

January 20, 2022 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 January 20, 2022 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, Mrs. Martin, FF Martin, Lt. McGuinness, FF Ujfalussy, and EMT Waldron were also in attendance.

DEPART FROM NORMAL AGENDA: Commissioner O’Hare reported that the Board would depart from the normal agenda to administer the oath of office to FF / EMT Martin. Chief DiGiorgio administered the oath of office to FF /EMT Martin.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: None.

CORRESPONDENCE: Commissioner O’Hare read the following note received from Rose Prisco.

Hello, my name is Rose Prisco. On January 6 my mom, Sophie Spagnuolo, called 911 as she was experiencing complications from COVID-19 for more than a week. One of the EMTs, Deanna (unfortunately I don’t have her last name), was wonderful with my mom. Not only did she tend to my mom’s medical needs, she put her mind at ease, made her toast as my mom was dehydrated, and helped her with her daily meds. Additionally, she phoned me with details to update me on my mom’s condition.

I can’t thank her enough for keeping my mom calm and going above and beyond what is typical, especially during these trying times.

Please extend our sincere thanks to her.

Kind regards,

Rose Prisco

Commissioner Dugan Sr. asked if Deanna Harrington received the note. Chief DiGiorgio reported that Deanna had received the note.

Commissioner Cornine reported that Fire Co. President Hark Jr. sent out an email asking the Department to keep Mr. Laszlo Csengeto in their thoughts and prayers.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES:

The minutes from the January 6, 2022 Special Meeting were reviewed.

Amendments to Previous Minutes: None.

Commissioner Dugan Sr. made a motion to approve the amended minutes from the January 6, 2022 Special Meeting. Commissioner Dugan Jr. seconded the motion. All were in favor. Commissioner DeSimone abstained.

The minutes from the January 6, 2022 Regular Meeting were reviewed.

Amendments to Previous Minutes: None.

Commissioner Dugan Sr. made a motion to approve the amended minutes from the January 6, 2022 Regular Meeting. Commissioner Dugan Jr. seconded the motion. All were in favor. Commissioner DeSimone abstained.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER:

Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that there is not much to report since it is so early in the new year but everything looks good so far.

Report of Fire Commissioner Board Committees and Chief of Department:

CHIEF'S REPORT: Chief DiGiorgio distributed his Bi-Monthly report on January 14, 2022.

Chief DiGiorgio updated the Board on the following items:

Chief DiGiorgio reported that the annual Division of Fire Safety Report of Inspections and Fire Prevention was submitted today with the assistance of Lt. McGuinness. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he has certified the report and that Commissioner O'Hare also has to certify the report. Chief DiGiorgio asked Commissioner O'Hare to get together with Lt. McGuinness to certify the report by January 31. Commissioner Dugan Sr. asked Chief DiGiorgio what the revenue was and if it was up or down from previous years. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the

revenue was on preliminary YTD December 2021 P&L. The bookkeeper reported that the actual revenue was more than budgeted. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the Local Registration Fees were 50% over budget and the Life Hazard fees were 5% over budget. Commissioner Dugan Sr. wondered if the Fire Prevention revenue suffered due to the pandemic. Chief DiGiorgio reported that all the 2021 inspections were completed as required and also billed.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that the Survey Feedback was included with his report and that after the Board has a chance to look at it he would like to talk about what direction the Board would like to take and who will address certain issues. Chief DiGiorgio asked the Board to set aside some time, maybe after the next meeting, to discuss how some of the issues will be addressed. Commissioner DeSimone asked if Chief DiGiorgio asked if he said he was going to review the survey data with staff. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he broke down the survey data by groups, and the 3 groups he has identified are Operations, which would be himself, the officers and the members; Fire Company; and the Board of Fire Commissioners. Chief DiGiorgio reported that as he started to review the survey responses he noted that certain items need to be addressed by one or more of the 3 groups. Chief DiGiorgio felt that instead of him deciding which group should address which items, each group should choose which items they would like to address. Commissioner Dugan Sr. felt that the Board would have an overall view over all 3 groups. Chief DiGiorgio agreed and noted that there would be some overlap of items that would be addressed by multiple groups. Chief DiGiorgio felt it was still important to make the decision of which group or groups will address each item and develop a plan of how to address the items. Commissioner Dugan Sr. agreed and noted that if there is a complaint about the Fire Co., it should be addressed by the Fire Co. for example. Chief DiGiorgio gave the example of a response about EMTs being given gear that fits being an overlap item that could be addressed by Operations and the Board together. Chief DiGiorgio reported that Operations could say that new gear was needed while the Board would look into whether the District could afford new gear that year and if not plan to add it to the budget next year. Commissioner Dugan Sr. noted that the Board would also have to find out what the EMT meant by gear that did not fit. Chief DiGiorgio agreed and felt that the Board should make notes as they reviewed the survey responses in case there are apparent solutions for some of the items. Commissioner DeSimone reported that the survey was a long time coming and

that she is disappointed that there are more negative comments than positive. Commissioner DeSimone felt that these things did not develop overnight but have been growing and not addressed. Commissioner DeSimone reported that she would definitely like to see a lot of these action items put in place and the action items should be given a time frame. Chief DiGiorgio agreed and hoped that there would be more than 14 responses from the 50-person Department. Chief DiGiorgio noted that many times people only comment on the things that are not working, not what is working. Chief DiGiorgio reported that some people commented that they had seen these surveys before and nothing changed so they do not want to waste their time responding. Chief DiGiorgio felt that if the items in this survey are addressed it may change the thought process and more people may respond to future surveys. Commissioner DeSimone reported that there was a survey done a few years ago where nothing was addressed and would explain why some people didn't want to do it again. Commissioner DeSimone asked how many responses were received and how many people the survey was sent out to. Chief DiGiorgio reported that 14 people responded and that the survey was sent to the entire organization. Commissioner DeSimone noted that some of the responses very detailed and not just one-word answers. Chief DiGiorgio agreed but noted that each respondent did not always answer all the questions on the survey. Commissioner DeSimone reported that she definitely wants to see some action taken because we need to turn this place around, not only the Department but the perception of the Board and some of the leadership here. Chief DiGiorgio felt there are 3 groups that all have a job to do. Commissioner O'Hare asked if the rest of the Board will be prepared to discuss the survey at the next meeting. Commissioner Desimone reported that she will not be at the February 3 meeting. Commissioner Dugan Sr. asked if it was too late to change the meeting to another night that week. Commissioner DeSimone reported that she was not available the entire week. Commissioner O'Hare reported that the discussion will be put off until the second meeting in February but that the Board should start gathering their thoughts and some concrete ideas between now and then. Commissioner Dugan Sr. asked when the other survey that they have been talking about was done and asked if it was the one he did. Commissioner DeSimone confirmed that it was and that he was not able to provide any further feedback at a Fire Co. meeting. Commissioner DeSimone reported that when the Fire Co. heard nothing more it prompted some individuals to comment that nothing was done after the

last survey so they were not going to respond to this one. Commissioner DeSimone felt that if the fire co. could see actions being taken, they would see that we are changing as well. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that there were certain results from that survey that were read out at the Fire Co. meeting and there were certain things that had to be held back. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that for the record, those things were discussed with the Board and the people that were involved with those particular items.

Chief DiGiorgio concluded his report. Commissioner O'Hare asked if anyone had any questions for Chief DiGiorgio. Commissioner DeSimone asked Chief DiGiorgio to sit down with her to discuss how he calculates his call numbers. Chief DiGiorgio agreed to meet and reported that if both Fire and EMS go out on a call they are both credited with a call. Commissioner DeSimone reported that there are IR numbers and call numbers and asked if a firetruck goes out on an EMS call do they get credit for a call. Chief DiGiorgio reported that there are in that case there would be both EMS and Fire call numbers. Commissioner DeSimone asked if the IR number meant nothing when calculating call volume but goes by the County number instead. Chief DiGiorgio reported that every time Fire goes out it is a run for firefighters and counts as a call and the same holds for EMS when they go out. Commissioner DeSimone asked if she should not run reports for call volume from ERS and should instead use County reports. Chief DiGiorgio reported that you can run the reports out of ERS and he showed Commissioner DeSimone a report from December 2021. Chief DiGiorgio pointed out where the call volume numbers were located in the report. Commissioner DeSimone thanked Chief DiGiorgio.

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

EMS: Commissioner O'Hare reported that it has come to his attention that the District is over budget on EMS overtime already. Administrator Schultz clarified that EMS budgeted hours per week for Part-time and Per Diem EMTs has been exceeded for two weeks. Administrator Schultz reported that there are 140 hours a week budgeted for and the District is at 207 and 211 hours for the past 2 weeks. Commissioner O'Hare asked why that was. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he has not seen the report so he cannot say. Commissioner O'Hare asked Chief DiGiorgio to look into this and get back to him. Chief DiGiorgio felt that the number might

be attributed to the fact that the District is not seeing the advantage of the 3rd FF/EMT riding on a shift and will not take effect until February 1. Chief DiGiorgio reported that his numbers included 2 volunteer EMTs riding a shift which would account for 16 hours. Chief DiGiorgio felt that the loss of the 2 volunteer EMTs and the effect of not having the 3rd FF/EMT yet would probably add up to those numbers.

Commissioner O'Hare asked if the District had a set date to talk to Coronis. Chief DiGiorgio reported that Jennifer at Coronis has sent him a couple of emails that had an encrypted attachment and unfortunately it was stopped by the District firewall. Commissioner O'Hare asked if Chief DiGiorgio could phone her and set up the meeting date and time. Commissioner Dugan Sr. asked how we had received the reports previously. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he had Coronis send the reports to his Verizon email. Commissioner Dugan Sr. asked if we could do that again. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he could but Coronis was trying to share the report with everyone who will be at the meeting so it might be best to try and get to the root of the problem. Administrator Schultz reported that it was not getting to the firewall because he sees everything that gets blocked and these emails are not there. Administrator Schultz noted that he has received encrypted emails from Coronis previously with no problems. Chief DiGiorgio reported that Jennifer emailed him asking if the District was good to meet on that date and he responded asking what date because he did not receive the original email. Commissioner Dugan Sr. asked Chief DiGiorgio to find out the date and time Coronis would like to meet.

BUDGET: Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the District is just waiting for the election to see if the budget is passed.

PERSONNEL: Commissioner Dugan Sr. asked for an Executive Session.

NEGOTIATIONS: Nothing to report.

LIAISON TO THE VOLUNTEERS: Commissioner Dugan Jr. reported that Fire Co. President Hark Jr. informed him that the Fire Co. was moving forward with merging the Fire Co. and District websites. Commissioner Dugan Jr. reported that the Fire Co. was discussing it with Mr. Braslow.

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS: Commissioner O’Hare reported that he noticed while signing the checks that the PSE&G bill for the month about \$21. The bookkeeper reported that the bill is usually under \$50. Administrator Schultz recommended contacting them to see if there is an issue with the meter.

APPARATUS/EQUIPMENT AND MAINTENANCE: Commissioner Dugan Sr. asked how the ladder truck was doing. Chief DiGiorgio reported that there have been no issues with it since the repair.

Commissioner Dugan Sr. asked if Ambulance 32 would be going in for service now that Ambulance 39 is back. Chief DiGiorgio reported that there are still issues with the steering on Ambulance 39 and we have an emailed VCI to see what is going on. Chief DiGiorgio reported that we are also waiting for a brake pressure switch to come in also. Commissioner DeSimone asked for clarification that A39 is out of service. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the mechanic said that the District could use but he decided not to use it in an emergency situation while we try to find a vendor to fix the steering.

INSURANCE: Commissioner O’Hare reported that the District received good news from Oxford about the Dental renewal. Administrator Schultz reported that the rate increased less than 1% and recommended that the Board approve the renewal. Commissioner O’Hare approved the renewal.

BY-LAWS: Commissioner DeSimone reported that the updated By-Laws were on the website.

WEBSITE: Up to date.

PLANNING COMMITTEE: Commissioner O’Hare asked for a report on the merger meeting with Whippany. Commissioner Dugan Jr. reported that the meeting went well and the committee is going to talk to Mr. Braslow and former Chief Davidson at the next meeting because they are very knowledgeable on mergers.

LIASON TO EXEMPTS: Nothing to report.

RECORDS RETENTION: Nothing to report.

LIAISON TO HANOVER TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE: Nothing to report.

OLD BUSINESS: Commissioner Dugan Jr. reported that at the last meeting he brought up that some of the members wanted to introduce an exercise program

and coincidentally Sterling Park is giving away some gym equipment if the District is interested. Commissioner Dugan Jr. reported that there was an elliptical and some treadmills. Commissioner DeSimone asked where the equipment would be put and if the district has checked that anyone getting hurt while using the equipment is covered under workers comp insurance. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that when this was looked into a couple of years ago, the answer was that as long as it is approved by the Board, it is approved. Commissioner DeSimone asked if the staff could be required to sign a waiver about getting hurt while using the gym equipment. Commissioner Dugan Sr. felt that would be up to the Board. Commissioner DeSimone reported that she has seen a lot of companies that have an onsite gym require the employees to sign a waiver. Commissioner O'Hare felt that the Board should verify coverage with the insurance company but felt that the bigger question was where we would put the equipment. Commissioner DeSimone felt there was no more room on the 3rd floor. Commissioner O'Hare reported that he did not want to infringe on the Fire Co. 2nd floor without their permission. Commissioner DeSimone felt that if the Fire Co. members could use the equipment then the Fire Co. might consider it. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the equipment would be available for all agencies. Commissioner Cornine reported that physical fitness is emergency services and a lot of department do it. Commissioner Cornine reported that diving into it can be scary for some but he seen programs work. Commissioner Cornine felt that the benefits outweigh the risks and that someone getting hurt would be no different from being injured while training. Commissioner Cornine felt that physical fitness is part of firefighting and EMS and the District would just need to ensure it has a good policy in place. Commissioner Dugan Sr. recommended that Commissioner Dugan Jr. and FF Martin, who proposed the program, reach out to the fire Co. to see if they are interested in housing the equipment on the 2nd floor. FF Martin reported that he will reach out to President Hark Jr. but noted that it was his understanding that the Sterling Park equipment might need to be picked up as soon as this weekend. Commissioner Cornine asked if anyone had notified Whippany about the equipment because they have the room to house the equipment. Commissioner Dugan Sr. recommended picking up some equipment, maybe 2 elliptical and 2 treadmills. Commissioner Dugan Jr. asked if there was room to store them in the tent for now. It was decided that room could be found in the tent to store the equipment.

Administrator Schultz reported that he will work with Commissioner Dugan Jr. and FF Martin to use a County truck to transport the equipment. Administrator Schultz asked for a copy of the sample waiver and other paperwork so he could ask Mr. Braslow to review it. Commissioner Cornine felt it was important that the equipment not be used until the Board and the Chief put out some sort of policies.

Commissioner O'Hare asked Administrator Schultz for a status on the Alcohol & Drug training. Administrator Schultz reported that he and Mr. Abrusci have been playing telephone tag all week. Administrator Schultz reported that he reached out to Mr. Trimboli because the District is going to try and remain compliant with what the State is putting out and was informed that the State has not put anything out yet. Administrator Schultz felt it was not wise to have the training until the State releases the requirements. Commissioner Dugan Sr. asked how the police are handling it. Administrator Schultz was not sure that marijuana was legal outside medical use yet. Commissioner Cornine asked for clarification that the purpose of the training would be in case an employee is suspected to be under the influence and if so couldn't the Board do a MOA with a local police agency. Administrator Schultz reported that Mr. Trimboli said going that route would bring in an entire other set of issues such as potential criminal involvement and privacy issues. Administrator Schultz reported that when the training occurs it will be opened up to other departments. Commissioner DeSimone asked if the training would be performed by a third party. Administrator Schultz reported that Mr. Abrusci is a retired Captain who does DRE training throughout the State and has authored a lot of the regulations about it. Chief DiGiorgio reported that there was a Fire Safety Commission meeting yesterday and there was a long discussion on this subject. Chief DiGiorgio reported they are looking for the Division of Fire and Safety to come out with some sort of guidance document and he will share any information he gets.

Commissioner O'Hare asked Chief DiGiorgio about the cart donation. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he spoke to District 2 and they said to bring the cart there. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he emailed Dr. Ralph but has not heard back from him.

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

NEW BUSINESS: Commissioner O'Hare asked the status of securing poll workers for the election in February. Administrator Schultz reported that the poll workers have been secured.

REMINDERS:

The next regular meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners will be held on Thursday, February 3, 2022 at 7:00 P.M at the firehouse.

The Fire District Annual Election will be held on Saturday, February 19, 2022 from 2 P.M. until 9 P.M. at the Cedar Knolls Fire Station.

The Joint Fire Prevention Board Meeting will be held on Monday, March 14, 2022 at the Whippany Firehouse at 6:30 P.M.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: None.

RESOLUTIONS: Commissioner DeSimone asked if the resolutions could be voted on after the Executive Session. The Board agreed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Commissioner O'Hare read Resolution 22-01-20-07 to enter into executive session. Commissioner Dugan Sr. made a motion to introduce the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Cornine. All were in favor. The Board went into closed session at 7:49 p.m.

Personnel matters were discussed, and action will not be taken.

The Board came out of closed session at 9:06 p.m.

RESOLUTIONS: Commissioner O'Hare asked if anyone had any objections to voting by consent agenda for the following resolutions. There were no objections.

Commissioner O'Hare read Resolution 22-01-20-08 authorizing Raises for Certain Employees and the Board.

Commissioner O'Hare read Resolution 22-01-20-09 adopting Terms and Conditions - EMS.

Commissioner DeSimone made a motion to introduce the resolutions, seconded by Commissioner Dugan Jr. All were in favor.

ADJOURN: A motion was made by Commissioner Dugan Jr., seconded by Commissioner Cornine, to adjourn the meeting. All were in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by

Steven Cornine, Secretary