

March 21, 2024 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 March 21, 2024 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. Commissioner Cornine asked that everyone keep Lt. Sulpy and his family in their prayers as they mourn the passing of his father, Dean William Sulpy.

ATTENDANCE: Commissioners Steven Cornine, Mary Lou DeSimone, Michael Dugan Jr., Michael Dugan Sr., and Gary Keyser were present.

Administrator Schultz, Deputy Administrator Hark Jr., Chief Martin, Lt. Sulpy, FF Martin, EMT Bergman, Committeeman Cahill and members of the public were also in attendance.

DEPART FROM NORMAL AGENDA: The Board departed from the Normal Agenda to allow Committeeman Cahill to give his report.

LIAISON TO HANOVER TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE: Committeeman Cahill reported that there are two things that he would like to discuss with the Board. Committeeman Cahill reported that there has been a little concern about his attendance record at the District 3 BFC meetings and while he agrees, there have been certain circumstances that have been preventing him from attending on a regular basis and he appreciates the Board's patience. Committeeman Cahill reported that he is available by cellphone all the time and will be responsive to emails. Committeeman Cahill reported that he will try to make as many meetings as he possibly can.

Committeeman Cahill reported that the second thing he wanted to discuss is some of the business that he owes the Board. Committeeman Cahill reported that one of the items was the ability for the District to collect fines for false alarms. Committeeman Cahill reported that he spoke with Mr. Giorgio and Ms. DiGiorgio and reviewed the Fire Prevention and Life & Safety Standards to which that specification of being able to set and collect fines is included.

Committeeman Cahill reported that with the exception of a couple of things in the Standards the Township is fine with the District issuing summons and collecting fines ourselves. Committeeman Cahill felt that having the Township issue the

summons and collect fines would probably not be done meet the anticipated response time for the District because of all the work that the Township is involved in. Committeeman Cahill reported that with the exception of a couple of things in the resolution, the Township is more than happy to have the Districts issue summons and collect fines themselves. Committeeman Cahill reported that when fines become uncollectable the District would need to bring it to court just like any other entity. Committeeman Cahill reported that before the Township Committee is willing to sign the resolution there were a couple things that the Committee had strong concerns with. Committeeman Cahill reported that the Township felt the resolution should state *“the Building Department of Hanover Township is the agency having jurisdiction in issuing certificates of habitability which includes compliance with fire code, carbon monoxide...”* as opposed to giving this authority to the Fire Districts. Commissioner Keyser reported that the law has not changed yet but will be changed in the future to require a person to be an inspector to perform the inspections on the fire alarms and smoke detectors. Committeeman Cahill noted that the way it is currently worded in the resolution the Fire District would approve the entire certificate of habitability. Commissioner Cornine clarified that the coming law would require someone to hold a certificate of fire inspector, which anyone can have. Committeeman Cahill felt that if the intent of the clause in the resolution was for the fire inspector to sign off on compliance with fire code, then perhaps the resolution just needs to be modified for a little more clarity. Committeeman Cahill reported that the other wording issue is *“whatever fire protection plan reviews or spec applications are completed and submitted to the Planning Board, Board of Adjustments and/or the Building Department, the comments/recommendations contained therein shall be adhered to”*. Committeeman Cahill reported that this states that the Districts have to absolute final say on any recommendations and not the Planning Board and needs to be rephrased. Committeeman Cahill felt that he knew why this wording was used but he did not feel that this wording would solve the issue it was intending to address. Commissioner Cornine asked whose summons tickets the District would be using. Commissioner Keyser reported that the District has its own ticket books. Committeeman Cahill reported that the resolution would give the Districts authority to use their own ticket books. Commissioner Keyser reported that this information has to be given to the District Fire Officials because they are the ones who will be making these changes. Committeeman Cahill asked to be kept apprised of the status of the new law on

requiring fire inspectors to perform certain inspections. Commissioner Cornine thanked Committeeman Cahill for coming.

Committeeman Cahill left the meeting. The Board returned to the Normal Agenda.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: None.

CORRESPONDENCE: Commissioner Cornine reported that the District staff made it into the Hanover Eagle for freeing a trapped driver. Commissioner Cornine congratulated the staff and left a copy of the newspaper on the Commissioners' table for all to read.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES:

The minutes from the March 7, 2024 Regular Meeting were reviewed.

Amendments to the Previous Minutes: None.

Commissioner Keyser made a motion to approve the minutes from the March 7, 2024 Regular Meeting, seconded by Commissioner Dugan Jr. All were in favor.

The minutes from the February 15, 2024 Executive Session were reviewed.

Amendments to the Previous Minutes: None.

Commissioner Keyser made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 15, 2024 Executive Session, seconded by Commissioner Dugan Jr. All were in favor.

The minutes from the February 22, 2024 Executive Session were reviewed.

Amendments to the Previous Minutes: None.

Commissioner Dugan Jr. made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 22, 2024 Executive Session, seconded by Commissioner Dugan Sr. All were in favor.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER: Commissioner Dugan Sr. distributed the interim March 2024 financial reports and indicated that there are quite a few that are over budget to date. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that overtime expense is at 50% of budget which is very concerning. Commissioner Dugan Sr. indicated that he will discuss the need to cut down on overtime. Chief Martin reported that overtime has been suspended until further notice and the District will do what needs to be done to avoid overtime at all costs. Commissioner Keyser felt that overtime cannot be suspended because there might be times when it is needed. Chief Martin reported that he is willing to adjust his schedule to fill gaps in the schedule. Commissioner Cornine reported that the Board has a Staffing

document showing what is optimal staffing and what is minimal staffing that will be discussed.

Commissioner Keyser felt that the District also has to suspend unnecessary spending. Commissioner Keyser reported that monies for a luncheon were approved and these expenses need to be curtailed. Deputy Administrator Hark Jr. reported that the luncheon expense was not submitted because a donation was received to cover the luncheon. Commissioner Keyser felt that the District needs to be careful about donations that could be perceived as pay for play and that the luncheon should not have been approved anyway.

Report of Fire Commissioner Board Committees and Chief of Department:

CHIEF'S REPORT: Asst. Chief Martin submitted his Bi-Monthly report on March 20, 2024.

Chief Martin reported that he received a call that Fire & Safety came to the firehouse at 7:15 P.M. last night to work on the apparatus foam cell and requested that personnel be left behind who were scheduled to go to the Fire Academy for mandatory training. Chief Martin reported that Fire & Safety were told to come back during regular business hours so consequently the foam cell has not been looked at.

Chief Martin reported that the backup alarm on Engine 34 was fixed today. Chief Martin reported that there was an issue with the suicide door sensor on Ambulance 32 but the issue has resolved itself. Chief Martin felt that there was moisture in there and it got stuck. Chief Martin reported that a vendor looked at it today and said it is functioning properly.

Commissioner Keyser asked if there were plans to repair the light tower on Engine 34 this year after not doing it in the past few years. Chief Martin reported it is not a safety issue and there are no plans to repair it this year.

Commissioner Keyser asked if all the equipment has been removed from Ladder 33. Chief Martin reported that all the equipment that the District decided to keep has been removed from 33.

DEPART FROM NORMAL AGENDA: Jonathan Squire, Esq. joined the meeting.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Commissioner DeSimone read Resolution 24-03-21-39 to enter into executive session. Commissioner Keyser made a motion to introduce the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Dugan Jr. All were in favor.

The Board went into closed session at 7:20 p.m.

Personnel matters were discussed, and action will be taken.

The Board came out of closed session at 7:55 p.m.

The Board returned to the Normal Agenda.

EMS: Commissioner Keyser reported that he has been reaching out to Commissioner Gethins but he has not gotten back to him yet.

BUDGET: Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported there was nothing beyond what was discussed in the Treasurer's Report.

PERSONNEL: Commissioner DeSimone reported that the Board would need to go into Executive Session.

NEGOTIATIONS: Commissioner Keyser reported that Board members have a copy of a resolution regarding the budget and once that is approved he will set up a meeting with the FMBA next week.

LIAISON TO THE VOLUNTEERS: Commissioner Cornine reported that last meeting the Board discussed providing a form to the volunteers which he filled out and brought to the recent Volunteers meeting. Commissioner Cornine reported that he explained the form to the volunteers and stressed the need for dual lines of communications. Commissioner Cornine hoped that the volunteers would fill out a form at their future meetings and send it to the Board. Commissioner Cornine reported that he made a commitment to the volunteers to work with the Captain on some of the things that he proposed so expect to see more about that stuff soon. Commissioner DeSimone felt that the document that Commissioner Cornine prepared was very helpful and there were favorable comments about the amount of information on the form.

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS: Commissioner Dugan Jr. reported that the light outside the Engine bay was replaced.

Commissioner Keyser asked if the District was going to ask for landscaper bids. Commissioner Dugan Jr. reported that the District does not have landscaping equipment so bids will have to be sent out. Administrator Schultz reported that he would take care of it. Commissioner Cornine asked the bookkeeper to look up what landscaping cost last year.

APPARATUS/EQUIPMENT AND MAINTENANCE: Commissioner Dugan Jr. reiterated that the Ladder truck was stripped of all essential equipment and the District will be looking into what the minimum bid to sell it should be.

Commissioner Dugan Jr. reported that the rear ladder on Engine 34 to get into the hose bed was repaired.

INSURANCE: Nothing to report.

BY-LAWS: Nothing to report.

WEBSITE: Up to date.

PLANNING COMMITTEE: Commissioner Keyser reported that there was nothing to report on Shared Services between Districts because Commissioner Gethins has not gotten back to him. Commissioner Cornine reported that he brought up creating a Shared Services Committee with rotating representatives from both Boards at the last Joint Board Meeting. Commissioner Cornine reported that he and Commissioner Keyser would be the representatives from District 3 and that after 2 meetings he would bow out and another Commissioner could take his place. Commissioner Cornine reported that after another 2 meeting Commissioner Keyser would rotate out and another Commissioner would rotate in if the rest of the Board is okay with that procedure. Commissioner Cornine felt that this was a good way to ensure that the whole Board is aware of what is being worked on. Commissioner Dugan Sr. asked for clarification that if something is tabled that it cannot be discussed until it is un-tabled. Administrator Schultz confirmed that a tabled matter cannot be discussed until it is taken off the table. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that both Boards made the decision to table discussions on Consolidation or Shared Services. Deputy Administrator Hark Jr. reported that the resolution that both Boards passed in December 2023 was to enter into discussions on Shared Services and talks of consolidation were tabled. Commissioner Cornine clarified that this committee would be discussing shared services and not consolidation.

LIASON TO EXEMPTS: Nothing to report.

RECORDS RETENTION: Nothing to report.

LIAISON TO HANOVER TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE: Commissioner Keyser reported that Township Committeeman Cahill gave his report earlier in the meeting. Commissioner Keyser asked Deputy Administrator Hark Jr. to reach out to Lt. McGuinness about the Fire Ordinance requested modifications.

OLD BUSINESS: Chief Martin reported that the District is still waiting to get Ambulance 32 into the body shop for repairs for the 2 incidents.

Commissioner Cornine reported that everyone received a copy of the suggested Procurement Policy and asked if anyone had any questions, comments or concerns. Commissioner Keyser asked if the \$500 threshold above which permission is required for a purchase should be lowered to \$250. Commissioner Cornine felt that the figure was arbitrary and that the District needed to get more of a grip on spending than allowing certain amounts. Administrator Schultz recommended adding verbiage that distinguished between operation necessity versus what is not necessary for operations. Administrator Schultz felt that this would distinguish between things that are critical to spend money on and things that the District can hold off on. Commissioner Cornine felt that forecasting all the expenditures that the District knows about would allow the Board and Administration to pre-approve these items. Commissioner Cornine also asked if getting approval from the Board Treasurer, one additional Commissioner, and Administration was too much. Administrator Schultz recommended taking out the additional Commissioner approval except in the absence of Administration approval. Commissioner Cornine asked for clarification on the requirement of the Board approving the checks for purchases. Administrator Schultz reported that this satisfies a requirement of the auditor that the Board approve purchases and is no different from the current procedure. Administrator Schultz reported that the Board can hold any check from being sent out. Commissioner Cornine felt that the Board should be approving quotes but an invoice means the purchase or service has already happened and seems a bit late. Commissioner Keyser asked if the budgetary review process wasn't already happening. Administrator Schultz reported that the budgetary review process is being pushed down to all levels so everyone is accountable for purchases made. Commissioner Keyser made a motion to approve the amended Procurement Policy, seconded by Commissioner DeSimone. All were in favor.

Commissioner Cornine reported that the Board received copies of proposed accident forms at the last meeting and asked if anyone had any questions. Commissioner Keyser asked if all this was needed. Commissioner Cornine reported that this is an employment form so the District can make sure the Policies and Procedures are up to date to try and prevent any other future occurrence. Commissioner DeSimone made a motion to utilize the Accident Forms, seconded by Commissioner Dugan Sr. All were in favor.

Commissioner Cornine reported that the Board heard from Labor Counsel about the Nepotism Policy earlier. Commissioner DeSimone made a motion to adopt the Nepotism Policy, seconded by Commissioner Keyser. Commissioners Cornine, DeSimone, Dugan Jr. and Keyser were in favor. Commissioner Dugan Sr. was against.

NEW BUSINESS: Commissioner Keyser had a question on the SOP about County Dispatch regarding in-service, out of service, standbys, etc. Commissioner Keyser reported that the other day when there was a gas leak and someone in the firehouse had all units stand by at the firehouse. Commissioner Keyser asked how he was going to know who was at the firehouse. Chief Martin reported that this is an attempt by the County to cut down on radio talk. Chief Martin reported that the county only wants to know that apparatus is responding and then has arrived at the scene.

Commissioner Keyser asked if the District was still waiting on uniforms to come in. Chief Martin confirmed that the District is still waiting on parts of the uniform order. Commissioner Keyser asked if the District has been waiting for almost 7 months. Chief Martin thought it had been longer on some items and reported that some of the career staff do not like the fit of the new uniforms so other options are being sent to choose from for this year's uniform allotment. Commissioner Dugan Sr. asked if it would help to look for another vendor. Chief Martin felt that the District would need to wait for orders regardless of which vendor they choose because vendors are not keeping stock on hand for small operations.

Commissioner Keyser reported that the steel doors that were put up going into the Engine room were never painted and asked if they should be painted with any paint that the District has on hand. The Board felt that it was not a high priority but if we have paint and someone wants to take it on that is fine.

Commissioner DeSimone asked if the District only had 3 individuals doing inspections. Chief Martin reported that there are only 3 individuals doing inspections because that is who they have been distributed to and his understanding was that they would be distributed to other inspectors as needed. Chief Martin noted that the only other inspectors that the District has are the other 2 career officers. Commissioner DeSimone asked why 2 of the inspectors have high numbers and the other one does not. Chief Martin felt that was a question for Lt. McGuinness since he decides who does the inspections.

Administrator Schultz reported that he would like to start looking at a SAFER grant for recruitment and retention. Administrator Schultz reported that there is a webinar next week from Sen. Booker's office about the grant and what items would be covered. Administrator Schultz reported that the District has previously used Millennium for grant writing with much success but the district would need to solicit 3 quotes for grant writers. Commissioner Cornine asked if this was something that District 3 go in on with District 2 to share the cost. Administrator Schultz felt there could be an advantage to that. The Board asked Administrator Schultz to solicit bids for grant writers. Commissioner Cornine reported that he will work with Administrator Schultz about reaching out to District 2 to see if they are interested.

Commissioner Keyser asked if the District was proceeding to sell Truck 33 on various platforms. Administrator Schutz reported that it would be listed on GovDeals along with letting a list of vendors know it is available. Administrator Schultz reported that a market valuation will be done to determine the minimum bid.

REMINDERS:

The next Regular Meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners will be held on Thursday, April 4, 2024 at 7:00 P.M.

The next Joint Fire Prevention Board Meeting will be held on Thursday, June 6, 2024 at 6:30 P.M. at the District 3 Firehouse.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Ms. Atkinson asked why the Board meeting were not posted on the electronic sign out front. Deputy Administrator Hark Jr. reported that he will get better at ensuring they are posted.

RESOLUTIONS: Commissioner Dugan Jr. asked that the following resolutions be considered under consent agenda.

Commissioner DeSimone read Resolution 24-03-21-40 authorizing a COE for Per Diem EMT be extended to Zachary Villari.

Commissioner DeSimone read Resolution 24-03-21-41 authorizing a COE for Per Diem EMT be extended to Eric Miller.

Commissioner DeSimone read Resolution 24-03-21-42 appointing Junior Fire Volunteer Cordasco Reckart.

Commissioner DeSimone read Resolution 24-03-21-43 amending the Cap Budget Resolution as per the DCA.

Commissioner DeSimone read Resolution 24-03-21-44 authorizing the sale of Fire Aerial Apparatus.

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Commissioner DeSimone read Resolution 24-03-21-45 to enter into executive session. Commissioner Keyser made a motion to introduce the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Dugan Sr. All were in favor.

The Board went into closed session at 8:40 p.m.

Personnel matters were discussed, and action will be taken.

The Board came out of closed session at 9:40 p.m.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 9:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by

Mary Lou DeSimone, Secretary