

November 16, 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 November 16, 2017 in accordance with the Public Meeting Act of 1975, Chapter 231.

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

Administrator Schultz, Asst. Chief O'Hare, Lieutenant Belott, FF Ujfalussy, Chief's Aide James Hark and Fire Co. Member Craig Vagell were also in attendance. Chief DiGiorgio joined the meeting at 7:50 p.m.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Fire Co. Member Craig Vagell expressed the appreciation of his parents for the quick EMS response they received on numerous occasions this year. Commissioner Callas inquired as to how they were doing and wished them well. The Board thanked Fire Co. Member Craig Vagell for the feedback.

CORRESPONDENCE: None.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES:

The minutes from the November 2, 2017 Regular Meeting were reviewed. Commissioner Callas noted that the Planning Committee report stated that Commissioners Callas and Quirk met with Chief DiGiorgio. It should have stated that Commissioners Callas and Dugan met with Chief DiGiorgio. Commissioner Florio made a motion to accept the minutes from the November 2, 2017 Regular Meeting with the amendment. Commissioner Quirk seconded the motion. All were in favor.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER: Commissioner DeNigris reported that the Financial Reports for the period ending October 31, 2017 were distributed prior to the meeting. Commissioner DeNigris stated that in total the P&L is in line with the budget but there are still certain line items that are significantly over budget. Commissioner DeNigris noted that Overtime and Legal expenses continue to exceed the budget. Class B Uniforms is also over budget. Pensions are over budget due to the catch up payment needed for the DCRP plan. Commissioner

DeNigris also noted that the board has not received the 4th Quarter tax check to date. Commissioner DeNigris noted that the EMS Service Income line will likely exceed budget and he felt this was due to the increasing the charge for transport to \$900. Commissioner DeNigris does not anticipate overrunning the budget.

Report of Fire Commissioner Board Committees and Chief of Department:

CHIEF'S REPORT: Chief DiGiorgio distributed his Bi-Monthly Report prior to the meeting.

EMS: None.

BUDGET: Commissioner DeNigris distributed copies of the proposed 2018 budget prior to the meeting. Commissioner DeNigris noted that the Total Income section showed no change in the City Tax Income line because he does not have the new number yet. Commissioner DeNigris noted that the Town has reported about a \$41 million increase in ratable but there are outstanding tax appeals that may affect the amount of taxes collected. Commissioner DeNigris noted that the EMS Service income budget has been increased to \$540,000 to reflect a full year effect of the increase in price and the collection agency receipts. Commissioner DeNigris said that the other income lines have been modulated slightly up or down with the net increase in projected income of \$22,000 without the new City Tax Income number. Commissioner Dugan asked if Commissioner DeNigris had any idea what the City Tax Income number would be for 2018. Commissioner DeNigris said that if everything goes perfectly there would be a \$50,000 increase in the City Tax Income number for 2018 but that realistically it might be around \$35,000.

Commissioner DeNigris said that he was going to skip over the Salaries section of the 2018 Budget since it would probably require a little more discussion.

Commissioner DeNigris reported that the Appropriations Offset with Revenue is the same every year and is what is received from the State each year. Everything that is received must be spent therefore this is a nonissue.

Commissioner DeNigris reported that the 2018 Budget for Benefits is a direct function of Salaries. Commissioner DeNigris noted that the 2018 Medical Insurance budget was increased by \$3,000 because of potential new hires. Commissioner DeNigris reported that he spoke with our health insurance

representative said that he is expecting about a 15% increase in premiums when the policy renews in April. Commissioner DeNigris said that he increased the budget by \$3,000 to reflect this increase and any potential new hires that would be eligible for health benefits. Commissioner DeNigris reiterated that the other numbers in the 2018 Benefits budget are a function of salary and will change if salaries change.

Commissioner DeNigris reported that the Administrative Expenses budget was increased by \$6,500 with one of the biggest increases in the Inspection Day / Public Events line. Commissioner DeNigris noted that the Inspection Day expense has increased every year and that the District is participating in more public events such as the Tree Lighting Ceremony each year. Commissioner DeNigris reported that the Computer Support Services line is also increasing due to the continued trend to computerize reporting documentation. Commissioner Florio asked if the board has cyber insurance since we keep medical charts and records in our computer system. Administrator Schultz felt that the Board did have cyber insurance but said that he does not remember the amount and he would verify it with VFIS. Commissioner Florio asked if the staff understands about phishing and which emails to not open because your best defense is a good offense. Administrator Schultz noted that there is mandated training. Commissioner DeNigris reported that Legal and Payroll expenses have each been increased by \$1,000 in the 2018 Budget but that most other Administrative Expense accounts have remained the same.

Commissioner DeNigris reported that the 2018 budget for Building and Maintenance Expenses have pretty much remained the same. Commissioner DeNigris noted that the General Building Repairs / Maintenance line could change once the final income number is received.

Commissioner DeNigris reported that the 2018 Budget for Apparatus / Equipment Maintenance expense has decreased \$1,600 because hopefully the new equipment that was purchased will minimize the repair expense.

Commissioner DeNigris reported that the 2018 Budget for Uniforms has been increased by \$1,000 since it appears the 2017 Budget figure was not sufficient.

Commissioner DeNigris reported that the 2018 Budget for Education & Training has been reduced in total by \$4,500. Commissioner DeNigris noted that the

Recruitment & Retention line has been decreased by \$7,000 because some of the plans for this program did not come to fruition.

Commissioner DeNigris reported that the 2018 Budget for Medical / Physicals is about the same because there will be a lot of people who need physicals again next year.

Commissioner DeNigris reported that the 2018 Budget for Dues and Subscriptions was decreased by \$2,450.

Commissioner DeNigris reported that the 2018 Budget for Fire Prevention Bureau was decreased by \$500.

Commissioner DeNigris reported that the 2018 Budget for Non Bondable Equipment Acquisitions was reduced by \$6,500. Commissioner DeNigris noted that some Personal Protection Equipment was purchased this year that should carry us through next year.

Commissioner DeNigris said that the only remaining 2018 Budget expense to discuss was the Salaries section. Commissioner DeNigris noted that what he was about to outline is based on proposals from the Budget Committee meeting and does not reflect his opinion, either pro or con, on the proposals. Commissioner DeNigris reported that the 2018 Budget for EMT Salaries has been substantially reduced because of the proposal. Commissioner DeNigris reported that the proposal would take 2,000 hours of EMS effort and you move it into the Firefighter Personnel line by hiring one full time EMT/Firefighter individual. Commissioner DeNigris reported that if one full time EMT only individual was hired at the current EMT rate of \$19/hour, the full year salary would be \$39,500. Commissioner DeNigris noted that a full time EMT/Firefighter individual would start at \$43,000. Commissioner DeNigris reported that the 2018 Budget for Firefighter Personnel also includes the salary for an additional hire of an EMT/Firefighter that Chief DiGiorgio has requested. Commissioner DeNigris said that Chief DiGiorgio would explain the proposal.

Chief DiGiorgio distributed a handout entitled EMS Shift Coverage. Chief DiGiorgio explained that EMS coverage was needed 24 hours a day for 365 days a year and that two EMTs are needed during this time. This calculates to a total 17,520 hours a year of EMS coverage each year. Chief DiGiorgio further explained

that during 2017 38% or 6,657 of those hours will be covered by volunteers while 62% or 10862 hours will be covered by either per diem or career employees. Chief DiGiorgio noted that if the paid hours were all covered by per diem employees, a budget of \$200,000 would be needed assuming an average pay rate of \$18.50 / hour. Chief DiGiorgio reported that a full time employee works 2080 hours annually. If a per diem employee were to cover these 2080 hours at \$18.50 / hour, they would be paid an annual salary of \$38,480. This figure goes up to \$41,600 if the per diem is paid \$20 / hour and increases to \$47,840 if the per diem is paid \$23 / hour. In comparison, a full time EMT/Firefighter would have a starting salary of \$43,000. Chief DiGiorgio noted the starting hourly rates of pay for some of the surrounding agencies at the bottom of his handout and pointed out that all of them are higher than what the Board is currently paying. Chief DiGiorgio also noted that the Morris Minute Men are going to start hiring per diem employees in 2018. Madison Fire Department is projected to start hiring per diem employees in mid-2018 also. Both of these agencies will have hourly rates of pay that are higher than the Board is currently paying. Chief DiGiorgio noted that this means that the candidate pool will continue to be diminished. Chief DiGiorgio reported that this continues to create challenges for us as we move forward. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the thought process while we were crafting the budget was to take 2,000 hours (2080 hours less 80 PTO hours) out of the Per Diem Salaries line and move it to the Firefighter Personnel line. This would help alleviate the overtime that is currently being paid to the per diem employees by guaranteeing 2,000 hours of coverage a year. Chief DiGiorgio reported that a trial program was utilized in November 2017 that ate up 40 hours / week for three or four weeks and it worked out great. The trial was going to continue into December until Chief DiGiorgio received notification that one full time employee will be out for three months following surgery. This means that the hours that were being covered by a full time employee now need to be covered by per diem employees. In addition, during Christmas week when one of the full time employees is on vacation, the Board will be required to pay overtime to maintain the level of personnel. The hiring of another full time EMT/Firefighter not only reduces the threshold of per diem hours but will allow the flexibility to utilize the individual as a firefighter as needed. Commissioner DeNigris felt that what the Board needs to evaluate is whether they buy into the concept of the proposal. Commissioner DeNigris stated that the proposed budget funds this

proposal and could change depending on what the Board's decision is about the proposal. Commissioner DeNigris noted that 2018 Budget for Overtime was decreased because the need for overtime should decrease. The 2018 Budget for Office Support was increased by 2%. The 2018 Budget for Commissioners salary has been increased by \$1,500. Commissioner DeNigris said that he was against this increase because it is more than the 2% that everyone else is being held to. He did acknowledge that the Commissioner salary has not been raised in quite some time. Commissioner Quirk asked if there was discussion about this. Commissioner Dugan said that it was brought up at the Budget Committee meeting but not discussed at a Board meeting. Commissioner Dugan felt that the commissioners have been putting in a lot of time and deserve to have a raise but that it will be up to the Board to decide. Commissioner Dugan asked what a 2% raise would come out to. Commissioner DeNigris said it would be about \$20. Commissioner Quirk said that he did not see a need for it. Commissioner DeNigris said that in some neighboring districts the commissioners get a stipend for roles that they take on. He stated that a treasurer may get a \$500 stipend each year as an example. The chairman, secretary, etc. would also get varying stipends. Commissioner Callas said that the awarding of stipend would be a bylaws issue and would not be something that could be done tonight. Commissioner DeNigris agreed but said that the Board needs to decide on the salary increase tonight. Commissioner Callas said that the Board should move on with the bigger issues that need to be discussed. Commissioner Florio asked why the Firefighter Personnel budget was increasing by \$62,000 if the cost of an EMT/Firefighter salary was \$43,000. Commissioner Dugan said that the budget reflects the hiring of two EMT/Firefighter personnel. Commissioner Florio asked why it was not going up by \$86,000 then. Commissioner DeNigris explained that the \$62,000 increase is the effect of hiring two EMT/Firefighter personnel and does not reflect the full year salary because they will not be hired as of January 1, 2018. Commissioner Callas said that Chief DiGiorgio presented the hiring of one additional EMT/Firefighter but he did not do a presentation on the need for the second EMT/Firefighter. Chief DiGiorgio said that another 2080 hours would be able to be moved from EMT Salaries with the hiring of a second EMT/Firefighter. Commissioner DeNigris stated that the budget reflects the moving of 2080 hours of EMT Salary to the Firefighter Personnel line plus the addition of another EMT/Firefighter in terms of growth. Commissioner Florio said that the second

MT/Firefighter would however cover another 2080 hours. Commissioner DeNigris agreed but said that he did not reduce the EMT Salary budget by 4000 hours. Commissioner Quirk said that he did not see the need to hire firefighters when the issue seems to be covering EMT hours. Commissioner Dugan stated that he felt it was wise to hire EMT/Firefighters so that they could be utilized as needed. Commissioner Quirk asked if anyone had looked into what a professional EMT would cost as opposed to calculating the salary at the per diem rate. Commissioner DeNigris said that the calculation is what it is currently costing the Board to cover those hours. Administrator Schultz said that Parsippany is the only district in Morris County with a full time EMT and their starting salary is \$45,000 / year. Chief DiGiorgio said that hiring a dual role person will allow you to swing them between roles as needed. Chief DiGiorgio also pointed out that the district has had a difficult time retaining per diem EMTs and is losing them to both full time jobs and other districts that are paying a higher wage. Commissioner DeNigris said that the Board had to keep in mind that the salary is not the only cost of hiring full time personnel. The cost of benefits has to be taken into account also. Commissioner Callas stated that he would like to see a dedicated presentation to the Board by Chief DiGiorgio on the need to hire. Administrator Schultz reminded the Board that the submitted budget has basically five line items, one of which is salaries. The Board can discuss how to allocate the salaries between categories at a later date if they agree on the total salary budget. Commissioner DeNigris said the issue is not the shift in salary but the addition of another full time person. Commissioner Dugan pointed out that the proposed 2018 Budget only has a deficit of \$50,000 and this could be made up by the increase in tax income that is not reflected in this budget yet. Commissioner DeNigris said that the context of the budget is just as important as the balancing of the numbers. Commissioner Florio asked is the Board was saying that they are fine with the shifting of the per diem monies to the full time salary line. Commissioner Quirk state that he is not convinced that this is the way to go. Commissioner Florio then asked Administrator Schultz if the Board could move forward with the 2018 budget the way it is and not spend the budget money if the Board decides at a later date to go in a different direction. Administrator Schultz said the submitted budget has salaries and benefits listed as a single line so that as long as the Board is fine with the total, the details can be decided at a later date. Commissioner Callas said that the Board has responsibility to the

community and the staff to make sure that the district is run in a safe and efficient manner and a responsibility to the taxpayers. Commissioner Dugan stated that the recommendation was made to have Chief DiGiorgio make a presentation to the Board on the proposed hiring and asked when that could happen. Commissioner Callas stated that the presentation should include the current status of the recruitment and retention of the volunteers and per diem employees and how they affect the ability to answer calls. Commissioner Quirk asked if this could be helped by shared services. Chief DiGiorgio said that he and Chief Cortright looked into this and realized that District 2 has noticed that they have the same issues as our district and therefore it would not be prudent to attempt to share services at this point. Commissioner DeNigris asked to continue on with the other 2018 Budget salary items. He stated that there is the addition of a holiday pay line that represents the cost of paying the full time personnel and per diem employees for the 10 holidays per year.

Commissioner DeNigris said that the 2018 Budget reflects a \$52,000 deficit but does not include the new tax income figures. Commissioner DeNigris reported that the other piece of the 2018 Budget is the proposed 2018 Capital Budget. Commissioner DeNigris reported that the Board had previously discussed a new engine for \$495,000. There has been an addition of \$23,000 for an EMS First Response Vehicle that Chief DiGiorgio requested. Chief DiGiorgio reported that this vehicle would be utilized by the volunteer members who respond from home during the overnight hours. This vehicle would be stationed in the volunteer's driveway during their overnight shift and would allow them to respond directly to a call as opposed to coming to the firehouse first. The volunteer would leave the vehicle at the scene should they need to transport someone to the hospital and then the ambulance would bring them back to the scene to retrieve the vehicle on the way back to the fire house. The volunteer would then take the vehicle back to their home. This would reduce response time and make the overnight shift more palatable to volunteers because they would not lose as much time on each call. The daytime on-duty staff would move the vehicle each day to the next night's volunteer. Commissioner Florio asked why they could not drive their own vehicle to the scene. Chief DiGiorgio said that using a district vehicle to respond alleviates some insurance issues that result from using personal vehicles and that personal vehicles are not equipped like district vehicles. Commissioner Florio asked what the pickup truck that was purchased is being utilized for and would it

be able to use this vehicle. Chief DiGiorgio said that the pickup was purchased with the intent to have the plow and is much bigger than the proposed vehicle. Commissioner Florio asked if the pickup truck could be used for a trial run of this program. Chief DiGiorgio said that this would work as long as there was no bad weather in the forecast that required the plow be attached to the pickup. Commissioner Florio asked about the condition of Asst. Chief O'Hare's vehicle and whether it might be better to purchase a new vehicle for him and use his old vehicle for this program. Chief O'Hare commented that a good number of overnight volunteers would not be comfortable driving the pickup even if they were given training. Commissioner Dugan recommended that the new vehicle be purchased for Asst. Chief O'Hare and made a motion to put the cost of the vehicle in the 2018 capital budget. The Board agreed to a 2018 Capital Budget of \$495,000 for the engine and \$23,000 for a response vehicle.

Administrator Schultz said the Special Meeting for the hiring presentation by Chief DiGiorgio would need to be on November 29th or 30th. The Board settled on November 29, 2017 at 6p.m. Administrator Schultz said that he would take care of publishing notification of the Special Meeting.

PERSONNEL: Nothing to report.

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

LIAISON TO THE VOLUNTEERS: Commissioner Dugan reported that the Board received a copy of the Bill of Sale for the trailer and that the Board is still waiting for a letter from the Fire Co. indicating that they are donating the trailer to the Board. Asst. Chief O'Hare noted that this should be a notarized letter. Commissioner Dugan reported that the Board will start the process of getting the trailer registered and insured.

Commissioner Dugan reported that the Fire co. was apprised of the status of the electronic sign project and the parking lot lighting situation.

Asst. Chief O'Hare reported that the fire Co. has contacted the Historical Society regarding the possible donation of the old siren. Asst. Chief O'Hare noted that the Historical Society has not made a decision to date on whether they will be able to accept the old siren because they may not have room for it. Asst. Chief

O'Hare indicated that a decision will be made by December 1. Commissioner Dugan noted that the Countrywood siren still needs to be taken down. Chief's Aide James Hark reported that he is looking into the matter.

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS:

Roof Project: Administrator Schultz reported that he has made a few adjustments to the termination agreement and forwarded it to Mr. Braslow for review. The agreement will be sent to Bondex after Mr. Braslow approves it.

2017 Building Improvements

Sign Project: Commissioner Dugan reported that the sign has been mounted and the wiring and caps on the columns still need to be done.

Administrator Schultz reported that he is working on guidelines for what will be allowed to appear on the sign. It was noted that these guidelines should be included as an amendment to the Policies Handbook. He also noted that the sign will probably not go live until after the Tree Lighting.

Parking Lot Lights: Commissioner Dugan reported that the Board is waiting on a quote for the installation of gooseneck lighting fixtures outside the bays.

Day Room: Commissioner Dugan reported that the molding has been completed and that the renovation is almost complete.

APPARATUS/EQUIPMENT AND MAINTENANCE: Administrator Schultz reported that there was no maintenance to report outside of the fuel issue that necessitated the draining of the fuel lines on the affected vehicles. Administrator Schultz also suggested sending a letter to the Township about the issue and outlining the vehicles that were affected so that the Board has recourse if any of these vehicles develop engine problems in the future as a result of being given the incorrect fuel. Chief DiGiorgio reported that VCI will be paying the bill from Eagle Towing for towing the loaner ambulance.

INSURANCE: Commissioner Florio reported that she did not meet with VFIS because neither Dr. Manis nor Brian was available on any of the original dates that were suggested. There is a tentative meeting scheduled for next Tuesday.

Administrator Schultz reported that the HRA has been renewed for 2018.

COMMUNICATIONS: Nothing to report.

BY-LAWS: Nothing to report.

WEBSITE: Commissioner Florio reported she has observed vehicles failing to yield to emergency vehicles on numerous occasions recently. Commissioner Florio suggested that the public be reminded of the policy either by posting it on the website or sending out an Eblast to Cedar Knolls residents.

PLANNING COMMITTEE: Nothing to report.

LIASON TO EXEMPTS: Nothing to report.

RECORDS RETENTION: Nothing to report.

LIAISON TO HANOVER TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE: Commissioner DeNigris reported that a contract to sell the Whippany Firehouse has been signed by both parties.

OLD BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Commissioner Quirk reported that he spoke with Chief Roddy yesterday about the upcoming Tree Lighting Ceremony. Chief Roddy directed him to Lieutenant Look who stated that Sergeant Carpenter is working that day and that there is ample manpower working the day of the Tree Lighting Ceremony for traffic control. Commissioner Quirk expressed concern that the police might be called away during the event and suggested hiring an officer to ensure that there was coverage. Commissioner Florio asked what the Board did last year.

Commissioner Quirk said that in prior years the Police Department was able to send an officer to help during the event but that it might be worthwhile hiring an officer to ensure that they will be available. Fire Co. Member Vagell noted that it would be nice to know that there will be one or two police officers available since there will be a large congregation of people on the driveway apron that is on a main road. Commissioner Callas asked about the minimum amount of time that the police officer could be hired for. Commissioner Quirk said he was not sure but that it might be three hours. Fire Co. Member Vagell noted that the event would run from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. so a three hour shift would work. Commissioner Callas made a motion to hire a police officer for four hours to direct traffic and

help people cross the street the night of the Tree Lighting Ceremony. Commissioner Quirk seconded the motion. All were in favor. Commissioner Quirk said that he would make arrangement to hire the officer and request a police escort for Santa from the North Pole.

Administrator Schultz reported that the original Special Meeting scheduled for November 25, 2017 needs to be moved to December 2, 2017 due to an additional item that needs to be added to the ballot for the Special Meeting. The reporting requirements of adding this item require that the Special Meeting be moved due to timing issues. Administrator Schultz reported that the 2018 Budget would then be able to be introduced at the December 7, 2017 Board Meeting. Administrator Schultz said that he would publish the Special Meeting announcement tomorrow so that everything is good to go. Commissioner Dugan asked if anyone on the Board had a problem with this and no one had any problem.

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

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

A Special Meeting will be held on December 2, 2017 from 2 p.m. until 9 p.m. for the purposes of voting on 2018 Capital Expenditures.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: None.

RESOLUTIONS: Commissioner Callas read Resolution 17-11-16-88 approving the transfer of Reserved Funds. Commissioner Dugan made a motion to introduce the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Florio. All were in favor.

Commissioner Callas read Resolution 17-11-16-89 authorizing extending a conditional offer of employment for Per Diem EMT to Chris McIvor.

Commissioner Florio made a motion to introduce the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Dugan. All were in favor. Administrator Schultz noted that Mr. McIvor was a volunteer here, left in good standing and is a police officer now in Pequannock. Administrator Schultz said that Mr. McIvor saw the employment ad and is happy to be coming back.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Commissioner Callas read Resolution 17-11-16-90 to enter into executive session. Commissioner Callas made a motion to introduce the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Quirk. All were in favor.

The Board went into closed session at 9:25 p.m.

Personnel matters were discussed. Action will be taken.

The Board came out of closed session at 10:45 p.m.

ADJOURN: A motion was made by Commissioner Florio, seconded by Commissioner DeNigris, to adjourn the meeting. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 10:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by

Robert Callas, Secretary