

January 16, 2025 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 16, 2025 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 Jr., Michael Dugan Sr. and Gary Keyser were present.

Administrator Schultz, Deputy Administrator Hark Jr., Deputy Chief Costello, and Hanover Township Committeeman Cahill were also in attendance.

DEPART FROM NORMAL AGENDA: The Board departed from the normal agenda and relocated to the Engine Bay. Commissioner Cornine administered the oath of office to Asst. Chief McGuinness while his Grandmother held the Bible. The Board congratulated Asst. Chief McGuinness and invited family & friends to stay and enjoy some refreshments.

The Board returned to the normal agenda at 7:08 P.M.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: None.

CORRESPONDENCE: None.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES:

The minutes from the December 19, 2024 Regular Meeting were reviewed.

Amendments to the Previous Minutes: Commissioner Keyser reported that under the New Business discussion of a proposed traffic study, the minutes should read Morris Township not Morris Plains.

Commissioner Dugan Jr. made a motion to approve the amended minutes from the December 19, 2024 Regular Meeting, seconded by Commissioner Keyser. All were in favor.

The minutes from the January 2, 2025 Regular Meeting were reviewed.

Amendments to the Previous Minutes: None.

Commissioner Keyser made a motion to approve the minutes from the January 2, 2025 Regular Meeting, seconded by Commissioner Dugan Jr. All were in favor.

The minutes from the December 5, 2024 Executive Session were reviewed.

Amendments to the Previous Minutes: None.

Commissioner Dugan Sr. made a motion to approve the minutes from the December 5, 2024 Executive Session, seconded by Commissioner Dugan Jr. All were in favor. Commissioner Keyser abstained.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER: Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the District is on a temporary budget and cannot exceed 14% of the budget. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that he would like to extend the procurement policy that the Board put in place in 2024 until at least May 1, 2025. Commissioner Keyser made a motion to extend the 2024 procurement policy until May 1, 2025, seconded by Commissioner Dugan Sr. All were in favor.

Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that he had an updated December 2024 P&L since a few more 2024 invoices were received. Commissioner Dugan Sr. noted that this means 2024 expenses were 108% of the budget. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that as of today the District had assets of \$237,727 with a payroll coming up next week. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the District is running off EMS income for everything outside payroll and this will continue for at least the first half of the year.

Report of Fire Commissioner Board Committees and Chief of Department:

MONTHLY REPORTS: Deputy Chief Costello distributed his monthly report. Deputy Chief Costello reported that he and Deputy Administrator Hark Jr. met about getting interest on the volunteer EMS side and noted that the way the shifts are set up is probably an issue. Deputy Chief Costello reported that he is pushing forward with a couple of Junior EMS candidates.

Deputy Chief Costello reported that he has just reissued the Probationary Handbooks to all probationary personnel and gave them a deadline to complete the handbook.

Deputy Chief Costello reported that he would like to go through the Junior Member guidelines to deal with some of the challenges encountered over the past year with scheduling and ensuring correct supervision.

Deputy Chief Costello reported that the volunteer engineer positions were posted and hoped he will get some interest in them soon.

Deputy Chief Costello reported that the Fire Co. brought up an issue when a new employee comes in to the Fire District they are not automatically made a member

for the fire Co. Deputy Chief Costello noted that in the past District employees were automatically made Fire Co. members but that this was stopped somewhere down the line. Deputy Chief Costello reported that the Fire Co. would like to reinstate the District staff being automatically members for the Fire Co. The Board agreed that the process should be reinstated and allow the employee to opt out if they want to. Deputy Administrator Hark Jr. reported that this would just require an additional line on the resolution for new hires stating they would also become Fire Co. members. Deputy Chief Costello reported that he would also go back to existing staff to ensure all are invited to join the Fire Co.

Deputy Chief Costello reported that in preparation for Asst. Chief McGuinness's promotion, they met and went through coordination of tasks. Deputy Chief Costello reported that he recommended that Asst. Chief McGuinness take the position of Chief 1 and he will be Chief 2 for communication purposes.

Deputy Chief Costello noted that Rapid Intervention was discussed at the last meeting and the fact that District 3 does not have the manpower for a team. Deputy Chief Costello reported that Asst. Chief McGuinness has spoken to our Mutual Aid jurisdictions and they are in favor of District 3 still responding to Rapid Intervention events and they will decide what they would like us to do, either RIC or Engine Company. Deputy Chief Costello reported that he was concerned that District 3 would get eliminated from assignments but this solution will keep the District on assignments. Deputy Chief Costello noted that our District had engaged with District 2 about forming a joint RIC unit but concerns were raised about both sets of staffing out of Town at the same time.

Asst. Chief Costello reported that the new manpower tone is still in process and is tied in with updating the District's run cards. Asst. Chief Costello reported that the run cards are updated for a few of reasons; one, to fill some gaps and voids to streamline some things, two, adding in a manpower tone on all of the alarms, and ultimately when Whippany's ladder comes in they need to be switched out from an engine to a ladder.

Deputy Chief Costello reported that he issued an order clarifying the District's internal apparatus response order so that it is clear which apparatus should respond to each different type of call. Deputy Chief Costello felt this will add consistency to responses while leaving leeway for the officers to use judgement in some instances.

Deputy Chief Costello reported that with the promotion of Asst. Chief McGuinness and the adjustments that he is making, the Fire District organization chart will be reissued for both compensated and volunteer staff.

Deputy Chief Costello reported that he has started going through Power DMS to get a feel for where documents are located and has come up with a new folder structure that documents will be moved into. Deputy Chief Costello reported that a review committee will be formed in the future to go through everything to get rid of documents that are old / outdated, update documents that need to be updated, and find things that need to be added. Deputy Chief Costello noted that this will be a long-term project.

Deputy Chief Costello reported that he would like to start another apparatus committee based on his concerns of Engine 34 nearing the end of its life. Deputy Chief Costello reported that the committee will look into the cost of refurbishing the Engine versus the cost of replacing it with a new / used piece of apparatus. Deputy Chief Costello acknowledged that the cost cannot be supported in this budget cycle but felt that the District needs to know what they want so when the time comes.

Deputy Chief Costello reported that he went through the Rt. 24 call history from 2024 and there were 77 calls, the majority were during the evening rush hour. Deputy Chief Costello reported that the majority of the calls were for car accidents but there were also car fires and overheating and a few special calls. Deputy Chief Costello reported that this information can be used for whatever route the District is going to go with on the Rt. 24 issues. Commissioner Keyser asked Deputy Chief Costello to pass the information on to Administrator Schultz.

EMS: Commissioner Keyser reported that he is looking at the EMS billing system with regards to how much money the District is losing by not pursuing balance billing for patients outside the District.

BUDGET: Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the Board adopted the 2025 Budget earlier tonight and the election will be on February 15, 2025.

PERSONNEL: Commissioner DeSimone reported that the Board would need an Executive Session tonight.

NEGOTIATIONS: Nothing to report.

LIAISON TO THE VOLUNTEERS: Commissioner Dugan Jr. reported that there was a meeting on January 13, 2025. Commissioner Dugan Jr. reiterated that the

intake procedure needs to be updated to include ensure new employees are also made members of the Fire Co.

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS: Nothing to report.

APPARATUS/EQUIPMENT AND MAINTENANCE: Commissioner Dugan Jr. reported that Ambulance 38 is out of service and Ambulance 32 is in the process of being painted.

INSURANCE: Nothing to report.

BY-LAWS: Nothing to report.

WEBSITE: Up to date.

PLANNING COMMITTEE: Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the committee tried to schedule a meeting this week but it did not work out. Commissioner Dugan Sr. noted that the committee is still in a holding pattern until after the election because any plans are dependent on if the referendum passes or fails and if the District gets a grant that was applied for. Commissioner Dugan Sr. clarified that if the referendum passes there are a few minor things that the District may be able to do to improve the firehouse and if the District is awarded the grant there is another set of plans for improvements to the building. Commissioner DeSimone asked who else was on the Planning Committee. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that Lt. Belott, EMT Waldron, Administrator Schultz, and Deputy Administrator Hark Jr. are also on the committee.

LIASON TO EXEMPTS: Nothing to report.

RECORDS RETENTION: Nothing to report.

LIAISON TO HANOVER TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE: Nothing to report.

OLD BUSINESS: Commissioner Keyser asked if there was any new information on the lot rental with the Post Office. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that he is still looking into all the possibilities but felt that the annual rent should be increased in the meantime since it appears that there has been no increase in over a decade. Commissioner Dugan Sr. asked if the Board thought that increasing the rent to \$10,000 a year sounded good. Commissioner DeSimone felt that this was a fair number. Commissioner Dugan Sr. noted that if the referendum fails then the district may have to entertain selling the lot. Commissioner Desimone felt this should only happen as a last resort.

Deputy Administrator Hark Jr. reported that the District has heard from Mr. Giorgio of Hanover Township regarding the letter to the DOT about the Rt. 24 incidents and he suggested that the letter should be a joint letter signed off on by the two Districts and the Township requesting that the Senators Bucco and Pennacchio petition the DOT to determine traffic safety protocols.

Deputy Administrator Hark Jr. reported that the transition to the new ERS provider should start in the next few weeks. Deputy Administrator Hark Jr. reported that the District had discussed switching the email server to something a little more current last year and the District hopes to move to Office 365 this year.

Commissioner Cornine asked if there was any other Old Business. There was none.

NEW BUSINESS: Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the District has a quote to replace the air brakes on Engine 34 for a little over \$9000 and he is going to get a couple more quotes before the District decides on the repair. Commissioner Keyser noted that the District has a standing policy that not just anyone can work on fire apparatus. Commissioner Dugan Sr. acknowledged that this is something to be considered in any decision.

Commissioner Cornine asked if there was any other New Business. There was none.

REMINDERS:

The next Regular Meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners will be held on Thursday, February 6, 2025 at 7:00 P.M.

A Special Joint Fire Prevention Board Meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 21, 2025 at 7:00 P.M. at the District 3 Firehouse.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: None.

RESOLUTIONS:

Commissioner DeSimone read Resolution 25-01-16-05 accepting the resignation of Per Diem EMT Kuzemczak.

Commissioner DeSimone read Resolution 25-01-16-06 accepting the resignation of Jr. Firefighter Cordasco.

Commissioner DeSimone read Resolution 25-01-16-07 appointing Per Diem EMT Wittnebert.

Commissioner DeSimone read Resolution 25-01-16-08 offering a COE to Junior EMS Cho.

Commissioner DeSimone read Resolution 25-01-16-09 offering a COE to Junior EMS Dave.

Commissioner DeSimone read Resolution 25-01-16-10 offering a COE to Volunteer EMT Laviola.

Commissioner DeSimone read Resolution 25-01-16-11 approving an MOU with HTPD on RTF.

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Commissioner DeSimone read Resolution 25-01-16-12 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 7:35 p.m.

Personnel matters were discussed, and action will be taken.

The Board came out of closed session at 7:39 p.m.

RESOLUTIONS:

Commissioner DeSimone read Resolution 25-01-16-13 setting the salaries for certain employees. Commissioner Dugan Sr. made a motion to introduce the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Keyser. All were in favor.

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

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

Respectfully submitted by

Mary Lou DeSimone, Secretary