

**April 16, 2020 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 April 16, 2020 in accordance with the Public Meeting Act of 1975, Chapter 231. This meeting was held on the Zoom.com platform.

The Board observed a moment of silence for all those who had passed due to COVID-19.

**ATTENDANCE:** Commissioners Robert Callas, Michael Dugan Sr., Michael Dugan Jr., Robert O'Hare, and Thomas Quirk were present.

Chief DiGiorgio and Administrator Schultz were also in attendance.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** None.

**CORRESPONDENCE:** None.

**APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES:**

**The minutes from the April 2, 2020 Regular Meeting were reviewed.**

**Amendments to Previous Minutes: None.**

**Commissioner Dugan Sr. made a motion to approving the minutes from the April 2, 2020 Regular Meeting. Commissioner Callas seconded the motion. All were in favor.**

**REPORT OF THE TREASURER:** Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that March 2020 financial reports were emailed to the Board members. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the P&L will highlight expenses that are running over budget in yellow and expenses that have exceeded the annual budget in red.

Commissioner Quirk made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report, seconded by Commissioner O'Hare. All were in favor.

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

**CHIEF'S REPORT:** Chief DiGiorgio said that he hoped everyone present and their families were doing well and enjoying their time home. Chief DiGiorgio gave the following updates pertaining to week six of the pandemic.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that the last few weeks have been extremely challenging for the members and staff, both physically and mentally. This has not been easy for anyone. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the members and staff continue to support each other and work to ensure their own personal safety, their crew's safety and the safety of our community.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that the COVID period began on March 5 with the first Executive Order from Governor Murphy. Chief DiGiorgio reported that there have now been a total of 25 additional Executive Orders since that date.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that our PPE stock continues to be a challenge. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the District has received donations of Tyvek suits and N95 masks, and this combined with backorders being shipped have allowed the staff to remain safe. Chief DiGiorgio reported that cleaning and disinfecting supplies are a challenge to keep in stock.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that the staffing excel spreadsheet has been updated and sent to the Board this afternoon. Chief DiGiorgio noted that the includes one member on self-isolation and an additional employee that tested positive at his other employment and is under quarantine. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the career staff began their 24/48 shifts on April 6. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the career firefighter on duty is assigned as the second EMT on the ambulance on the overnight from 10 PM to 6 AM. Chief DiGiorgio noted that this shift has always been difficult to fill and continues to be so during the pandemic. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the firefighter volunteer members continue to sign up for standby and operational periods and shifts and continue to respond to fire related calls. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the District has not received any interest in the incentive program to date from EMTs in the EMS Division. Chief DiGiorgio reported that openings in shifts are continuing to be monitored by Lt. Belott as standby members continue to sign up for those shifts. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he met with Lt. Belott on multiple occasions to discuss shifts and schedules and have move a part-time EMT into the fill-time EMT position previously held by FF/EMT Sulpy.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that lunch continues to be delivered at 1 PM daily for the staff members and crew in the station to reduce the need for staff to go out to various local establishments for lunch. Chief DiGiorgio reported that donations of food and snacks have been received from local establishments, community, family and friends. Chief DiGiorgio reported that all donations are being recorded in a log so that a list will be available.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that he does not have an exact number of cases transported but will give an update at the end of his report. Chief DiGiorgio reported that an MOU has completed and returned to NJEM Grant. Chief DiGiorgio reported that once the user names are received, the District will begin the application process for reimbursement.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that NJOEMS has issued waivers to allow EMS agencies to educate the public and for patients to stay at home. During a dispatch to a patient's home, crews are provided with guidance and documentation approved by the State and also by Dr. Gluckman to avoid unnecessary transport to the hospital.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that the both the Fire District and the Cedar Knolls Fire Department Facebook pages continue to be updated with information thanks to Craig Vagell and Jess Sainato.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that he previously sent out a memo on suspending any non-essential activities which are in line with the Governors order on social distancing. Chief DiGiorgio reported that this included the Easter Bunny circuit and local birthday party drive byes. Chief DiGiorgio reported that one option that could be explored at the end of the pandemic was a possible open house.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that 100 exam capes and gowns were donated to the NJ Firemen's Home in Boonton last week. Lt. Belott and FF/ EMT Sulpy dropped them off. Chief DiGiorgio noted that the NJ Deputy Chiefs Association reported that the home is in dire need of supplies. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the capes and gowns were for health care workers and not emergency responders so it was a perfect fit for the NJ Firemen's Home.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that the District is continuing to monitor the temperatures of the staff and members at the beginning and end of their shifts.

Chief DiGiorgio reported the following numbers since March 5, 2020:

Requests for EMS service:	209
Total transports:	105
Transports to Morristown Medical:	102
Refusals of medical care:	41
Mutual Aid responses:	21
Patients who met COVID assessment requirements:	60

Chief DiGiorgio reported that six of the 209 requests were cardiac arrests and pronounced on scene.

Chief DiGiorgio concluded his report. Administrator Schultz asked if anyone had any questions for Chief DiGiorgio.

Commissioner O'Hare thanked everyone who has been putting in a lot of time and effort during the pandemic and wanted them to know that the Board is aware and appreciates all that they are doing.

Commissioner O'Hare asked if there was a steady stream of PPE being delivered to the firehouse and if Chief DiGiorgio was confident that we would continue to have enough. Chief DiGiorgio reported that there has not been a steady stream of PPE but that there has always been enough. Chief DiGiorgio noted that some of the staff have been searching out PPE on their own time at Lowes or Home Depot. Chief DiGiorgio reported that PPE supplies are always a concern because the amount needed cannot be anticipated but that for now the need has flattened out.

Commissioner Quirk asked if the District has large backorders and will then have a surplus of PPE. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the vendors that the District deals with do not have PPE in stock and the PPE manufacturers that supply them have been shipping directly to health care organizations. Commissioner Quirk noted any backordered items, including when they were ordered, need to be documented in reimbursement claims. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he will double check that there is specific documentation for all backordered items.

**EMS:** Administrator Schultz reported that he drafted a letter to Revenue Guard asking them to suspend any collection efforts and balance billing for 60 days to allow things to settle down a little. Administrator Schultz asked the Board if they had any problems with this approach. The Board did not have any problem with

it. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he received a letter from Revenue Guard outlining the procedures to document the PPE that EMTs are using because there is an avenue to potentially recoup the cost of some PPE through the insurance billings. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he called Revenue Guard to discuss this and is waiting for a call back. Chief DiGiorgio reported that at the beginning of the pandemic EMT Houser saw the new PPE field in EMS charts and the District has been utilizing the field from the start.

**BUDGET:** Nothing to report.

**PERSONNEL:** Nothing to report.

**NEGOTIATIONS:** Commissioner Callas reported that a resolution pertaining to the MOA between the district and the FMBA will be voted on later tonight.

Commissioner O'Hare asked if any consideration was given to forbidding our fulltime staff from going to alternate jobs. Administrator Schultz reported that the Chief's Order states that employees must take all due caution at any other job similar to those taken here. Administrator Schultz noted that the order states that an employee would need to use PTO if they are required to isolate due to exposure from another job. Administrator Schultz reported that there is a question before the NJ courts about the issue where it is not covered in a contractual agreement and whether it can be enforced by a municipality or district. Administrator Schultz noted that a decision has yet to be made so the District refrain from acting on this to avoid potential liability.

**LIAISON TO THE VOLUNTEERS:** Nothing to report.

**BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS:** Chief DiGiorgio reported that with the approval of Commissioner Dugan Jr. and Commissioner O'Hare, he was able to contract with Greenwood Tree is going to take down some trees on the property. Chief DiGiorgio reported that this will be delayed due to a death in the contractor's family.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that some of the career staff removed the metal fence along the property line to make the trees more accessible.

**APPARATUS/EQUIPMENT AND MAINTENANCE:** Chief DiGiorgio reported that the mechanic has some of the brake parts for Engine 34 and some of the items for the annual maintenance service for the ladder truck.

**INSURANCE:** Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the Workers Compensation issue has been put on hold.

**COMMUNICATIONS:** Nothing to report.

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

**WEBSITE:** Nothing to report.

**PLANNING COMMITTEE:** Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that meetings are on hold.

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

**RECORDS RETENTION:** Nothing to report.

**LIAISON TO HANOVER TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE:** Nothing to report.

**OLD BUSINESS:** Administrator Schultz reported that he spoke with Commissioner Dugan Sr. and Commissioner O'Hare about workers' compensation insurance and it was decided to put the inquiry into other insurance carriers was put on hold until after the COVID-19 operation.

Administrator Schultz reported that he has received and filled out the necessary paperwork to access the portal to apply for FEMA reimbursement. Administrator Schultz reported that he spoke with Commissioner Quirk about reimbursement and are trying to stay ahead of what needs to be done in order to maximize the potential reimbursement.

Commissioner Quirk reported that he received an email about FEMA webinar seminars regarding FEMA reimbursement and he will forward it to Administrator Schultz so he can provide it to the Chief and others. Commissioner Quirk reported that there are new webinars coming in the near future and that the one he watched was long but helpful.

Commissioner Quirk reported that he received another FEMA email that outlines the approval of first responders and others to be reimbursed for hotel stays in order to protect their family should the responder become compromised. Commissioner Quirk reported that he will forward the paperwork to the District.

**NEW BUSINESS:** Administrator Schultz reported that he spoke with Commissioner O'Hare about an issue that he will contact Mr. Braslow about. Administrator

Schultz reported that a bill was introduced to allow municipalities to not pay their obligated payments to fire districts in a timely fashion. Administrator Schultz reported that the senate set the bill aside and he does not anticipate any delay in the quarterly tax payments from the Township. Administrator Schultz reported that he will speak with Mr. Braslow any influence he can exert to allow fire districts to spend monies that they receive for pandemic reimbursement in the current budget year even though the receipt of the monies was not in the budget.

**REMINDERS:**

The next regular meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners will be held on Thursday, May 7, 2020 at 7:00 P.M.

The Joint Fire Prevention Board Meeting will be rescheduled.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** None.

**RESOLUTIONS:**

**Administrator Schultz asked if the Board had any objections to approving the following resolutions by consent agenda. There were no objections.**

**Administrator Schultz read Resolution 20-04-16-42 approving a MOA between the District and the FMBA.**

**Administrator Schultz read Resolution 20-04-16-43 terminating EMT Fawcett.**

**Commissioner Dugan Sr. made a motion to introduce the resolutions, seconded by Commissioner Quirk. All were in favor.**

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:** None.

**ADJOURN: A motion was made by Commissioner Callas, seconded by Commissioner O'Hare, to adjourn the meeting. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted by

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Thomas Quirk, Secretary