EMS for 12 hours

of their shift and riding Fire for the other 12 hours of their shift. Chief DiGiorgio reported that currently the career FF that is on shift rides the ambulance from 6 pm to 6 am, which leave the fire apparatus down to one FF. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the new rotation would have another FF / EMT that would work on the ambulance during the day and switch to Fire at night. Commissioner DeSimone noted this would help maintain their skill set too. Commissioner Cornine asked if the District would get enough EMS time from this rotation. Chief DiGiorgio felt that this would add a 3rd person to the shift and the 4th person would be supplemented with part-time and per diems. Chief DiGiorgio noted that this would get the District back to what he considered full staffing.

Commissioner Dugan Sr. asked when the other two EMTs were due back. Chief DiGiorgio felt that was a personnel matter that should not be discussed at this time. Commissioner O'Hare reported that this could be discussed in closed session. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that he is not against hiring FF / EMTs but he needs to discuss things in closed session before he makes any decision. Chief DiGiorgio reported that there are two spots that you know are completely vacant. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that he did not know that. Chief DiGiorgio reported that there was one FT EMT vacancy because one of the 4 positions was never filled and there is a vacant Lieutenant position.

Commissioner Dugan Sr. noted that this was the one he needs clarification on.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that he went through the minutes from last meeting and there were a lot of things that were brought up under public comments that were operational concerns that should be addressed so we can clarify some of the things that were happening here. Chief DiGiorgio reported that there were comments about scheduling, competencies, and individuals who may have questions, comments, or concerns that stay within or outside the chain of command. Chief DiGiorgio reported that there were a couple of comments related to scheduling that went along the lines that scheduling around here is on a good atrocious and typically horrible being an understatement. Chief DiGiorgio reported that there were comments that if the Board was hurting for money, there was a proposed schedule that would create a 40-hour workweek and there would still be surplus. Chief DiGiorgio thanked and commended Lt. Belott who has been doing a really good job and working hard to do scheduling. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he has been answering calls while on duty and off duty, answering text messages, and working on things while he has been on vacation

time. Chief DiGiorgio noted that most of this has not been charged back to the District and he was doing things on his own time just to get them done. Chief DiGiorgio reported that when it comes down to the 11th hour if he cannot get the shifts covered, he has come down and done them himself. Chief DiGiorgio thanked EMT Waldron and EMT Perrone for stepping up to cover shifts when needed. Chief DiGiorgio reported that this is how things are getting covered and it is bothersome to him to hear the words atrocious and typically horrible. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he would like an example of atrocious and typically horrible scheduling that on a good day is not good. Commissioner O'Hare reported that he was not at the last meeting. Commissioner Dugan Sr. asked who made the comment. EMT Thompson reported that he made the comments and clarified that Lt. Belott does a good job at administering the schedule that he has been forced to administer by the administration. EMT Thompson reported that it is not a knock on Lt. Belott, it is just that the schedule that is being pushed is no good. EMT Thompson reported that he brought forth examples of other schedules that would create manpower surpluses and was told in no uncertain terms to stay in his lane. EMT Thompson reported that the facts are that he presented these schedules to the Board in the past and the decision was made not to go with them. EMT Thompson reported that there is no reason for the District to have the shortages it has because the District is trying to maintain a level of manpower that it may not need. EMT Thompson felt that hiring people may help but it may not. EMT Thompson reported that he came up with schedules requiring less people that would have worked but they may have not been popular. Chief DiGiorgio reported that providing the fire response and EMS is the responsibility of the District and the District has put him in charge of figuring out the best way to do that and make it happen. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he makes decisions on a daily basis and some may be popular while other are unpopular. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he makes these decisions based on the best interest of the organization. Chief DiGiorgio reported that it is inaccurate to say that he did not decide to not go with the schedules that EMT Thompson proposed because it was not fun. Chief DiGiorgio felt that some members sometimes sign up for shifts or crews based on what is convenient for them but the District needs to be staffed 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the officers of this Department need to be in this for the right reasons, which is what we currently have, not to be a thorn in the Chiefs side.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that one thing that has to happen from a chain of command perspective is that if someone has a problem, they need to bring the problem to their officer or him. Chief DiGiorgio reported that if the that person does not like the answer they get from the officer or him, they can then come to the Board. Chief DiGiorgio stressed that the person who has the problem needs to come to the Board, not a spokesperson for them. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he spoke to one of the individuals who had issues and that individual told a completely different story than what was perceived and projected at the last Board meeting. Chief DiGiorgio reported that there was talk about competencies, that he refused to pay for training and that this is the way we are going to get rid of volunteers. Chief DiGiorgio reported that it was all nonsense and hearsay and did not match what the individual said to him. Chief DiGiorgio reported that this individual spoke with members of the Board and it was put into a spin and not what the individual said. Commissioner DeSimone asked if Chief DiGiorgio has spoken with her. Chief DiGiorgio confirmed that he had. Commissioner O'Hare felt that the discussion was getting a little off the track and the Board needed to focus on whether they were going to hire the 3 people or not. Commissioner O'Hare reported that scheduling and staffing has been an issue for the 20 years that he has been here for one reason or another. Commissioner O'Hare reported that the nature of the community has changed, the nature of our calls, our call volume, and the standards that the District is held to have all changed markedly in that time. Commissioner O'Hare felt that the Board needed to get back on track and face the facts of whether the Board will hire the 3 people or not. Commissioner O'Hare noted that the Board went into the hiring process saying that we would hire 3 and that the Board would clarify some questions for Commissioner Dugan Sr. shortly in closed session. Commissioner O'Hare reported that if the Board was going run the organization efficiently and competently, they need to focus on this process and not a lot of peripheral things that have been going round and round for the last 15 years. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that he just wanted to say one thing about scheduling. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that before he left the procedure was that if there is overtime, it gets assigned to someone. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that once the overtime is assigned to an employee, he owns it and can work it himself or allow someone else who wants it to have it. Commissioner Dugan Sr. asked Lt. Belott if that procedure was still being followed. Lt. Belott confirmed that the procedure is still

being followed but that the problem is that there are only 6 individuals to whom the overtime can be assigned. Lt. Belott reported that there is an abundance of overtime to be assigned and did not feel it was fair to these individuals that they are constantly assigned overtime. Commissioner Dugan Sr. felt that life is not fair and while he understands their frustration, it is their job. Commissioner Dugan Sr. felt that while the Board may move slow, it usually finds ways to fix things with input from the Chief. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the bottom line is if the District had the EMTs and staffing was up to par, there would be no overtime. Lt. Belott felt that he is expected to do a job but is not given the proper tools to do his job. Commissioner Dugan Sr. asked for clarification that more staffing was the tools that Lt. Belott referred to. Lt. Belott confirmed that it was and reported that it is extremely frustrating to the small number of employees who are now being scheduled 5 days a week with 2 of those being 24-hour shifts.

Commissioner Desimone asked if when there are staffing shortages did Lt. Belott reach out to the Part-timers and per diems. Lt. Belott reported that he always reaches out to them. Commissioner DeSimone asked what reasons they gave for not coming in. Lt. Belott reported that if EMT Waldron was asked he would tell you that he is already working here 5 days a week. Lt. Belott reported that others are students and have classes. Commissioner Cornine reported that former Commissioner Davidson identified that if the District was at full capacity, which is the 6 and 4, the District is still short staffed 56 hours a week. Commissioner Cornine reported that this means there will be 56 hours of overtime a week even at full capacity. Commissioner Dugan Sr. felt that could not be full capacity. Commissioner Cornine reported that the District budgeted to cover x amount of people but not x number of hours. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that there could be an unlimited amount of per diems utilized and asked how many FT EMTs the District had. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the District currently has 1 but has budgeted for 4. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the District has also budgeted for 4 part-time EMTs and that the Board told Chief DiGiorgio that he could hire as many per diem EMTs as he wanted. Commissioner Dugan Sr. granted that it has been difficult to find per diem and part-time EMTs but noted that if the District could get to full staff, it would not have overtime.

Commissioner DeSimone asked if the District was competitive with its rate of pay. Commissioners O'Hare and Dugan Sr. reported that the District is on par with other districts. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that he would be in favor of

hiring 3 but he needs to go through some concerns that he has in closed session. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that he also may have a problem with the ranking. Commissioner Cornine felt that the District could not rely on per diems to cover open shifts because they are all working multiple jobs and will not be available. Lt. Belott noted that the concept of a per diem is to be used on an as need basis but the District is using per diems to try and fill full time spots. Commissioner Dugan Sr. felt that if there were enough per diems it would work but that there are not enough out there. Commissioner DeSimone asked for clarification that if the District would be hires 3 FF / EMTs would this free up the 5 inspectors to do more inspections. Commissioner Dugan Sr. felt the inspections are currently getting done. Lt. Belott reported that the addition of the FF / EMT who would ride on the ambulance during the day would potentially free up the inspector to go out and do their inspections. Lt. McGuinness reported that the District inspectors average between 20 – 50 inspections a month and the current number of inspectors is more than sufficient. Lt. McGuinness reported that the District averages 400-450 non-hazard life use inspections a year and about 70 annual life hazard use inspections which the current 5 inspectors are more than able to handle. Chief DiGiorgio clarified that the ranking system for the candidates was something that was put in place by the previous Board who agreed that if they were going to use an outside company and an outside agency to provide the District with the results and a listing that the Board would utilize the ranking. Commissioner Dugan Sr. asked who the initial job posting was open to. Chief DiGiorgio asked if Commissioner Dugan Sr. was talking about the time there was an issue with the website or prior to the website issue. Commissioner Dugan Sr. clarified that once the Board decided to create a list, who was that opened to. Chief DiGiorgio reported that it was open to residents of the State of New Jersey however there was a mix-up on the website that stated it was open to internal applicants. Commissioner Dugan Sr. asked if the District did not seek candidates internally first. Chief DiGiorgio confirmed that the District did open it up first to currently employed and volunteer members. Chief DiGiorgio reported there were 4 candidates but none successfully completed the process. Commissioner DeSimone asked if that was with the stipulation that they needed to have Firefighter 2 or was the bar raised when the District decided to look outside. Chief DiGiorgio confirmed that Firefighter 2 was made a requirement when the District decided to open it up to the public. Chief DiGiorgio wanted to

clarify that this was how and why the ranking system is exactly the way it is and what the Board agreed to. Commissioner Cornine made a motion to table resolutions B, C, and D until after closed session. The Board agreed.

Commissioner O'Hare asked if there was any other old business. There was none.

NEW BUSINESS: Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that since several employees have been moved down from workstations on the 3rd floor to the Commissioners Room, he suggested holding the meetings in the bay. Commissioner Dugan Sr. felt that the room was kind of a mess because space is too tight in the room now. Commissioner Dugan Sr. felt it would be better to move the meetings to the bays and get rid of the Commissioners table to allow for more space for the employee workstations. Commissioner Dugan Sr. recommended keeping an area for the Commissioners to store their things and give the employees more room to store their things. Commissioner Dugan Sr. noted that the Board is looking at long term solutions but this would give the employees a little better working conditions for the short term because they need and deserve it. Commissioner DeSimone noted that the door to the room should still be locked when no one is in it. Chief DiGiorgio reported that keys were distributed to the people who belong in the room. Administrator Schultz reported that he would help prepare a proposal on changes for the next meeting.

Commissioner DeSimone asked if the plastic cabinet where the duffel bags are kept could be switched to cubicles that hold individual bags because multiple bags fall out of the cabinet every time someone tries to get theirs out. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the storing of the bags could be revisited.

REMINDERS:

The next regular meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners will be held on Thursday, October 21, 2021 at 7:00 P.M at the firehouse.

The next Joint Fire Prevention Board Meeting will be determined.

The Holiday Tree Lighting is scheduled for Saturday, November 27, 2021 at 6:00 P.M. at the Cedar Knolls Fire Station.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: None.

RESOLUTIONS: Commissioner O'Hare asked if the Board had any objections to approving the resolutions by consent agenda. The Board agreed.

Commissioner Cornine read Resolution 21-10-07-95 memorializing the Commissioners compensation.

Commissioner Cornine read Resolution 21-10-07-96 authorizing the close-out of the Bay Floor project.

Commissioner Cornine read Resolution 21-10-07-97 accepting the resignation of Volunteer Giglio.

Commissioner Cornine read Resolution 21-10-07-98 accepting the resignation of Volunteer Shen.

Commissioner Cornine read Resolution 21-10-07-99 accepting the resignation of Volunteer Smith.

Commissioner Cornine made a motion to introduce the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Dugan Sr. All were in favor.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Commissioner Cornine read Resolution 21-10-07-100 to enter into executive session. Commissioner Dugan Sr. made a motion to introduce the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Dugan Jr. All were in favor. The Board went into closed session at 8:20 p.m.

Commissioner Dugan Jr. left the meeting at 9:41 p.m.

Personnel matters were discussed, action will be taken.

The Board came out of closed session at 11:05 p.m.

RESOLUTIONS: Commissioner O'Hare asked if the Board had any objections to approving resolutions 101-104 by consent agenda. The Board agreed.

Commissioner Cornine read Resolution 21-10-07-101 authorizing a conditional offer of employment to Candidate 1 for the position of FF/ EMT.

Commissioner Cornine read Resolution 21-10-07-102 authorizing a conditional offer of employment to Candidate 2 for the position of FF/ EMT.

Commissioner Cornine read Resolution 21-10-07-103 authorizing a conditional offer of employment to Candidate 3 for the position of FF/ EMT.

Commissioner Dugan Sr. made a motion to introduce the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Cornine. Commissioners Cornine, Dugan Sr., and O'Hare were in favor. Commissioner DeSimone was against. Commissioner Dugan Jr. was absent.

Commissioner Cornine read Resolution 21-10-07-104 authorizing a conditional offer of employment to Candidate 4 for the position of FF/ EMT.

Commissioner Dugan Sr. made a motion to introduce the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Cornine. Commissioners Cornine, Dugan Sr., and O'Hare were in favor. Commissioner DeSimone was against. Commissioner Dugan Jr. was absent.

Commissioner Cornine read Resolution 21-10-07-105 terminating EMT Mockler.

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

ADJOURN: A motion was made by Commissioner Cornine, seconded by Commissioner DeSimone, to adjourn the meeting. All were in favor. Commissioner Dugan Jr. was absent. The meeting was adjourned at 11:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by

Steven Cornine, Secretary