

## **October 19, 2017 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 October 19, 2017 in accordance with the Public Meeting Act of 1975, Chapter 231.

**ATTENDANCE:** Commissioners Robert Callas, Peter DeNigris, Michael Dugan and Tom Quirk were present. Commissioner Maria Florio was absent.

Chief DiGiorgio, Administrator Schultz, Asst. Chief O'Hare, Lieutenant Belott and FF Ujfalussy were also in attendance.

**SWEARING IN CEREMONY:** Commissioner Dugan suspended the regular agenda for a Swearing In Ceremony.

Chief DiGiorgio administered the oath of office to the following Career Personnel: Probationary Firefighter/EMT Stephen G. Gilson.

Commissioner Dugan announced that the Board would continue with the Agenda at 7:04 p.m.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** None.

**CORRESPONDENCE:** Commissioner Dugan reported that the Board had received a copy of the letter from Chief DiGiorgio thanking Hanover Township Superintendent Brian Foran for the use of the vac truck for the confined space rescue training that was held in Madison.

### **APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES:**

**The minutes from the October 5, 2017 Regular Meeting were reviewed. Commissioner Callas made a motion to accept the minutes from the October 5, 2017 Regular Meeting. Commissioner DeNigris seconded the motion. All were in favor. Commissioner Florio was absent.**

**REPORT OF THE TREASURER:** Commissioner DeNigris reported that the Board received \$336 from the collection agency for the month of September. Commissioner DeNigris reported that the 2018 budget process would begin on

October 27<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 a.m. He asked that all 2018 budget requests be submitted before then.

Commissioner Quirk made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report, seconded by Commissioner Callas. All were in favor. Commissioner Florio was absent.

**Report of Fire Commissioner Board Committees and Chief of Department:**

**CHIEF'S REPORT:** Chief DiGiorgio distributed his Bi-Monthly Report prior to the meeting. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the former Ambulance 38 chassis is ready to be picked up in North Plainfield. Two people will be sent down early next week to drive it back to the firehouse. Once the chassis is back, the Board can move forward with putting it up for auction. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he received pictures of the current Ambulance 38 and indicated that it should be delivered by the end of next week after some testing and last minute adjustments are completed. Chief DiGiorgio has requested an invoice from VCI so that a check will be ready when the ambulance is delivered. Chief DiGiorgio has requested VCI's assistance in obtaining a certificate of ownership which is required because of the new chassis. The ambulance will also need to be registered, and inspected.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that there is a Morris County Communications Center User Meeting set for November 16<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. at the County Com Center. Chief DiGiorgio indicated that he would like to attend since it has been awhile since the last meeting. Unfortunately this conflicts with a Board of Fire Commissioners Meeting. Commissioner Quirk indicated that he did not have a problem with Chief DiGiorgio attending the User Meeting.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that he and Administrator Shultz are planning to attend the Tuesday / Wednesday session of Municipalities in November

**EMS:** Nothing to report.

**BUDGET:** Commissioner DeNigris distributed the September Cost Reports before the meeting. Commissioner DeNigris indicated that the same lines continue to be over budget. Commissioner DeNigris reported that in total the costs are within budget but that he would be requesting authorization to make budget transfers for a few lines at the next meeting.

**PERSONNEL:** Commissioner Callas reported that there were two issues that needed to be discussed in closed session.

**NEGOTIATIONS:** Commissioner Quirk reported that the Board would need to go into closed session to discuss contract negotiations.

**LIAISON TO THE VOLUNTEERS:** Commissioner Dugan reported that he attended the Fire Co. Meeting last week. Commissioner Dugan discussed the need to move the hose card trailer from under the tent so that vehicles could be parked under the tent this winter. Commissioner Dugan reported that since the trailer has to be registered and insured, the Fire Co. indicated that they would like to donate the trailer to the Board. Commissioner Dugan indicated that the hose cart would be permanently mounted on the trailer. The Board agreed to accept the donation provided that the Fire Co. writes a letter to the Board indicating that they are donating the trailer. Commissioner Dugan reported that the Fire Co. is trying to locate the certificate of origin for the trailer.

Commissioner Dugan reported that a memo on staffing was distributed to the Board. Commissioner Dugan indicated that Shirley Bergen expressed concern about the fact that the Fire Co. was a little light on signups for the recent Open House. Chief DiGiorgio asked Commissioner Dugan at the Fire Co. Meeting if it would be alright if the Career Staff could be brought in for PTO straight time to help with staffing. Commissioner Dugan indicated that he did not have a problem with that. Commissioner Quirk indicated that this was a reflection on the Board and the correct decision. Asst. Chief O'Hare stated that the Fire Co. planned to hold an Open House every year from now on. Commissioner Callas felt that career staff should attend the Open House each year and that any cost should be included in future budgets.

Commissioner Dugan reported that the old siren is still out under the tent and that he told the Fire Co. that the Board wants to get rid of it. A few months back the Board told the Fire Co. that the siren was theirs but has subsequently found a letter stating that the Board owns the siren. Commissioner Dugan told the Fire Co. that they could do whatever they wanted with the siren as long as it was removed from under the tent. The Fire Co. indicated that they will try to donate it to a historical society first. If it cannot be donated then it will be sold.

Commissioner Dugan indicated that he gave the Fire Co. until November 14 to remove the siren. If they cannot get rid of it by then, it will be scrapped.

Commissioner Dugan will inquire about removing the siren on Countrywood so that it can also be disposed of.

Commissioner Dugan reported that the leftover slate from the new roof is also under the tent. Chief DiGiorgio reported that Lieutenant Belott suggested it be used to replace the roof on the shed. The Board agreed. Chief DiGiorgio thanked FF Ujfalussy and Lieutenant Belott for getting the tent and the shed cleaned out.

### **BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS:**

**Roof Project:** Administrator Schultz reported that the letters have been sent to Bondex. Alden Bailey is aware that he has been approved to complete the roof project and as soon as a crew becomes available they will start the work.

### **2017 Building Improvements**

**Sign Project:** Administrator Schultz reported that he received word that the permits are ready and he will send someone to pick them up tomorrow. Administrator Schultz said that work should begin next week and take about four or five days to complete.

**Parking Lot Lights:** Chief DiGiorgio reported that Crotty Electric was here to update the timer on the parking lot lights because we were having some issues with it. The timer has been fixed but there were still two lights that remain out because the ballasts are bad. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he is holding off on replacing the ballasts until Crotty provides us with a quote for changing to LED lights. Crotty is also going to give the Board a quote on putting in lights to shine on the bell.

**APPARATUS/EQUIPMENT AND MAINTENANCE:** Chief DiGiorgio reported that the new loaner ambulance is back from VCI after having some mechanical issues. The ambulance was towed back to the firehouse on October 6 where VCI picked it up, repaired it and delivered it back to the firehouse. Commissioner Callas asked if VCI would be paying for the towing. Chief DiGiorgio said that he would speak to VCI about reimbursing the Board for the cost of the towing.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that the annual hose testing was completed this past Tuesday and repairs to the failed hose have been scheduled.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that Ambulance 39 received four rear tires, new rear shocks and two suspension air bags.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that the ladder truck should go out for annual maintenance within the month.

**INSURANCE:** Nothing to report.

**COMMUNICATIONS:** Nothing to report.

**BY-LAWS:** Nothing to report.

**WEBSITE:** Nothing to report.

**PLANNING COMMITTEE:** Commissioner Callas reported that he and Commissioner Quirk would like to meet with Chief DiGiorgio and get a status report on the plan to share assets with Whippany.

**LIASON TO EXEMPTS:** Nothing to report.

**RECORDS RETENTION:** Nothing to report.

**LIAISON TO HANOVER TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE:** Commissioner DeNigris reported that he was told that a contract to sell the Whippany Firehouse was very close to being signed but he does not know who the buyer is.

Commissioner DeNigris reported that the Whippany Fire Committee, the people who are negotiating on behalf of the firehouse, is looking to refinance their loan. They would like to go through the county because the county can do all the legwork and they would get a lesser interest rate. The town is evaluating if they want to be a cosigner or not.

**OLD BUSINESS:** Chief DiGiorgio reported that there has been progress regarding the purchase of a replacement Engine 35. Administrator Schultz reported that he had a discussion with Mr. Braslow today. Administrator Schultz had gotten a quote from Car & Safety for the engine along with the two quotes discussed at the previous meeting. Mr. Braslow stated that as long as the Board is comfortable with accepting one of these quotes, they may proceed.

Administrator Schultz reported that as long as Commissioner DeNigris is comfortable with purchasing the engine outright for the quoted price then the Board can proceed. A tentative schedule would be to have a Special Meeting on November 25 from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m. and then to get certified with the state to be put into the February election. Administrator Schultz reported that if the Board makes a \$256,000 down payment in March 2018, then Pierce would give the

Board a \$10,000 credit on the price. Commissioner DeNigris asked for clarification on the purchase price. Administrator Schultz said that the price will be \$489,246 if purchased in 2018. Commissioner DeNigris indicated that there was currently \$733,000 in the Management bank account and that cost of the new ambulance will be taken out of that account this year. Commissioner DeNigris felt that the Board should be able to purchase the new Engine 35 with the remaining monies as long as the Board does not decide to take on any other large projects. The Board agreed that it made sense to purchase the engine outright. Commissioner Callas asked if the Special Meeting could be held on the same day as the Tree Lighting. Commissioner Dugan stated that a Special Meeting was held at last year's Tree Lighting. Commissioner Dugan made a motion to hold a Special Meeting on November 25, 2017 from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m. or as needed for the purposes of allocating funding for the 2018 capital budget. Commissioner DeNigris seconded the motion. All were in favor. Commissioner Florio was absent.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

Commissioner Quirk reported that Dale Cowley from Whippany Fire Department held an "Are You Ready?" class for the seniors last month. There is another class scheduled for next Wednesday from 12:30 – 2:30 p.m. Commissioner Quirk asked the Board if Fire District 3 would send a career person to the class to answer any questions. The class will go over generator safety, safety around downed power lines, smoke detectors, etc. Chief DiGiorgio agreed to send Lieutenant Belott.

Administrator Schultz reported that the Board has received an estimate to upgrade the phone tree.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that he would like to re-announce the per diem announcement. Chief DiGiorgio said that in light of the recent discussions on the salary range scales, he would like to modify the per diem job announcement to indicate that the salary is \$17 / hour to \$19.50 / hour. The current salary scale for per diem employees has the starting salary as \$17 / hour if the employee has a certification but the starting salary is \$15 / hour without the certification. The maximum salary is \$19.50 / hour. Chief DiGiorgio stated that many per diem employees who are not certified when they start working, receive the certification within a few months of starting and are then moved up to the \$17 /

hour salary. Chief DiGiorgio felt that this modification would make the position more attractive to prospective employees. Commissioner DeNigris stated that this would in essence change the starting salary and that has not been approved by the Board at this time. Chief DiGiorgio felt that the necessary recruitment drive would not be successful if the starting salary was listed as \$15 / hour because this is significantly less than what surrounding districts are offering. Since employees are required to get the certification if they accept the position, Chief DiGiorgio felt that announcing that the starting salary is \$17 / hour would at least help make the recruitment drive more successful. Commissioner DeNigris felt this was wrong since the starting salary could be \$15 / hour for uncertified candidates and that the Board has not discussed changing the salary range yet. Chief DiGiorgio stated that he is not looking to change the salary range but to announce the existing salary range for a candidate with certification as opposed to the salary range for candidates with or without certification. Commissioner Callas asked if we could announce an attractive salary but not state what the specific salary was in the announcement. Chief DiGiorgio felt that the salary range should be stated in the announcement and that he would explain to the candidates how they got a specific salary when they come in for an interview. Chief DiGiorgio stated that the announcement with the \$15 / hour starting salary did not result in many inquiries and therefore there was no opportunity to explain the current salary range. Commissioner DeNigris still felt that announcing the starting salary at \$17 / hour was paramount to changing the starting salary and should not be done since the Board had not approved a salary increase. Commissioner Dugan made a motion to change the starting salary as of tonight to \$17 / hour. Commissioner Callas seconded the motion. Administrator Schultz reported that he has been in discussions with Commissioner DeNigris and Chief DiGiorgio about the salary range policy and that resulted in proposed modifications. Administrator Schultz stated that he has not had a chance to calculate how the proposed changes will affect the 2018 budget or to present these calculations to Commissioner DeNigris. Administrator Schultz felt that it would not be a hasty to change the starting salary without knowing the implications. Commissioner Quirk recommended modifying the announcement to indicate that the starting salary is \$17 / hour with the necessary certification. Chief DiGiorgio read the current announcement and said he now felt that the specific salary range portion should be eliminated and leave it as progressive

salary. Chief DiGiorgio stated that the specifics would be explained if / when a candidate inquired about the position. Chief DiGiorgio asked if the Board was amenable with eliminating the specific salary range in the announcement and working on changing the salary range policy for 2018. Commissioner Dugan withdrew his previous motion. Commissioner Quirk made a motion to redact the specific salary range line in the per diem job announcement. Commissioner Callas seconded the motion. All were in favor. Commissioner Florio was absent.

Administrator Schultz reported that there was a discussion about inviting Mr. Braslow to the Joint Fire Prevention Board Meeting on November 13, 2017 at 6:30 p.m. to discuss the moving of the elections. Administrator Schultz felt that the discussion would take more than the allotted half hour since the Regular Meeting is scheduled to start at 7 p.m. Administrator Schultz emailed the Joint Board a copy of 1690, which is a 23 page document, and felt that the discussion with Mr. Braslow should be rescheduled to allow the Joint Board to read and digest the document. Commissioner Dugan reported that Whippany has already extended the invitation to Mr. Braslow. Commissioner Dugan has spoken to Commissioner Mihalko about the possibility of the Joint Meeting running overtime and he did not have a problem with it.

The next regular meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners will be held on Thursday, November 2, 2017 at 7:00 P.M.

The next scheduled meeting of the Joint Fire Prevention Board is Monday, November 13, 2017 at 6:30 P.M. at the Whippany Firehouse.

The Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony will be on Saturday, November 25, 2017 at 5:00 P.M.

A Special Meeting will be held on November 25, 2017 from 2:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. for the purpose of voting on 2018 Capital Expenditures.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** None.

**RESOLUTIONS:** Commissioner Callas read Resolution 17-10-19-81 appointing Volunteer Member Gerardo Ilaria. Commissioner Dugan made a motion to introduce the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Quirk. All were in favor. Commissioner Florio was absent.



**Commissioner Callas read Resolution 17-10-19-82 voiding certain checks. Commissioner DeNigris made a motion to introduce the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Quirk. All were in favor. Commissioner Florio was absent.**

**Commissioner Callas read Resolution 17-10-19-83 accepting the resignation of Per Diem EMT Gary Howard. Commissioner Dugan made a motion to introduce the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Callas. All were in favor. Commissioner Florio was absent.**

**Commissioner Callas read Resolution 17-10-19-84 authorizing extending a conditional offer of employment for Per Diem EMT to Philip Buono. Commissioner Quirk made a motion to introduce the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Dugan. All were in favor. Commissioner Florio was absent.**

**EXECUTIVE SESSION: Commissioner Callas read Resolution 17-10-19-85 to enter into executive session. Commissioner Quirk made a motion to introduce the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Dugan. All were in favor. Commissioner Florio was absent.**

**The Board went into closed session at 8:12 p.m.**

Personnel matters were discussed. Action will be taken by the Personnel Committee.

**The Board came out of closed session at 10:25 p.m.**

**ADJOURN: A motion was made by Commissioner Callas, seconded by Commissioner DeNigris, to adjourn the meeting. All were in favor. Commissioner Florio was absent. The meeting was adjourned at 10:26 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted by

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Robert Callas, Secretary