

## **May 6, 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 May 6, 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.

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

Chief DiGiorgio, Administrator Schultz, and Capt. Thompson were also in attendance.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** None.

**CORRESPONDENCE:** None.

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

**Approval of the minutes from the April 15, 2021 Regular Meeting were tabled until the next meeting.**

**REPORT OF THE TREASURER:** The bookkeeper distributed the April 2021 financials. Commissioner O'Hare asked the bookkeeper to report on the April 2021 financials. The bookkeeper reported that the District has spent 32% of the expense budget over 33% of the year and that this includes payment of the annual employer pension expense. The bookkeeper reported that some accounts such as overtime were running high but that overall, the District was operating within budget.

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

**CHIEF'S REPORT:** Chief DiGiorgio submitted his Bi-Monthly on May 5, 2021. Chief DiGiorgio noted that he tries to get his report out the Friday before the meeting to give the Board ample time to review it. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the Lieutenants reports are included with his report monthly. Chief DiGiorgio

reported that he asks the Board if they have any questions on the report at each meeting.

Chief DiGiorgio had the following additions to his report:

Chief DiGiorgio reported that nameplates for the new commissioners have been ordered for both the Commissioners Room door and the Commissioners table. or completed.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that he submitted a memo about the Volunteer Fire Division Officer appointments. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the work group for Inspection Night has made the recommendation that the Officers be appointed at Inspection Night. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he will work with Administrator Schultz to get resolutions ready to be read at the next Board meeting and the oaths will be administered at Inspection Night. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he still has to meet with Capt. Thompson to get recommendations for the EMS Division officers and hopes to have them ready for the next meeting also.

Commissioner O'Hare noted that his Chief's report stated that six members have qualified for Exempt Association and asked the Board to have a resolution for the next meeting recognizing that they have reached that status and acknowledge them at the Inspection Dinner also. Commissioner O'Hare asked Chief DiGiorgio to provide Administrator Schultz with the names of the members so that he can prepare the resolution for next meeting.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that he added some pending items to his report that could either be discussed now or at another point in the meeting.

Chief DiGiorgio concluded his report and asked if anyone had any questions. Commissioner DeSimone asked if the District did an exit interview with the person who resigned after a week. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the District has not historically conducted exit interviews and do not have a process set up for it. Commissioner DeSimone felt that the District should start doing exit interviews because this is the second person that has resigned within a week of starting and it is important to find out why. Chief DiGiorgio asked if Commissioner DeSimone had a template to use for an exit interview. Commissioner DeSimone reported that she had a template that she could share. Commissioner DeSimone noted that she was part of the interview team and is curious to find out why he resigned. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he did not have any first-hand feedback

from this person and noted that an exit interview template and a suggestion as to who the exit interview team should be would be helpful in starting the process. Commissioner DeSimone reported that the exit interview is normally performed by one person who is not the direct report of the individual who is leaving. Commissioner Cornine noted that he was interested to know why the individual left also. Chief DiGiorgio asked if Morris Township had an exit interview process. Commissioner Cornine reported that Morris Township did not have an exit interview process. Commissioner O'Hare noted that this is a good idea and that while the individual is not obliged to participate in an exit interview, the District should make the attempt to have one. Chief DiGiorgio noted that an exit interview may not be able to be held face to face because the individual sent an email resigning. Commissioner DeSimone felt that the exit interview could be done by phone.

Commissioner O'Hare asked about the outstanding item on the Chief's report about an FF/EMT being promoted to and inspector. Commissioner O'Hare asked if the District needed another inspector or if when the individual was hired and put in that spot it was meant to be an FF/EMT position. Chief DiGiorgio reported that his understanding from the current negotiations process was that the individual was going to be moved to FF/EMT/Inspector so that there was one inspector on each shift. Chief DiGiorgio felt that this was a negotiated item and would allow the individual to go to the next salary step. Commissioner O'Hare reported that he has not seen the contract but that the Board hopes to have by the next meeting. Commissioner O'Hare asked if the District needed another inspector. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he would like to have an inspector on each shift. Chief DiGiorgio reported that a fire alarm issue came up while this individual was on duty today that the individual was able to work through because they are trained as an inspector and it would be beneficial to have the individual on the roster as an inspector. Administrator Schultz confirmed that there were discussions during the negotiations process about doing this and that budgetarily it is well within the District's means.

**EMS:** Commissioner O'Hare asked Administrator Schultz to bring the Board up to date on the Revenue Guard merger. Administrator Schutz reported that the District received notification after the fact that on April 1, 2021 Revenue Guard was acquired by Coronis, which is a multinational corporation headquartered in

Sykesville, MD. Administrator Schultz noted that they have offices in Ewing, NJ and Newcastle, DE. Administrator Schultz reported that the process raised a lot of questions and red flags. Administrator Schultz reported that the District received a letter about what they called a merger on April 22, but noted that when someone buys a substantial portion of your assets, it is an acquisition instead of a merger. Administrator Schultz reported that the notification included an agreement that Coronis wanted the District to sign and that he forwarded it to Mr. Braslow. Administrator Schultz reported that Mr. Braslow reviewed the document and felt that the District should not sign the agreement because the district is currently in an agreement which should transfer over and that a transfer agreement should be signed. Administrator Schultz reported that he spoke to Mike Pastorino, a consultant who is our representative to Revenue Guard, and he indicated that he also found out about the acquisition after the fact. Administrator Schultz reported that Mr. Pastorino pointed out that the District could always walk away from the agreement but that the agreement may be beneficial to the District because Coronis is a larger corporation and have more resources for data collection and recovering monies. Administrator Schultz noted that the District has not seen any changes yet and that the District just has to keep an eye on the situation. Chief DiGiorgio noted that the EMS Service income through April 2021 is at 30% of the budgeted income.

**BUDGET:** Nothing to report.

**PERSONNEL:** Nothing to report.

**NEGOTIATIONS:** Commissioner O'Hare reported that the District is waiting to get the contract back from attorney review. Commissioner O'Hare felt reasonably confident that the reviewed contract would be received by the next meeting. Administrator Schultz reported that he received an email from the attorney this afternoon stating that he wanted to talk to the District about some of the things in the contract but felt that it was just some verbiage clarification. Chief DiGiorgio noted that if the contract was signed at the next meeting, the District would not have to pay Holiday time for the upcoming Memorial Day holiday.

**LIAISON TO THE VOLUNTEERS:** Chief DiGiorgio reported that there is a Fire Co. meeting scheduled for Monday. Chief DiGiorgio reported that an Inspection Night work group was put together and held a zoom meeting. Chief DiGiorgio reported

that the Fire Co. is looking to get approval to rent a tent for the parking lot and rent additional tables to enable social distancing at the dinner. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the picnic group is settling some of the outstanding questions.

**BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS:** Commissioner O'Hare asked if there was any progress on the bids for painting the firehouse. Administrator Schultz reported that there are two contractors who are not going to be doing the job but are still looking for one who will. Administrator Schultz reported that he spoke with Commissioner Davidson on the matter and he felt that this is not something that the District would be able to have done this year because of the cost. Administrator Schultz reported that he felt the cost would be in the \$30,000 range but that Commissioner Davidson felt it would be more than that. Administrator Schultz noted that the project would have to go out to bid and that prevailing wage would have to be paid.

**APPARATUS/EQUIPMENT AND MAINTENANCE:** Chief DiGiorgio reported that now that the 2021 budget has passed, he has instructed Lt. DeSimone to schedule all the routine 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter maintenance on the apparatus.

Commissioner O'Hare asked if the new ambulance delivery was on target. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he has not gotten an update recently and will reach out to see where the ambulance is on the line.

**INSURANCE:** Commissioner O'Hare asked if Administrator Schultz had run the pared down list of members covered by workers compensation insurance past Chief DiGiorgio. Administrator Schultz reported that he will discuss any discrepancies between his and the Chief's list prior to submitting the list to the insurance company. Administrator Schultz reported that the District is trying to pare down the member list by eliminating individuals who have not been seen in years. Administrator Schultz reported that the District cannot solicit another quote unless the renewal existing company declines the renewal because of the risk category. Administrator Schultz noted that the renewal is not until July and the only item outstanding is clarifying the member list.

**COMMUNICATIONS:** Commissioner O'Hare made the suggestion that the committee be dissolved because it was only created for one purpose awhile ago and there is no longer a need for it. Commissioner O'Hare noted that the only remaining discussion item is communication equipment and it can be handled

under other committees. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he has communication bullet points in his monthly report but has never reported anything to the communications committee.

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

**WEBSITE:** Up to date.

**PLANNING COMMITTEE:** Administrator Schultz reported that a meeting will be scheduled once the new committee assignments are given out.

**LIAISON TO EXEMPTS:** Capt. Thompson reported that there was a meeting last night, which was the first meeting in pre COVID. Capt. Thompson reported that a request was made to get an updated list of people included on the District life insurance policy.

**RECORDS RETENTION:** Chief DiGiorgio reported that the one project is at the point that the data needs to be submitted to the State for destruction approval.

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

**MEMORIAL DAY COMMITTEE:** Chief DiGiorgio reported that he had no further updates.

**OLD BUSINESS:** Administrator Schultz reported that the burned-out lights in the electronic sign have been replaced.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that when Commissioner Davidson returns the Board can discuss the procedure for Commissioner(s) acknowledge the payroll sheet in addition to his signature.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that awhile back the Board discussed having a process for internal affairs or Attorney Generals guidelines as to how internal complaints are going to be handled. Commissioner O'Hare noted that Asst. Chief Martin was looking into this and asked Chief DiGiorgio to reach out to him and get it back in motion. Capt. Thompson noted that the Attorney Generals guidelines should probably be used as a template because they will change a lot and may restrict the Board in a lot of ways. Commissioner O'Hare clarified that he felt that the Board was indeed going to use it as a template.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that there was some discussion about reviewing and updating the District Policies & Procedures Manual because certain things were out of date. Commissioner O'Hare reported that he would give this some thought.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that the annual reviews for non-contractual employees are pending Board approval. Commissioner O'Hare reported that he was led to believe that they were already signed off on and will be done as early as tomorrow. Chief DiGiorgio noted that the 2021 salary increases for the non-contractual employees goes along with this.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that there is still a full time EMT position open and pending. Chief DiGiorgio reported that once things settle down the applications that were collected need to be reviewed. Commissioner O'Hare asked for clarification that there were candidates in the que. Chief DiGiorgio confirmed this and noted that the need was evident in the overtime that is required to fill the openings in the schedule currently. Commissioner Cornine asked if there was action required by the Board for this or any hiring. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the Board has approved the positions and allowed him to recommend a candidate to the Board. Administrator Schultz reported that the process of making a conditional offer of employment to appointing the individual usually takes two meetings to for the background check, drug test, and physical. Commissioner DeSimone asked when the new EMT would be working. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the new EMT would be put in the matrix and work two 12 hour and one 16-hour shift. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the 12-hour shifts could be daytime and the 16 hour would be the Sunday overnight shift which is open.

**NEW BUSINESS:** Commissioner O'Hare reported that the new preliminary Committee Assignments are as follows:

EMS Committee: Commissioners DeSimone and O'Hare

Budget Committee: Commissioners Davidson and Cornine

Personnel Committee: Commissioners Cornine and DeSimone

Negotiations Committee: Commissioners Cornine and O'Hare

Liaison to Volunteers Committee: Commissioners Dugan Jr. and O'Hare

Building & Grounds Committee: Commissioners Dugan Jr. and O'Hare

Apparatus & Equipment Maintenance Committee: Commissioners Cornine and Dugan Jr.

Insurance Committee: Commissioners Cornine and O'Hare

By-Laws Committee: Commissioners DeSimone and Davidson

Website Committee: Commissioners Davidson and Dugan Jr.

Planning Committee: Commissioners DeSimone and Cornine

Liaison to Exempts Committee: Commissioners DeSimone and O'Hare

Records Retention Committee: Commissioners Davidson and Dugan Jr.

Liaison to Hanover Township Committee: Commissioner O'Hare

Commissioner O'Hare noted that if the absent commissioners have a problem with the assignments or want to change, the Board will make those changes at that time.

Chief DiGiorgio noted that each of the lieutenants provide a report at the beginning of each month highlighting updates about each of their responsibilities and may provide the Committee Members with insight into updates for their Committee report. Commissioner DeSimone noted that EMT Mockler also submitted a report and asked if her responsibilities were different than the other FT EMTs. Chief DiGiorgio reported that she has taken the lead on a few projects and that he asked that she keep Lt. DeSimone abreast of the status of the projects. Chief DiGiorgio reported that Lt. DeSimone attaches her report to his monthly report.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that a reminder was sent out that the financial disclosure statements were extended until June 1 for current members.

Commissioner O'Hare reported that he received two emails about training sessions on licensing. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he is probably receiving the emails because he is the licensing holder as the chairman of the Board. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he also received the emails and has pushed them down to his officers.

## **REMINDERS:**

The next regular meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners will be held on Thursday, May 20, 2021 at 7:00 P.M at the firehouse.

The next Joint Fire Prevention Board Meeting is to be determined. Administrator Schultz reported that he sent a list of the new Board to Whippany and is going to



ask them to agree to hold a Fire Prevention Board Meeting at the Cedar Knolls firehouse before the first June 2021 meeting.

Inspection Night will be held on Friday, May 28, 2021 at 6:30 P.M.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** None.

**RESOLUTIONS:** Commissioner O'Hare asked if the Board had any objections to approving the resolutions by consent agenda. The Board agreed.

**Commissioner O'Hare read Resolution 21-05-06-47 accepting the resignation of EMT Dorman.**

**Commissioner O'Hare read Resolution 21-05-06-48 appointing Volunteer C. Ficchi.**

**Commissioner Cornine made, a motion to introduce the resolutions, seconded by Commissioner DeSimone. All were in favor. Commissioners Davidson and Dugan Jr. were absent.**

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:** None.

**ADJOURN:** A motion was made by Commissioner Cornine, seconded by Commissioner DeSimone, to adjourn the meeting. All were in favor. Commissioners Davidson and Dugan Jr. were absent. The meeting was adjourned at 7:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by

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Steven Cornine, Secretary