

**November 18, 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 November 18, 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 Mary Lou DeSimone, Michael Dugan Jr., and Robert O'Hare were present. Commissioners Steven Cornine, and Michael Dugan Sr. were absent.

Chief DiGiorgio, FF Gilson, Fire Co. President James Hark Jr., EMT Thompson, EMT Waldron and EMT Perrone were also in attendance.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** None.

**CORRESPONDENCE:** None.

**APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES:**

**The minutes from the November 4, 2021 Regular Meeting were reviewed.**

**Amendments to Previous Minutes: None.**

**Commissioner Dugan Jr. made a motion to approve the minutes from the November 4, 2021 Regular Meeting. Commissioner DeSimone seconded the motion. All were in favor. Commissioners Cornine and Dugan Sr. were absent.**

**REPORT OF THE TREASURER:**

Commissioner O'Hare asked if the bookkeeper had anything to report in the Treasurer's absence. The bookkeeper reported that she distributed the YTD P&L through today and that the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter tax check was received.

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

**CHIEF'S REPORT:** Chief DiGiorgio distributed his Bi-Monthly report on November 11, 2021 and did not have any updates since he was not around since then.

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

Commissioner DeSimone noted that the Chiefs report indicated that FF Ujfalussy's report was attached but she did not see it. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he forgot to delete that portion of his report and that FF Ujfalussy's report was attached to last meetings Chief's report.

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

**EMS:** Commissioner O'Hare reported that since the last meeting there has been a number of discussions about calls, and calls that were submitted for billing that have not been billed. Commissioner O'Hare thanked Chief DiGiorgio and the bookkeeper for doing a deep dive on calls going back to last November which resulted in the identification of about 200 calls that the District has received no revenue from. Commissioner O'Hare reported that the District has reached out to the representative and asked him to provide a disposition on all these calls. Commissioner O'Hare reported that the District is hoping to meet with the representative next week to get a response from him on the calls. Chief DiGiorgio noted that the calls represent about \$236,000 in potential revenue. Commissioner O'Hare noted that when he looked at the list of calls there appeared to be many with bonafide insurance information that there did not seem to be a reason why a majority of the bills were not paid on. Commissioner Dugan Jr. asked why there was potentially \$236,000 that the District could have received. Commissioner O'Hare reported that there were approximately 236 calls where the District received no revenue on a \$1,000 billing. Chief DiGiorgio noted that the District usually collects 47% of what it bills so the District could expect to see about \$120,000.

**BUDGET:** Commissioner O'Hare reported that the Board has a copy of the 2022 Budget that will be introduced later.

**PERSONNEL:** Nothing to report.

**NEGOTIATIONS:** Commissioner O'Hare reported that the MOA is under attorney review.

**LIAISON TO THE VOLUNTEERS:** Commissioner DeSimone reported that at the last Operations Meeting the volunteers expressed that they were very unhappy with the atmosphere and the engagement of the volunteers to do anything.

Commissioner DeSimone reported that the volunteers asked what could be done to encourage them to come back and re-energize themselves. Commissioner DeSimone reported that she does not know how the Board can help the volunteers or how it got to the stage that it did but did not feel that this is something that happened overnight. Commissioner DeSimone felt that the Board should be concerned about the morale of the volunteers. Commissioner Dugan Jr. reported that one thing that stuck out during the discussion was the difficulty to secure usage of the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor because of insurance issues. Commissioner Dugan Jr. reported that the volunteers felt this was a deterrent to using the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. Commissioner DeSimone reported that the members would like to use the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor for parties and such like they used to but do not because of the insurance requirement. Commissioner DeSimone reported that the volunteers were hoping that the Board would take another look at the situation. Commissioner O'Hare reported that he does not recall the reason that the insurance company had issues with non-departmental events being held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor but felt that the Board could touch base with the insurance company again. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the building usage form is on the District website and he has forwarded the link to President Hark Jr. to share with the membership. Chief DiGiorgio explained that the member would need supplemental insurance rider if the member was having a non-Fire Department function. EMT Thompson asked how much the supplemental policy would cost and guessed it would be more if alcohol was permitted. EMT wondered if the cost was small enough that the District could cover it as a perk for the volunteers. Chief DiGiorgio did not recall the cost but felt that there was the opportunity for people to buy a rider policy from a certain group. Fire Co. President Hark Jr. did not remember the cost specifically but felt that it was between \$300 - \$500 without alcohol and asked if the bookkeeper could look it up for the one member who used the room. The bookkeeper remembered seeing a check for a refundable deposit for the usage of the room but not for an insurance rider. Chief DiGiorgio reported that there is a flow chart in the document on the website that goes through the required steps. Chief DiGiorgio noted that the chart does not include the cost of the rider and did not feel that the Board could purchase the rider since they are the policy holder. Chief DiGiorgio reported that Fire Co. Member Donofrio was the liaison between the Fire Co. and the Board when someone wanted to rent the space upstairs. Commissioner O'Hare remembered something about a member having to get a

rider on their own homeowners' insurance. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he does use the Building Usage form for events like the rabies clinic and they return the completed form with proof of insurance. President Hark Jr. reported that the other thing that came up was the ability to have other departments come back to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor for a few beers after a softball league game. President Hark Jr. reported that the home team used to host the visiting team. President Hark Jr. reported that this was shut down during the same period due to insurance liabilities and the volunteers asked that this be looked into again as well. Chief DiGiorgio did not remember that having to stop because it was a company function. Commissioner DeSimone reported that the insurance requirement was a deterrent because the volunteers felt that they were not allowed to have people come back and have a gathering. President Hark Jr. reported that the softball gathering came up because alcohol was being served and outside people were in attendance. Chief DiGiorgio clarified that if the gathering was all our members, then it would not be an issue but non-members were and issue. Chief DiGiorgio felt that at that time softball was starting to phase itself out. Chief DiGiorgio felt that if the Fire Co. wants to have a Holiday party for its members, nothing is needed because it is covered under the existing policy. Commissioner O'Hare asked if this included guests. Chief DiGiorgio reported that this was his understanding. Commissioner DeSimone asked if they could serve alcohol and it not be an issue. Again, Chief DiGiorgio said that was his understanding. The bookkeeper noted that the Board never got a rider for Inspection Day. Commissioner DeSimone reported that this was not the impression that the volunteers had. President Hark Jr. felt that the softball gatherings should be allowed because they are Company functions so guests should be allowed. Chief DiGiorgio felt that it was worth revisiting but noted that having a Fire Co. function to build morale is different from a singular member looking to hold a family party. President Hark Jr. asked if the Board could get clarification for the volunteers about the allowance of guests that are not members at a Fire Co. function without the need for the insurance rider even if alcohol is served. Commissioner O'Hare reported that the Board would look into it.

**BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS:** Nothing to report.

**APPARATUS/EQUIPMENT AND MAINTENANCE:** Commissioner O'Hare reported that he saw that a quote to get Ambulance 32 fixed came in today. Chief

DiGiorgio reported that the District has the quote but is waiting for VFIS to give us the go ahead. Commissioner O'Hare thought that the District had gotten the go ahead today. Commissioner DeSimone asked how long Ambulance 32 would be out of service. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he did not receive a time estimate on the repair but that the vendor would come pick up the ambulance and take it down to Manchester. Commissioner DeSimone asked if Ambulance 39 would be brought back here during that time. Chief DiGiorgio reported that Ambulance 39 is already back here because Ambulance 38 is down at VCI getting serviced. Chief DiGiorgio reported that once Ambulance 38 returns, Ambulance 39 is going down to VCI for annual maintenance, and once Ambulance 39 comes back, Ambulance 32 will go in for the repair. Chief DiGiorgio reported that this will allow the District maintain 2 ambulances.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that the ladder truck is back and it was put to the test this Sunday when it was utilized for many hours to work on the holiday tree and it seems to be functioning properly. Chief DiGiorgio reported that Engine 35 went in this week for a recall repair from Cummins and it is now back. Chief DiGiorgio thanked Lt. Belott for driving apparatus all over New Jersey for these repairs.

**INSURANCE:** Nothing to report.

**BY-LAWS:** Commissioner DeSimone reported that the amended By-Laws that were approved at last meeting will be posted to the website.

**WEBSITE:** Up to date.

**PLANNING COMMITTEE:** Commissioner Dugan Jr. reported that the committee has not had a meeting since the last Board meeting. Commissioner O'Hare asked if a meeting was scheduled. Commissioner Dugan Jr. reported that he hoped to have a meeting soon because it has been too long since the last one. Commissioner O'Hare asked commissioner Dugan Jr. to schedule a planning committee meeting before the next Board meeting. Commissioner Dugan Jr. asked if Tuesday worked for President Hark Jr. President Hark Jr. reported that Tuesday was good for him but that he was not sure about the other members of the committee. Commissioner O'Hare asked Commissioner Dugan Jr. to reach out to the other members of the committee and commit to having a meeting before the next Board meeting. Commissioner Dugan Jr. reported that he would get it done.

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

**RECORDS RETENTION:** Nothing to report.

**LIAISON TO HANOVER TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE:** Nothing to report.

**OLD BUSINESS:** Commissioner DeSimone asked Chief DiGiorgio if the meeting with the Per Diem and Part-time EMTs about the scheduling and hours had occurred. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he believed that it was discussed at the last meeting that Commissioner Dugan Sr. would be getting that together and that it was something that the commissioners would be scheduling and hosting. Chief DiGiorgio reported that to his knowledge the meeting has not taken place. Commissioner DeSimone felt that the meeting should be held sooner rather than later because a few have approached with questions and they need to know in case they need to look elsewhere for additional employment. Chief DiGiorgio felt that this would be a question for Commissioner Dugan Sr. since he was taking the lead on it. Chief DiGiorgio reported that on the same topic, the terms and conditions of the Per Diem and Part-Time employees should also be revisited because it will be one of the main topics of conversation at the meeting. Commissioner O'Hare felt that the whole idea of the meeting was to talk about the terms and conditions of employment.

Commissioner DeSimone reported that Chief DiGiorgio has been asking about the status of the Disciplinary Action Report and reported that she has been reading it and she hopes the rest of the Board has been reading it but felt that the entire Board should be present to discuss it and decide if it is something that the Board wishes to go with. Commissioner DeSimone hoped that it could be discussed at the next meeting. Chief DiGiorgio suggested that it be added to the agenda for next meeting for discussion purposes but felt that the supplemental terms and conditions discussion was more of a priority. Commissioner O'Hare agreed. Chief DiGiorgio reported that if some EMTs have been asking questions of the Personnel Committee about the terms and conditions of employment, it might be helpful to write the questions down so the Commissioners can address them prior to the meeting with the EMTs. Chief DiGiorgio felt that if an individual has a question maybe the Board can respond to that individual. Commissioner DeSimone reported that it was not a specific question that was being asked but more of a what is going on type of question.

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

**NEW BUSINESS:** None.

**REMINDERS:**

The next regular meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners will be held on Thursday, December 2, 2021 at 7:00 P.M at the firehouse.

The next Joint Fire Prevention Board Meeting will be Thursday, December 2, 2021 at 6:30 P.M. at the Cedar Knolls Fire Station.

The Holiday Tree Lighting is scheduled for Saturday, November 27, 2021 at 6:00 P.M. at the Cedar Knolls Fire Station. Commissioner O'Hare extended his gratitude and compliments to all who worked so hard on this and he is sure it will be tremendous.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** EMT Waldron reported that there have been rumors floating around and Chief DiGiorgio was kind enough to speak to himself and another EMT six weeks ago to give a heads up that they would lose hours. EMT Waldron did not know if Chief DiGiorgio had spoken with other EMTs. EMT Waldron reported that the loss of hours would mean that he would make about \$33,000 less in the coming year. EMT Waldron reported that he is averaging 47 hours in the 23 pay periods this year which represents 7 hours a week of overtime. EMT Waldron reported that if he is cut back from 40 hours to 24 hours a week, he loses over 800 hours and another 300 plus in overtime. EMT Waldron asked how long this Board has known this was going to happen, 8 weeks? 10 weeks?, 3 months? Commissioner O'Hare reported that it was not 3 months but acknowledged it was a long time. EMT Waldron reported that it is appalling to him that 80% of this Board comes from a supervisory background or an administrative background, leaders of people, and the Board does not make sure that this information gets out to the people that deserve to know. EMT Waldron reported that there are people here who have to pay rent and they are going to get 2 weeks' notice that their hours are going to be cut in half? EMT Waldron reported that he is in a unique situation because he has a paycheck coming in, but the other 4 EMTs are not in the same situation and need to know if they need to get secondary employment. EMT Waldron reported that it is unfair of this Board to wait to the last minute to tell their people that they are losing half their hours.

EMT Waldron reported that some of these people stayed with the District through COVID and they deserve better treatment than this Board is showing right now. EMT Waldron reported that it was his understanding, through rumor and innuendo, that Commissioner Dugan Sr. asked a full-time EMT if they had heard what was going on in front of a part-time EMT, who acknowledged that they had heard some things. EMT Waldron reported that Commissioner Dugan Sr.'s response was that he guessed he did not need to meet with anybody then. EMT Waldron felt that if this is true, it was wrong. EMT Waldron reported that at the last meeting when the committee report came up while he was on a call, and someone mentioned that he was supposed to have a meeting with the employees, Commissioner Dugan Sr. mouthed that oh yeah, he was supposed to have a meeting. EMT Waldron told Commissioner O'Hare that as Chairman he has to stay on these committee heads, especially on something this important. EMT Waldron reiterated that the employees have personal expenses to pay and they should have been told 8 weeks ago that their hours were going to be cut in half so they could look for something else if they need to. EMT Waldron felt it was wrong that this Board has not done something sooner. Commissioner O'Hare thanked EMT Waldron for his comments and input.

Commissioner O'Hare asked if there was any other public participation. There was none.

#### **RESOLUTIONS:**

**Commissioner O'Hare read Resolution 21-11-18-110 introducing the 2022 District Budget.**

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

**Commissioner DeSimone asked for a brief Executive Session to clarify a couple things before continuing with the resolutions.**

**EXECUTIVE SESSION: Commissioner O'Hare read Resolution 21-11-18-113 to enter into executive session. Commissioner Dugan Jr. made a motion to introduce the resolution, seconded by Commissioner O'Hare. All were in favor.**



**Commissioners Cornine and Dugan Sr. were absent. The Board went into closed session at 7:32 p.m.**

Personnel matters were discussed, and action will be taken.

**The Board came out of closed session at 7:36 p.m.**

**RESOLUTIONS:**

**Commissioner O'Hare read Resolution 21-11-18-111 appointing Probationary FF/EMT DiGiacomo.**

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

**Commissioner O'Hare read Resolution 21-11-18-112 appointing Probationary FF/EMT Colin.**

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

**Commissioner O'Hare read Resolution 21-11-18-114 rescinding a conditional offer of employment to FF/EMT Hinson.**

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

**Commissioner O'Hare read Resolution 21-11-18-115 authorizing a conditional offer of employment be made to FF/EMT J. N. Martin.**

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

**ADJOURN: A motion was made by Commissioner Dugan Jr., seconded by Commissioner DeSimone, to adjourn the meeting. All were in favor. Commissioners Cornine and Dugan Sr. were absent.**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by

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Steven Cornine, Secretary