

November 4, 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 4, 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 and for John Hark, grandfather of Fire Co. President James Hark Jr.

ATTENDANCE: Commissioners Steven Cornine, Mary Lou DeSimone, Michael Dugan Sr., Michael Dugan Jr., and Robert O'Hare were present.

Chief DiGiorgio, Administrator Schultz, FF Ujfalussy, Fire Co. Lt. Costello, and Committeeman Cahill were also in attendance.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: None.

CORRESPONDENCE: None.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES:

The minutes from the October 21, 2021 Regular Meeting were reviewed.

Amendments to Previous Minutes: None.

Commissioner Dugan Jr. made a motion to approve the minutes from the October 21, 2021 Regular Meeting. Commissioner DeSimone seconded the motion. All were in favor. Commissioner Cornine was abstained.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER:

Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that there are some big-ticket items included in the list of checks that the Board is authorizing tonight and asked the bookkeeper all the expenses were included in the October 2021 financials that were distributed to the Board. The bookkeeper reported that any invoice that was dated October was included in the financials but that the invoice for the ladder truck repair was dated November 1 and is therefore not included.

Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the District is still operating within budget, having expenses at 76% of the budget through 83% of the year.

Report of Fire Commissioner Board Committees and Chief of Department:

CHIEF'S REPORT: Chief DiGiorgio distributed his Bi-Monthly report on October 29, 2021 and updated it today.

Chief DiGiorgio highlighted the following updates to his report.

Chief DiGiorgio thanked the Fire Co. and Career staff who worked alongside Morris Township Fire Dept. for the Lowes Fire Prevention display. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the event was very well attended with the exception of children. Chief DiGiorgio thanked Lt. McGuinness for putting together the Fire Prevention program for the month of October. Chief DiGiorgio noted that Lt. McGuinness was assisted by a couple of the members through the month. Chief DiGiorgio reported that information on the number of children who participated in the program will be in Lt. McGuinness's monthly report.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that as the Board is looking at potentially modifying the Supplemental Terms and Conditions for EMTs, the Board should have a game plan for any changes ready before they meet with the EMTs.

Chief DiGiorgio asked if the Board had any progress on reviewing the internal affairs document prepared by Asst. Chief Martin. Commissioner DeSimone reported that she has been reviewing it but that it is pretty intense and wants to make sure that she and the Board are comfortable with it before moving forward. Commissioner O'Hare reported that he is about halfway through the document.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that he forwarded an email from Mr. Gorgio in relation to local government services and a grant that is out there right now for the consolidation. Chief DiGiorgio reported that State funding is being offered to look at shared services and consolidations and this time it includes fire districts. Chief DiGiorgio thought that the grant is open through January 2022. Chief DiGiorgio noted that if this is something that the Board would like to explore, that this is something that Millennium could help the District with. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he is willing to take on the project with the support of the Board and District 2. Chief DiGiorgio asked the Board to review the forwarded email and do some research on it and see who the players are that are willing to work on the consolidation process at the States level. Chief DiGiorgio noted that there has been a lot of conversation about this and if the Board wants to approach District 2, the opportunity to move forward is here now. Commissioner Dugan Sr. felt

that it was definitely worth pursuing and asked Chief DiGiorgio to have Millennium look into the grant to see if there are any requirements that the project be further along than we currently are in the process. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the League of Municipalities conference is coming up and this is usually a hot topic so some individuals nicknamed the Czars of Consolidation will probably be there for him to connect with. Chief DiGiorgio reported that if there are any seminars on this topic, he is also willing to attend them to get more information. Chief DiGiorgio felt this was the best opportunity to start having these conversations. Commissioner O'Hare asked if the conference was next week. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the conference is in two weeks. Commissioner Desimone asked for clarification that the deadline for applying for the grants is in two months. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the deadline was January 22, 2022 so he will try to do some research and get back to the Board with the information at the next meeting. Chief DiGiorgio felt that this was worth looking into even if the District 2 Board was not interested. Chief DiGiorgio asked the Board to look at the information sent from Mr. Giorgio while he researched the grant opportunity and they could discuss this again at the next meeting.

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

Commissioner DeSimone noted that Chief DiGiorgio did not include monthly call volume numbers from last year for comparison with the current year numbers in his report. Chief DiGiorgio apologized for the oversight. Commissioner DeSimone reported that she still cannot tie out to the call numbers in the report and asked if Chief DiGiorgio could show her how they are derived after this meeting. Chief DiGiorgio agreed to meet later tonight.

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

EMS: Administrator Schultz reported that there has been discussion about the fact that while call volume is going up, EMS revenue has been going down. Administrator Schultz reported that he is starting to get a little concerned about the process and thinks that the EMS committee should meet to discuss this. Administrator Schultz reported that he is reaching out to Coronis to ensure that everyone is on the same page and make sure that everything is getting

transmitted correctly. Administrator Schultz noted that the District also needs to ensure that Coronis is a SOC1 audited company as required by the District RFP. Administrator Schultz noted that Revenue Guard was a SOC1 audited company but does not know if Coronis, which acquired Revenue Guard, is compliant. Administrator Schultz reported that if Coronis is not a SOC1 audited company, the District will need to terminate the contract because the accountant will not allow us to contract with an unaudited company. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the bookkeeper did tell him that October EMS income was very light and he questioned Revenue Guard. Chief DiGiorgio reported that Revenue Guard reported that the billing system was down for 9 days in September which resulted in uneven deposits in October. Commissioner O'Hare noted that he looked at the call volume numbers and noticed public assistance and lift assist calls which are EMS calls which do not produce income. Commissioner O'Hare reported that this is something that needs to be looked at for the potential to skew the numbers. Administrator Schultz reported that he was looking at the transport numbers and that while the District is not back to where they were, they are getting closer, so the EMS revenue process should be looked at. Chief DiGiorgio noted that year to date there were 134 EMS calls answered by mutual aid because the District was unavailable to answer the calls. Chief DiGiorgio reported that increased staffing will allow the District to answer these calls in the future. Commissioner Dugan Sr. felt that a good number of the mutual aid calls were transports because a person will not wait the extra time for mutual aid otherwise. Administrator Schultz felt that this would account for about \$45,000 in EMS income but felt that the Board is addressing this with staffing and having a 3rd ambulance. Chief DiGiorgio reported that FF Ujfalussy just ran the October 2020 call numbers and there were 127 EMS calls and 49 Fire calls. Chief DiGiorgio noted that this means the District is up 35 EMS calls from last year and up 16 Fire calls from last year.

BUDGET: Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that he would defer to Administrator Schultz to give an update on the 2022 Budget. Administrator Schultz reported that the budget has been forwarded to the accountant for review to ensure the budget is within the State guidelines. Administrator Schultz reported that the accountant will also be utilized to input the data the District has developed. Administrator Schultz reported that he is working to answer some questions that the accountant sent him this afternoon and the District should have the budget back and ready to be introduced at the November 18 meeting. Administrator

Schultz reported that there will be no need for a Special Meeting because the District is not going to exceed the cap nor a capital spending plan that requires voter approval at this point. Administrator Schultz felt that the District could have the budget hearing at the second meeting of December. Administrator Schultz reported that if anything comes up this timeline will allow for a Special Meeting if needed. Administrator Schultz suggested that there be a budget meeting next week to go over the 2021 projections and make sure that the District is not colliding with the 2022 budget. Administrator Schultz reported that the 2022 budget is an austere budget but addresses staffing issues and equipment purchases that have been kicked down the road for a while. Commissioner O'Hare asked if there would be a 2% tax increase. Administrator Schultz reported that the budget comes in at the 2% cap but there are items that are excluded from the cap such as health care and pension costs. Administrator Schultz reported that the District pension liability next year increased by \$40,000. Administrator Schultz reported that the total tax increase came out to 4 ½% which is in line with last year. Commissioner Dugan Sr. thanked Administrator Schultz and everyone who worked on the budget.

PERSONNEL: Nothing to report.

NEGOTIATIONS: Commissioner Cornine reported that the committee is still working on the MOA. Administrator Schultz asked for a brief Executive Session.

Chief DiGiorgio noted that there was talk of members of the Board or representative for the Board meeting with part-time and Per Diem staff and asked what group was going to meet with them and if there was a time chosen for the meeting. Commissioner DeSimone felt that the meeting was going to occur fairly quickly. Commissioner O'Hare felt that Commissioner Dugan Sr. was going to spearhead that as head of the Budget Committee. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that a meeting will be put together for the beginning of the week. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he would let the staff know.

LIAISON TO THE VOLUNTEERS: Nothing to report.

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS: Commissioner O'Hare asked Administrator Schultz for an update on the telephone tree issue. Administrator Schultz reported that the telephone tree is currently being configured and if everything comes together

properly it should be ready next week. Administrator Schultz noted that it should be easier to navigate and that the dialer system will have its own extension.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that in anticipation of the new Rover App platform, the monitors in the ambulance bay and ladder bay that were not working were replaced with other monitors that were in the firehouse. Chief DiGiorgio reported that once Rover is set up the goal is to put it in the firehouse. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he will bring it up at the Officers Meeting and Fire Co. Meeting but he is pretty sure that Rover has a lot more benefits than what the district is getting from IAmResponding. Chief DiGiorgio noted that IAmResponding costs about \$750 annually while Rover is fully supported and licensed by the County. Commissioner O'Hare reported that he read about it and it sounds pretty good. Chief DiGiorgio felt that it was like having the CAD in the palm of your hand.

APPARATUS/EQUIPMENT AND MAINTENANCE: Nothing to report.

INSURANCE: Administrator Schultz reported that he got some paperwork back from Benchmark identifying where the Workers Compensation increases were and while it answered some questions it led to more questions. Administrator Schultz reported that he and Chief DiGiorgio will be asking them to clarify how they derived some of the numbers because they do not jive with what they have. Administrator Schultz noted that the premium adjustment will be paid while this is disputed to ensure that coverage continues. Administrator Schultz reported that the District will have to find a new insurance company in July 2022 because Benchmark is pulling out of New Jersey due to new State mandates for Workers Compensation. Administrator Schultz reported that the District will be put in assigned risk category and that the 2 biggest carriers are Travelers and NJ manufacturers.

BY-LAWS: Commissioner DeSimone reported that the Board has before them the second reading of the amended By-Laws. Administrator Schultz reported that there was a resolution before the Board tonight to approve the amended By-Laws if no one has any questions. The Board was comfortable with the amended By-Laws.

WEBSITE: Up to date.

PLANNING COMMITTEE: Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the committee is in the process of hiring a structural engineer to look over the building and the engineer that the District normally uses does not do this type of work. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the engineer has referred him to someone who does this type of work and he will reach out to him. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the District is going to have the building evaluated to ensure that it is structurally sound after the work with the tie rods and if the building can support some of the Planning Committee proposed renovations.

LIASON TO EXEMPTS: Nothing to report.

RECORDS RETENTION: Nothing to report.

LIAISON TO HANOVER TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE: Committeeman Cahill reported that he will follow up with Mr. Giorgio about the potential grant for consolidation. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he asked Mr. Giorgio for an updated copy of the Townships Employee Review form and Mr. Giorgio said that the Township is using the 2012 form. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the Township is in the process of updating the Policies and Procedures Manual which would include new versions of the Employee Review form. Chief DiGiorgio reported that Mr. Giorgio is supposed to send him a Probationary Review Form for someone coming off probation that has been updated since 2012 but he has not received it yet.

CONSOLIDATION: Nothing to report.

OLD BUSINESS: Commissioner O'Hare asked Chief DiGiorgio the status of the new hires. Chief DiGiorgio reported that on October 22 Candidates 1, 2, & 3 were notified of the conditional offers of employment via resolution and letter. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he and Lt. Belott met with the three candidates on October 26 to give them the employee packets and review the Districts expectations and goals. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the candidates were also issued dates for their physicals, which were held on October 28 & 29 and the District is waiting on the results. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the candidates' Psychological exams are 2 parts with the first part being held yesterday and the 2nd part is set for tomorrow. Chief DiGiorgio felt that if the process stays on track, the appointment date would be the next meeting on November 18 and the candidates start date would be November 29. Chief DiGiorgio reported that they would be on a 12-hour shift and Lt. Belott will be assigned to 4 12-hour shifts on

Monday thru Thursday to train the candidates. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he and Lt. Belott have a plan for the candidates' goals for the first four days and plans for the subsequent 2-3 weeks before the new year. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he met with the 4th candidate on Tuesday, as recommended, to discuss with him the hiring process, the decision of the Board, the budgetary constraints, and the possibility of a mid-year hire. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the District is just waiting for the results of the physical, psychological exams, and fingerprinting for the first three candidates. Commissioner DeSimone asked for clarification that the candidates all know not to give notice to their current employers until Chief DiGiorgio gives them the green light. Chief DiGiorgio confirmed that they knew this. Commissioner DeSimone asked if the start date could be affected by any of the candidates being required to give a certain number of weeks' notice to their current employers. Chief DiGiorgio felt that if the appointments happen on November 18, the candidates would be able to give enough notice to their current employers and be able to start on November 29.

Commissioner O'Hare asked Administrator Schultz the status of the impairment training. Administrator Schultz reported that he still has to get some documents over to Mr. Trimboli, who is currently busy with the MOA. Administrator Schultz reported that Mr. Trimboli has to advise what exactly has to be included in the training.

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

NEW BUSINESS: Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that this is not really business but he wanted to thank Lt. Costello for all he does. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that he hears him out a lot, more than even his normal duty crew, and he wanted to thank Lt. Costello for this.

REMINDERS:

The next regular meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners will be held on Thursday, November 18, 2021 at 7:00 P.M at the firehouse.

The next Joint Fire Prevention Board Meeting will be determined.

The Holiday Tree Lighting is scheduled for Saturday, November 27, 2021 at 6:00 P.M. at the Cedar Knolls Fire Station.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: None.

RESOLUTIONS:

Commissioner Cornine read Resolution 21-11-04-108 amending the By-Laws.

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Commissioner Cornine read Resolution 21-11-04-109 to enter into executive session. Commissioner Dugan Jr. made a motion to introduce the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Dugan Sr. All were in favor. The Board went into closed session at 7:42 p.m.

Personnel matters were discussed, some action on contractual matters will be taken.

The Board came out of closed session at 8:10 p.m.

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 8:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by

Steven Cornine, Secretary