

June 18, 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 June 18, 2020 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, in particular Firefighter Frank McKenna who passed away yesterday.

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

Chief DiGiorgio, Administrator Schultz, Lt. McGuinness, Lieutenant McGuinness, and FF Ujfalussy were also in attendance.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: None.

CORRESPONDENCE: None.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES:

The minutes from the June 4, 2020 Regular Meeting were reviewed.

Amendments to Previous Minutes: None.

Commissioner Dugan Sr. made a motion to approve the minutes from the June 4, 2020 Regular Meeting. Commissioner Callas seconded the motion. All were in favor.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER: Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that a preliminary June 2020 YTD P&L was distributed to the Board. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that it did not look like the District was terribly off budget at this point but noted that the organization is only through half the year and there is some money to be made up. Commissioner Dugan Sr. felt that as long as the expenditures and overtime are kept down, the District will be in an okay position, although not where we had hoped to be.

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

Report of Fire Commissioner Board Committees and Chief of Department:

CHIEF'S REPORT: Chief DiGiorgio noted that it was nice to meet in person again even if it was under the conditions required to maintain social distancing. Chief DiGiorgio distributed his Bi-Monthly Report and outlined the following items:

Chief DiGiorgio reported that the Fire & EMS calls are returning to pre-COVID response and transport levels. Chief DiGiorgio noted that the COVID component continues to be identified by District EMS crews.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that the District NJ OEMS License is due to expire June 30th and Lt. McGuinness has been updating the license book. Chief DiGiorgio reported that two items remain to be completed and he anticipates submitting the final items next week. Chief DiGiorgio noted that one of the outstanding items is a new requirement that NJ OEMS wants a medical director to sign off on every one of the District Policies and Procedures.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that Lt. Belott, Asst. Chief Martin and he met to discuss the Fire Division training. Chief DiGiorgio reported that Fire Division training will begin July 1st and Lt. Belott is working on the training schedule. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the goal is hold all of the training outdoors. Chief DiGiorgio reported that six training sessions were held for returning members in Phase 2. Chief DiGiorgio reported that two of the six sessions, which were held on the 2nd floor, were conducted with a maximum of 10 people and the three of the sessions had as little as three people. Chief DiGiorgio reported that all social distancing rules were adhered to.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that the Township of Hanover passed a resolution for outdoor dining requirements and Fire Prevention was given 10-12 of the applications to review. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the applications were approved and most of them are operating. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the Division of Fire Safety provided some guidelines on what they felt was important concerning outdoor dining.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that he collected 10% of the initial penalty from Foster & Co. Chief DiGiorgio noted that the penalty was reduced because they abated their violations.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that 54 of the 60 Life-Hazard Use inspections were completed for 2020 under the direction of Lt. McGuinness. Chief DiGiorgio noted that they are usually completed over an 11-month period. Chief DiGiorgio reported that of the remaining 6 inspections, three are currently closed and do not anticipate opening again.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that four inquiries for EMS members were received via the online portal and Captain Thompson was assigned to contact the potential applicants. Chief DiGiorgio noted that one of the potential applicants is a certified EMT and another was certified but let the certification lapse. Chief DiGiorgio reported that Asst. Chief Martin met with one Volunteer Fire candidate. Chief DiGiorgio reported that Part 1 of the process has been completed and a conditional offer of volunteer employment is before the Board tonight. Chief DiGiorgio noted that part two of the process is the physical.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that all Township events have been cancelled and/or postponed indefinitely.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that on Saturday, June 27, the Recreation Commission and the FMBA will be hosting a free movie night at Bee Meadow Pool. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he will be assigning fire & EMS duty crews to the event.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that it is his goal to have the Ambulance Acquisition Work Group decide on a vendor and have a recommendation to the Board by July 15th. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the updated specs have been received from the bidders so a final price should be part of the recommendation.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that the Data Entry position announcement has been distributed to the membership and staff via email along with the Full-Time EMT announcement.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that Lt. Belott & EMT Sulpy are finalizing the report of members who signed up for Stand-By. Chief DiGiorgio reported that a report of who the members are and the cost to the District for member reimbursement will be sent once this is complete. Commissioner Dugan Sr. asked for clarification that the Stand-By incentive was still going on. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the initial Stand-By incentive program completed on May 30th and is the one he is referring

to. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the next phase of the incentive program will start soon.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that as per the recent notification process, the Personnel Committee was sent a memo of six complaints being investigated along with recommendations. Commissioner Callas asked that the Personnel Committee be provided with the names as part of the notification process. Chief DiGiorgio noted that would work with the Personnel Committee off line on the matter.

Chief DiGiorgio concluded his report.

EMS: Commissioner O'Hare reported that the committee sent a letter to Revenue Guard about reducing their fee percentage of 8% and advising them that the District might be looking into different options. Commissioner O'Hare reported that Revenue Guard offered to reduce the percentage rate to 7.5%. Commissioner O'Hare reported that the committee is thinking about advising Revenue Guard that the District will be doing the RFP. Commissioner Dugan Sr. did not think that knocking off 0.5% is much of a reduction. Commissioner O'Hare agreed and felt that there are other organizations which will offer a much lower percentage fee rate or maybe a tiered structure fee. Chief DiGiorgio noted that if Revenue Guard collects the \$580,000 that was budgeted for this year, the 0.5% reduction would result in about \$2,900 savings for the District.

BUDGET: Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the 2021 Budget process has not started yet but asked everyone to start thinking about items that they would like to see included in next year's budget.

PERSONNEL: Commissioner Quirk indicated that an Executive Session was needed.

NEGOTIATIONS: Commissioner Callas reported that there should be a resolution before the Board tonight approving the MOA with the FMBA and the committee will open up discussions on the new contract soon.

LIAISON TO THE VOLUNTEERS: Nothing to report.

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS: Nothing to report.

APPARATUS/EQUIPMENT AND MAINTENANCE: Chief DiGiorgio reported that the rear brakes were replaced on the ladder truck.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that the annual hose testing was completed today and noted that about ½ dozen lengths were lost.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that Lt. Belott and the staff cleared out the corner behind the tent. Chief DiGiorgio reported that a small red trailer was removed and that the District has no use for the trailer. Chief DiGiorgio asked if the trailer could be listed on Gov Deals and sold. The Board approved.

INSURANCE: Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the District has paid another installment on the workers' compensation policy and is waiting for the results of the annual audit. Administrator Schultz reported that he spoke with the person doing the audit, who confirmed that all the information has been submitted and that the audit was not significantly different from last year. Administrator Schultz reported that the District should find out what the adjusted premium will be in a couple of weeks. Administrator Schultz reported that there is another offer on the table from a second vendor and noted that the District will defer making a decision until the adjusted premium is received from Travelers.

COMMUNICATIONS: Nothing to report.

BY-LAWS: Nothing to report.

WEBSITE: Commissioner Dugan Jr. reported that the website is up to date. Administrator Schultz reported that the vendor performed a system update which resulted in the District being unable migrate documents to the website. Administrator Schultz reported that the vendor estimates that it will take a couple of weeks to fix the issue and in the meantime he has been sending them any documents that need to be posted on the website. Commissioner O'Hare asked if the website had crashed because he tried to get on about a week ago and could not access it. Administrator Schultz reported that it did not crash but maybe this was the time that the vendor was doing the upgrade.

PLANNING COMMITTEE: Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the committee is still waiting to get back together and hoped to have a meeting next week. Administrator Schultz reported that he will reach out to everyone and try to set up a meeting time. Commissioner Dugan Sr. noted that having a plan in place will help with the budget process.

LIASON TO EXEMPTS: Chief DiGiorgio reported that the 2020 Wildwood Convention has been cancelled and the only thing that will be held for the delegates and life members is the caucus. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the delegates and life members will receive their year in grade. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the caucus will likely be held at the Wharton Firehouse where the voting can take place while adhering to social distancing guidelines. Chief DiGiorgio noted that there will be no campaigning, socializing, or refreshments allowed. Chief DiGiorgio that the delegates that go will be reimbursed \$100 from the State Association while the life members will be reimbursed \$50. Commissioner Dugan Sr. asked if there are additional costs for the Board that are associated with the Wildwood Convention. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the Board usually reimbursed the life members for the second half of the reimbursement that the State Association did not cover. Chief DiGiorgio noted that the delegates normally get \$700 for the Wildwood Convention while the life members get \$350 and that historically the Board gives the life members the additional \$350. Chief DiGiorgio suggested that the Board reimburse the life members \$50 each for the caucus this year. The Board agreed to the reimbursement.

RECORDS RETENTION: Nothing to report.

LIAISON TO HANOVER TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE: Commissioner Quirk reported that he received a letter from Mr. Giorgio that effective July 1st, Mayor Francioli will be stepping down. Commissioner Quirk reported that he believes that Deputy Mayor Ferramosca will take over as mayor. Commissioner O'Hare asked if Mayor Francioli would be staying on the Committee. Commissioner Quirk reported that he will be staying on the Committee.

OLD BUSINESS: Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the data entry position has been posted. Administrator Schultz reported that he received an email today from Christina Loscado regarding some training and assistance that is available to the District for the FEMA reimbursement submission. Commissioner Quirk noted that the State Police would still like to be the point of contact for the submission and are willing to help guide the District through the submission process. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he was at a Career Chiefs Conference today and one of the questions that came up was whether any districts had already filed for reimbursement. Chief DiGiorgio reported that Camden City and Bordentown

Township responded that they had filed for reimbursement. Chief DiGiorgio reported that Bordentown Township said that their application got kicked back for overtime and that there was a big back and forth battle about overtime. Chief DiGiorgio reported that FEMA did not understand that Bordentown was backfilling the lost volunteer hours with paid personnel and that the wording on the submission to FEMA for overtime had to be drafted in a very specific way in order for it to be approved. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he has the contact information for the Bordentown Township chief and will request a copy of the overtime letter to FEMA so our District can learn how to word our overtime reimbursement request. Commissioner Quirk reported that FEMA wants to know if the overtime personnel responded to a COVID call and felt that the fact that the Board passed a resolution to cover personnel shortages. Chief DiGiorgio noted that Bordentown Township is fire only and FEMA was confused as to how their overtime was COVID related. Chief DiGiorgio felt that the District will have the advantage of being able to show that the firefighters are also EMTs and riding on the ambulances.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that the Fire Division standby budget will be used to pay the people who volunteer to standby for the nonexistent Crew E shifts. Chief DiGiorgio noted that this includes every Friday night from 10 P.M. until 6 A.M. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the number of standby personnel needed would be determined by how many career staff are working that day and whether any of the staff was being utilized to ride on the second ambulance. Chief DiGiorgio clarified that if no one signs up for standby for any of the Crew E shifts, then the coverage would go back to the normal scramble if a call comes in. Chief DiGiorgio felt that for the first few months, volunteers would sign up because of the incentive, but that after that it will probably drop off. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the Board should think about what the plan will be if only a partial crew signs up for standby instead of the optimal 4 people. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the Board had started to talk about the staffing policies and guidelines and the staffing of Crew E as well as other staffing concerns should be kept in mind during this discussion. Chief DiGiorgio reported that last Saturday there was only one career staff member working with one EMT and since both were assigned to the ambulance, there were no Fire Crews. Chief DiGiorgio asked if the draft of the staffing policies and procedures had been sent to legal counsel for review as was suggested at last meeting. Commissioner O'Hare reported that it did not get sent

to legal counsel yet and asked if the request for standby for the Crew E shifts is being done with more than a couple of days' notice. Chief DiGiorgio reported that this past Saturday, the staffing issue crept up on them and help was not solicited early. Commissioner Dugan Sr. asked if anyone banded out on Saturday. Chief DiGiorgio reported that one of the two scheduled career staff was on their COVID week off and someone banded out on EMS. Chief DiGiorgio reported that Lt. Belott looked at the calendar and worked out all the Crew E shifts that would require standby coverage for the remainder of the calendar year. Chief DiGiorgio reported that Lt. Belott created a Crew E standby shift in EMS Manager and can be used to push out the request for standby volunteers during those shifts. Commissioner Dugan Sr. asked for clarification that one member called in sick on Saturday and one career staff member was on COVID time off. Chief DiGiorgio reported that one career staff was on COVID time off and one EMS staff called in sick because they were required to report to their primary job due to a scheduled protest. Chief DiGiorgio asked for a status on the staffing policies and procedures guidelines being approved. Commissioner O'Hare suggested that the Board take a rigorous look at the plan and report back either way at the next meeting. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the staffing guidelines give a minimum staffing number that the Board deems acceptable and that is what he is looking for. Chief DiGiorgio noted that the Board indicated that the attorney should look at the staffing policy guidelines before they approve it at the last meeting. Commissioner Quirk remembered the comment for legal counsel to review the document but not who was assigned to get it to them. Commissioner O'Hare asked Chief DiGiorgio to send the Board the draft document again for review and that the Board would have a definitive direction for next meeting. Commissioner Dugan Sr. asked for clarification that Chief DiGiorgio knew how and where he could schedule people in the meantime. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he knew. Commissioner Dugan Sr. clarified that overtime needed to be down and that the District would not pay overtime when a FF / EMT was available to ride the ambulance. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he is staying within conjunction to what the Board told him in the memo. Chief DiGiorgio noted that there may be times that there will be overtime, so he did not want to make a generalized statement that there would be no overtime. Commissioner Callas noted that any overtime must be justified. Commissioner Dugan Sr. noted that the Board agreed that they did not want to pay overtime if there was a FF / EMT available to ride

the bus. Chief DiGiorgio noted that he ordered three career staff to work on Sundays so far, and that overtime would need to be paid. The Board agreed that this was acceptable. Commissioner Dugan Sr. wanted assurances that overtime would not be paid when there were one or two FF /EMTs available to ride the ambulance. Chief DiGiorgio noted that if he moved both FF /EMT's on duty to the ambulance, there would be no fire coverage. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that it would be the same scenario as on a Sunday when the District relied on volunteers to come out.

Commissioner Quirk reported that the Procedure for Notifying the Personnel Committee document was sent to legal counsel, who was in agreement with it but suggested putting some references to the Policy Manual on some of the items. Commissioner Quirk reported that he printed off the updated version from the attorney and this is what the District will go by. Commissioner Quirk noted that legal counsel also had some concern that full review of the personnel file has to be done before termination that was part of the Manual.

NEW BUSINESS:

Commissioner Quirk reported that under the Executive Orders, non-contact sporting activities will start on June 22 and contact sporting activities will start on July 6.

REMINDERS:

The next regular meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners will be held on Thursday, July 16, 2020 at 7:00 P.M.

The Joint Fire Prevention Board Meeting will be rescheduled.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: None.

RESOLUTIONS:

Commissioner O'Hare asked if anyone had any objections to voting by consent agenda for the following resolutions. There were no objections.

Commissioner O'Hare read Resolution 20-06-18-55 approving the MOA with FMBA Local 109. Administrator Schultz noted that this MOA represents how the FMBA was willing to step up when needed and should be kept in mind as the Board enters into negotiations on the new contract.

Commissioner O’Hare read Resolution 20-06-18-56 accepting the resignation of S. Fasano.

Commissioner O’Hare read Resolution 20-06-18-57 to make a conditional offer of employment for Per Diem EMT to G. Isler.

Commissioner O’Hare read Resolution 20-06-18-58 to make a conditional offer of employment for Per Diem EMT to M. Bergman.

Commissioner O’Hare read Resolution 20-06-18-59 to make a conditional offer of employment for Volunteer Firefighter to J. Urciuoli.

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Commissioner O’Hare read Resolution 20-06-18-60 to enter into closed session. Commissioner Callas made a motion to introduce the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Dugan Jr. All were in favor. The Board went into closed session at 7:52 P.M.

Personnel matters were discussed. Action will be taken.

The Board came out of closed session at 9:16 P.M.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: None.

RESOLUTIONS:

Commissioner O’Hare read Resolution 20-06-18-61 terminating EMT Stefan Schuele. Commissioner Quirk made a motion to introduce the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Dugan Jr. 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 9:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by

Thomas Quirk, Secretary