

March 7, 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 7, 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. McGuinness, FF Gilson, FF DiGiacomo, FF Ujfalussy, and Mr. Waldron were also in attendance.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: None.

CORRESPONDENCE: None.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES:

The minutes from the February 15, 2024 Regular Meeting were reviewed.

Amendments to the Previous Minutes: None.

Commissioner Keyser made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 15, 2024 Regular Meeting, seconded by Commissioner Dugan Jr. All were in favor. Commissioner Dugan Sr. abstained.

The minutes from the February 22, 2024 Special Meeting were reviewed.

Amendments to the Previous Minutes: None.

Commissioner Keyser made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 22, 2024 Special Meeting, seconded by Commissioner Dugan Jr. All were in favor. Commissioner Dugan Sr. abstained.

The minutes from the February 1, 2024 Executive Session were reviewed.

Amendments to the Previous Minutes: None.

Commissioner Keyser made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 1, 2024 Executive Session, seconded by Commissioner Dugan Jr. All were in favor. Commissioner Dugan Sr. abstained.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER: Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that this will be a very tight budget year for the District. Commissioner Dugan Sr. distributed a recommended Temporary Procurement Policy document and asked the Board to review the document and let him know of any proposed changes so it can be discussed at the next meeting. Commissioner Dugan Sr. indicated that the policies outlined in the document will help the District control spending this year.

Commissioner Dugan Sr. distributed the February 2024 financial reports and indicated that the accounts highlighted in yellow on the P&L indicate that the line is over budget based on the percent of year that has passed and items highlighted in red indicate that the account has exceeded the annual budget.

Report of Fire Commissioner Board Committees and Chief of Department:

CHIEF'S REPORT: Asst. Chief Martin submitted his Bi-Monthly report on March 6, 2024.

Chief Martin reported that it has been a light 3 weeks and hopes the trend will continue.

Commissioner Keyser asked about the status of Ambulance 32 repair. Deputy Administrator Hark Jr. reported that there will be an update under old business.

EMS: Commissioner Keyser indicated that he had no report but there was something he would like to discuss in Executive Session.

BUDGET: Commissioner Keyser asked how the Board was going to proceed with purchasing and financing the new ambulance. Commissioner Dugan Sr. believed that Administrator Schultz is working with Mr. Braslow on it. Administrator Schultz reported that the Board would make a down payment and the 1st payment for the financed amount would start in the 2025 budget. Commissioner Keyser asked what the down payment would be. Administrator Schultz reported that the approved down payment is \$35,000. Commissioner Keyser asked what the interest rate would be and how long the Board is going to finance it for. Administrator Schultz felt that the ambulance should be financed for the shortest duration that is feasible. Administrator Schultz reported that the interest rates on financing have been between 5.5% and 7.9% and noted that the District will have to bring in the lowest interest rate when it goes to Local Finance. Administrator Schultz reported that he is still getting financing rates from other lending institutions and noted that a shorter length loan would result in less finance charges overall. Commissioner Keyser felt that the District should go with a shirt

duration loan because in 3-4 years the District will need another ambulance based on current trending and in 6-7 years the District will be looking at another piece of Fire apparatus. Administrator Schutz reported that he discussed the need for the District to get in a better financial position to make capital purchases.

Administrator Schultz noted that the last capital purchases that the District made since Engine 34 have all been cash purchases. Administrator Schultz stressed that minimizing spending this year will help with the financial position. Administrator Schultz reported that any payment on the ambulance next year is already approved because the residents approved the purchase of the ambulance.

Commissioner Keyser reported that he would like to see the District cut another 2% from the budget to facilitate building up the savings account for capital purchases. Commissioner Dugan Sr. felt that the reason the District is in this position is two-fold; the first thing is that inflation has gone up and the second thing is that the District has taken money out of savings the last couple years to supplement the budget instead of asking the residents for more money.

Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the District asked the residents for a lot this election but he is not against asking for supplemental monies for the budget in the future but not asking for as many things at once.

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

NEGOTIATIONS: Commissioner Keyser had no report but indicated there were things to discuss in Executive Session.

LIAISON TO THE VOLUNTEERS: Commissioner Cornine reported that he compiled a form to be filled out at the end of each Board meeting outlining information that should be disseminated to the members at the next Volunteer Meeting. Commissioner Cornine reported that topics to be covered on the form include District initiatives, Status on the firehouse & apparatus, training, grants, shared services, public engagement & social media, recognition to the volunteers, operational acknowledgements received, status of any incentives, and what we are doing as far as recruitment and retention. Commissioner Cornine felt that was a good way to facilitate back and forth communication between the District and the volunteers. Commissioner Keyser noted that Cpt. Costello has been doing a lot for recruitment and retention with all the training drills that he has been running.

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS: Nothing to report.

APPARATUS/EQUIPMENT AND MAINTENANCE: Commissioner Keyser asked for clarification that the C. F. Services invoices being paid tonight represent all of the annual apparatus maintenance. Chief Martin reported that it represents a good portion of the annual maintenance.

INSURANCE: Nothing to report.

BY-LAWS: Nothing to report.

WEBSITE: Up to date. Commissioner Cornine reported that social media posts have indicated that the residents do not know who the Board and Chief are and he asked that the website include a brief biography of the Board members and Chief Martin so the residents are aware who everyone is.

PLANNING COMMITTEE: Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that there is not much to plan about with the building but he has some ideas that he is working on to make the sleeping quarters more comfortable. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that when he is ready he will bring the ideas before the Board for discussion. Commissioner Cornine asked if Commissioner Dugan Sr. felt that it would be worthwhile to put together a committee of shareholders similar to when consolidation discussions were being held. Commissioner Dugan Sr. felt that the Planning Committee should still be intact to look into small modifications to better utilize the building. Commissioner Dugan Sr. asked if the District was able to accept either donated items or monetary donations. Administrator Schultz reported that any monetary donations need to be included in the budget. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reiterated that once the Planning Committee has more information they will bring the ideas before the Board. Commissioner Desimone reported that last time the Planning Committee did not share the information about the proposed new firehouse with all the Board until right before the residents were informed and she hoped that there would be more frequent updates going forward. Commissioner Cornine felt that a committee that involves more people might be beneficial.

LIASON TO EXEMPTS: Nothing to report.

RECORDS RETENTION: Nothing to report.

LIAISON TO HANOVER TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE: Commissioner Keyser reported that he is going to reach out to the Township Committee or Committeeman Cahill because it has been a year since talks began about the nuisance alarms and the Districts have not received anything.

OLD BUSINESS: Commissioner Keyser asked for clarification on the volunteer parking spaces because he thought that based on previous discussions that spots were going to be marked off for volunteer parking when events were held at the firehouse, not that there would be permanent parking for volunteers.

Commissioner Keyser felt that the parking lot is practically empty 90% of the time and the volunteers should be able to walk across the parking lot to the building. Mr. Waldron clarified that when he brought up the dedicated volunteer parking spots at the last meeting they would be for *responding* volunteers and part of the reason was safety. Commissioner Keyser felt that the volunteers did not need dedicated spots and there have not been marked spots in years. Mr. Waldron felt that there has been marked spots in the past. Commissioner Desimone felt that maybe the first row of parking could be reserved for volunteers. Commissioner Cornine reported that he is familiar with parking lots at a few facilities and there are marked spots with the intent of having someplace for volunteers to safely put their car if a call goes out during an event. Commissioner Cornine felt it was a fantastic idea but he would leave it up to the Chief and operations. Chief Martin reported that the first 3 spots next to the engine bays have been designated as volunteer parking but the temporary signs on the poles were blown away. Chief Martin reported that he liked the idea of designated spots but the Board needs to decide how they will be marked. Commissioner DeSimone suggested painting the markings in the parking lot. Commissioner DeSimone noted that the light outside the engine bay door is out. Commissioner Cornine suggested asking the DPW to make inexpensive signs to use for a test run.

Commissioner Cornine asked for the status of Ambulance 32. Administrator Schultz reported that A 32 had another accident and because the new damage is in the same area as the previous damage, it should require no additional repair since the doors are already being replaced. Administrator Schultz reported that the accident was reported to the insurance company in case there is a claim from the other party. Administrator Schultz reported that he will coordinate the repair with Lt. Belott in the hopes of bringing in the new ambulance before the repair so the District will not be down an ambulance. Administrator Schultz noted that the County has not responded to inquiries about a loaner ambulance. Chief Martin reported that the County does not usually do this because of the difficulty of identifying and reimbursing for the insurance on the loaned ambulance.

Commissioner Cornine noted that the Procurement Policy was briefly discussed earlier. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the Board does not need to discuss this tonight, just read the amended policy that was distributed and send

him any comments or changes. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that one of the changes is that each lieutenant will be responsible for keeping track of how much of the budget has been spent year to date.

Commissioner Keyser reported that the District will not be purchasing a new ladder truck and does not have the funds to repair the current Truck 33 so the Board had previously decided to sell Truck 33. Commissioner Keyser felt that the Board needs to move forward with the sale. Commissioner Cornine noted that Truck 33 is out of service permanently, is not currently insured, and the estimated repair bill was \$50,000. Commissioner Dugan Sr. asked if a committee could be formed to look into the cost of refurbishing Truck 33. Chief Martin reported that the work group looked into refurbishing Truck 33 and the cost would be over \$1 million. Chief Martin reported that the difference in cost to refurbish versus buying new was minimal. Chief Martin reported that because the ladder truck is 23 years old the representatives could not guarantee that all the electronics would be compatible so the entire electronics system would need to be replaced. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the District might consider getting a used or refurbished ladder truck in the future. Commissioner Keyser made a motion to move forward with the sale of Truck 33, seconded by Commissioner DeSimone. All were in favor. Administrator Schultz reported he would begin the process and look into which option will allow the highest sale price. Administrator Schultz reported that he would also research what the minimum bid should be.

Commissioner Cornine asked Chief Martin to contact neighboring departments to see if there are any ladder trucks available for a potential MOA to house it here.

Chief Martin reported that he left a pamphlet for each Board member from a company that handles everything regarding physicals for emergency services, including Buscio. Chief Martin reported that the company has 2 locations, the closest being in Wayne. Chief Martin reported that if this is something that the Board is considering, he is sure that they will come in and give a presentation. Commissioner Keyser reported that currently the members can go to their own doctor or FastER for their physical. Deputy Administrator Hark Jr. clarified that volunteers can go to FastER, their own doctor, or opt out, but the career staff must go to FastER. Deputy Administrator Hark Jr. noted that new appointments and return to work physicals must be done at FastER also. Commissioner Cornine asked if the District could have more than one medical provider. Administrator Schultz confirmed that the District could have more than one medical provider. Commissioner Cornine asked if anyone had any questions about the upcoming resolution appointing FastER as a medical provider. There were no questions.

NEW BUSINESS: Commissioner Cornine reported that each Board member received a copy of the amendment to the Employee Review Form. Commissioner DeSimone reported that a box for *Not Applicable* was added to each reviewable item in case that item is not applicable to that employee. Commissioner Keyser made a motion to accept the amended Employee Review Form as the District form for employee appraisals, seconded by Commissioner Dugan Jr. All were in favor.

Commissioner Cornine reported that he gave the Administrators a few forms to handle motor vehicle accidents. Commissioner Cornine noted that the forms are borrowed, tried and true, and provide documentation if an employee is hurt during a motor vehicle accident. Commissioner Cornine asked that the Board members review the forms so they can be discussed at the next meeting. Commissioner Keyser reported that he liked the idea and he liked that a police report was made for the last accident. Commissioner Cornine reported that these forms outline the procedures to take if there is an accident.

Commissioner Keyser reported that on February 24th he and Deputy Administrator Hark Jr. attended the Boy Scout Court of Honor and presented 2 Eagle Scouts with District resolutions honoring them. Commissioner Keyser recommended that the District continue to present these resolutions at the Court of Honor instead of having the Scouts come to a Board meeting for the presentation.

Commissioner Keyser reported that there was money put in the budget for the cap on Unit 30 and felt that the District should move forward with this since the vehicle bed is sometimes used for tools that should not be kept out in the elements. Commissioner Cornine felt that if it is in the budget and needed then it should be acted on.

REMINDERS:

The next Regular Meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners will be held on Thursday, March 21, 2024 at 7:00 P.M.

The next Joint Fire Prevention Board Meeting will be held on Monday, March 11, 2024 at 6:30 P.M. at the Whippany Firehouse.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: None.

RESOLUTIONS:

Commissioner DeSimone read Resolution 24-03-07-30 appointing Medical Provider; FastER Urgent Care. Commissioner Keyser made a motion to introduce the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Dugan Sr. All were in favor. Commissioner Cornine noted that Administrator Schultz stated earlier that the District can appoint more than one medical provider so if the Board finds another option at a later date they can act on it then.

Commissioner DeSimone read Resolution 24-03-07-31 appointing Per Diem EMT Waldron. Commissioner Keyser made a motion to introduce the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Dugan Sr. All were in favor.

Commissioner DeSimone read Resolution 24-03-07-32 appointing Volunteer Perrone. Commissioner Keyser asked if the applicant had Firefighter 1 and how long they had been a firefighter. Administrator Schultz confirmed that the applicant had FF1 and has been a firefighter for 4 months at Lebanon Township. **Commissioner Dugan Jr. made a motion to introduce the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Dugan Sr. All were in favor.**

Commissioner DeSimone read Resolution 24-03-07-33 accepting the resignation of EMT Prachthausser. Commissioner Keyser made a motion to introduce the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Dugan Sr. All were in favor.

Commissioner DeSimone read Resolution 24-03-07-34 appointing Volunteer EMT Zattor. Commissioner Keyser made a motion to introduce the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Dugan Jr. All were in favor.

Commissioner DeSimone read Resolution 24-03-07-35 authorizing a COE to Jr. Fire Volunteer Cordasco. Commissioner Keyser made a motion to introduce the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Dugan Jr. All were in favor.

Commissioner DeSimone read Resolution 24-03-07-36 setting pay rates for certain employees. Commissioner Keyser felt that only 2 of the 3 employees are included in the resolution and that all 3 should be included. Commissioner DeSimone agreed. Administrator Schultz recommended that the Board move on this resolution and discuss the 3rd employee situation in Executive Session. **Commissioner Dugan Sr. made a motion to introduce the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Dugan Jr. Commissioners Cornine, Dugan Jr. & Dugan Sr. were in favor. Commissioner Keyser was against. Commissioner Desimone abstained.**

Commissioner DeSimone read Resolution 24-03-07-37 authorizing Grant Application. Commissioner Keyser made a motion to introduce the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Dugan Jr. All were in favor.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Commissioner DeSimone read Resolution 24-03-07-38 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 8:00 p.m.

Personnel matters were discussed, and action will be taken.

The Board came out of closed session at 9:23 p.m.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by

Mary Lou DeSimone, Secretary