

## **July 1, 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 July 1, 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, James Davidson, Mary Lou DeSimone, Michael Dugan Jr., and Robert O'Hare were present.

Chief DiGiorgio, Administrator Schultz, Fire Co. President Hark Jr., Lt. McGuinness, FF Ujfalussy, and Michael Dugan Sr. were also in attendance.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** None.

**CORRESPONDENCE:** Commissioner Cornine reported that Administrator Schultz drafted a Thank You Letter to the Legacy Foundation for their contribution, which he signed and sent. Commissioner O'Hare noted that there is also a plaque commemorating the contribution.

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

**The minutes from the June 17, 2021 Regular Meeting were reviewed.**

**Amendments to Previous Minutes: Commissioner Davidson reported that the date of a set for a Special Meeting was June 24, 2021, not July 24, 2021 as shown in the minutes.**

**Commissioner Cornine made a motion to approve the amended minutes from the June 17, 2021 Regular Meeting. Commissioner Davidson seconded the motion. All were in favor. Commissioner Dugan Jr. abstained.**

**REPORT OF THE TREASURER:** Commissioner Davidson reported that the Board had checks #12328 to 12351 totaling \$45,120.12 in front of them to be signed.

Commissioner Davidson reported that EMS Revenues continue to be lower than budgeted. Commissioner Davidson distributed a spreadsheet and graph showing the District's current positions on EMS Revenue and reported that based on the

current information, he projects a deficit of approximately \$58,000 for the year. Commissioner Davidson reported that he has advised Chief DiGiorgio of the situation and they are both reviewing the spending plan for the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 2021. Commissioner Davidson reported that EMS Revenue may pick up in the second half of the year but it is something the District needs to keep an eye on. Commissioner Davidson reported that last year EMS Revenue was about \$120,000 under budget, although he pointed out that last year was sort of an anomaly.

Commissioner Davidson reported that Administrator Schultz has informed him that he is working with the bookkeeper to get her familiar with the payroll process. Commissioner Davidson felt this was a positive initiative by both to build redundancy within the small organization.

Commissioner O'Hare asked if anyone had any questions for the Treasurer. Commissioner Cornine asked how far out the receivables generally were, or if June's revenue represents June's EMS calls. Commissioner Davidson reported that historically the revenue is two to three months behind the call.

Commissioner Davidson reported that he looked at last year's revenue by month, even though it was an unusual year, to see if there was a particular month where revenue spiked and there was nothing like that. Chief DiGiorgio noted that the lag is a running 2 to 3 months, so he is not sure why some months have spikes in revenues.

Commissioner O'Hare asked if there were any more questions. There were no questions. Commissioner Cornine made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report, seconded by Commissioner Dugan Jr. All were in favor.

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

**CHIEF'S REPORT:** Chief DiGiorgio distributed his Bi-Monthly report on July 1, 2021. Chief DiGiorgio noted that he did not submit his report on the Friday before the meeting because he was on vacation.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that the Legacy of a Hero presentation was held on Wednesday, 6/23/21. Chief DiGiorgio reported that Lt. Belott had scheduled the presentation and photo opportunity. Chief DiGiorgio noted that Lt. Belott reached out to the local newspapers and one of the Fire News magazines but unfortunately, they were not able to make it due to the short notice. Chief

DiGiorgio reported that Mr. Donofrio was able to take some pictures and he was going to submit them to his contacts.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that Car 37 was again repainted the lower end of the car due to some issues with the original job.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that that he met with the Buildings and Grounds Committee and Fire Co. President Hark Jr. to discuss moving some offices to accommodate moving the bunks to the third floor. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the moves should be occurring soon.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that he and Administrator Schultz worked on a Draft of the FF/EMT announcement. Chief DiGiorgio noted that there a couple of items to discuss in closed session.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that he met with District 2 Chef Perrello to discuss the Draft Storage Agreement for our ambulance at District 2's Firehouse. Chief DiGiorgio reported that that they discussed each of their thoughts and goals for the agreement. Chief DiGiorgio thought that Chief Perrello was welcoming of the agreement but would need direction and approval from his Board. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the Draft Storage Agreement was provided to him to present to his Board and hopefully we will hear something back after their July meeting.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that Millennium has submitted the 2<sup>nd</sup> FEMA COVID reimbursement request of \$14,182.10 representing COVID expenses incurred from September 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that he received a request from Commissioner O'Hare to discuss some of the questions related to COVID and people being out. Chief DiGiorgio felt they should discuss this in closed session and work off those discussions to address any questions that people have.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that Lt. Belott and Lt. McGuinness completed probationary reviews for FF/EMT Sulpy and EMT Bergman. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the reviews were signed by the employee, the lieutenants and himself and have been forwarded to Commissioner O'Hare for final signature.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that he, Administrator Schultz, and Lt. Belott reviewed the packets of interest from Per Diem, Part Time, and Full Time EMTs. Chief

DiGiorgio reported that he worked with Commissioner Davidson to discuss an immediate, short term, and long-term staffing plan. Chief DiGiorgio noted that they also discussed how to combat open EMS shifts. Chief DiGiorgio reported that his current suggestion is to interview two Per Diems with the help of Administrator Schultz and Lt. Belott in the next week or so. Chief DiGiorgio hopes to have candidates for conditional offers of employment for the July 15<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that he is looking for direction from the Board about what to do about 4 members who have not been actively riding calls, have not completed their annual physicals, workplace conduct training, or EMT competencies. Chief DiGiorgio asked the Board how to handle the situation with these individuals. Commissioner DeSimone asked if Chief DiGiorgio had approached them and asked what their intentions were. Chief DiGiorgio reported that there were emails back and forth about their responsibilities and requirements. Chief DiGiorgio reported that two of the individuals did not respond at all the email. Commissioner DeSimone asked if the two that did respond expressed hesitancy to return and the reasons for the hesitancy. Chief DiGiorgio reported that neither of the two individuals expressed any hesitancy to return but have not responded to requests to cover some of the current open shifts. Commissioner DeSimone asked to find out the names of the individuals who did respond to the emails so that the District could reach out to get the reason for their hesitancy to come back and ride. Commissioner DeSimone noted that the two individuals who did not respond do not sound interested anymore. Chief DiGiorgio felt that the District had done its due diligence by the individuals. Commissioner O'Hare asked what the two individuals who responded had to say. Chief DiGiorgio reported that one of the individuals indicated that they were on college leave and do not intend to return to work for the summer and the other individual dropped off their pager and radio at the firehouse. Commissioner DeSimone felt that if Chief DiGiorgio made documented attempts to reach out to these 4 individuals to no avail, then the district should thank them for their service and invite them to apply again when they have more availability. Commissioner Davidson felt that Chief DiGiorgio could write a letter stating that the District considers you not to be part of the organization anymore and if they feel differently, they should contact us. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he will draft a letter for the Board to review. The Board agreed.

Commissioner DeSimone reported that she had sent an email asking to see the probationary reviews before they were administered but that it looks like the review was already administered. Chief DiGiorgio reported that historically the process has been that the Officer prepares the review, meets with the employee and then the review goes up the chain. Commissioner Davidson felt that Commissioner DeSimone was not looking for what the actual review was but what was asked in the review. Commissioner DeSimone qualified she was looking for what was prepared in the review because there may have been things that should have asked to be included. Commissioner Davidson asked if a template form was used for the review. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the template is in the Policies and Procedures Manual. Commissioner DeSimone asked how old the form was. Chief DiGiorgio reported that form was updated and approved in 2019. Commissioner DeSimone asked if it was a template that the District got from someone or if it was created in house. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the original review template, which was approved by Mr. Trimboli, was a JIF document. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the Board then felt this was not in a very user-friendly form, so the Board went back to a form that was used in the past and pulled from a Hanover Township review form. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the old Township form was modified, approved and put into the current Policies and Procedures Manual. Commissioner DeSimone felt that the explanation for the ratings on different categories do not seem to match the rating itself on the current review form. Commissioner DeSimone felt that the rating of "Fully Competent" on the form and the explanation of "Fully Competent", for instance, do not match. Chief DiGiorgio felt that a review of the Policies & Procedures Manual is an outstanding item and this can be addressed during the review. Commissioner DeSimone reported that she would have liked to see the review of one of the individuals because she had some issues or concerns from when she was Asst. Chief of EMS that she would have liked to have seen addressed in the review. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the personnel file, which contained the document that Commissioner DeSimone is referring to, and the items were addressed in the current review. Commissioner O'Hare asked that any more discussion be held for closed session.

Commissioner O'Hare asked if there were any more questions for Chief DiGiorgio. Commissioner Davidson asked if the form in question was titled Career Division Employee Performance Evaluation Self Appraisal. Chief DiGiorgio reported that

the self appraisal and the regular appraisal form are not much different. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the Policies & Procedures Manual on Power DMS has the current form.

Commissioner Davidson asked if there was a resolution tonight for FF/EMT Sulpy. Chief DiGiorgio reported that his review would be approved tonight and the resolution would be before the Board at the July 15 meeting.

Commissioner Davidson asked what the Local 109 Drug & Alcohol Policy discussion on training / review outstanding item on the Chief's report was about. Chief DiGiorgio reported that when he received a copy of the new contract, there was an attachment on the new drug and alcohol policy with forms, a flow chart, and reviews. Chief DiGiorgio reported that if this is something that the District needs to administer or have an understanding of, then it is important to have direction in how to use the policy. Chief DiGiorgio noted that it is not as simple as reading the policy and applying it. Chief DiGiorgio reported that it important that we are trained to the policy. Commissioner Davidson asked who was "we". Chief DiGiorgio felt that "we" encompassed himself, the lieutenants, any supervisor, or anyone the policy is applicable to. Commissioner Davidson asked who would be doing the training on the policy. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he did not know and is why he is looking for some direction on how to use the policy. Chief DiGiorgio felt that examples of how the policy is to be administered would be helpful. Chief DiGiorgio felt that maybe training was not needed so much as an open dialogue between those who are responsible for the application of the policy. Commissioner DeSimone felt an interpretation of the policy and how to handle incidents was what Chief DiGiorgio was looking for. Commissioner Cornine felt that the Negotiations Committee, Chief DiGiorgio, and the Local 109 should meet to discuss since if something is not administered correctly, it will be a violation of an agreements procedure. Commissioner Davidson asked Chief DiGiorgio if he could hold a discussion to address the concerns by the next meeting so that the item does not sit on the outstanding item list. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he would attempt to get all the concerned parties to discuss the procedure before the next meeting.

**EMS:** Nothing to report.

**BUDGET:** Commissioner Davidson reported that he spoke to Chief DiGiorgio about the new ambulance coming in and the various equipment that needs to be put on the new ambulance. Commissioner Davidson reported that they have come up with a spending plan that will close out the entire capital appropriation which will take care of a large portion of the equipment purchases for the ambulance with affecting the operating budget.

Commissioner Davidson reported that he and Chief DiGiorgio have started looking into some of the big-ticket items for the 2022 budget. Commissioner Davidson reported that they have been discussing doing a capital appropriation for loose equipment such as SCBAs and turn out gear.

**PERSONNEL:** Commissioner O'Hare reported that the Board had items to discuss in Executive Session.

**NEGOTIATIONS:** Nothing to report.

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

**BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS:** Commissioner O'Hare reported that the committee met earlier to discuss the bunking situation.

Commissioner O'Hare reported that the painting of the exterior of the firehouse is going to be a big project and will probably not happen until next year.

Commissioner O'Hare noted that the bushes around the flagpole are still not trimmed. Commissioner Cornine reported that the bushes were trimmed to expose the lights. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the landscaper did not have the proper equipment with him this week to trim all the bushes. Commissioner DeSimone felt that weeding needed to be done along the fencing where the cyclone fence was removed. Administrator Schultz reported that he would speak with the landscaper.

**APPARATUS/EQUIPMENT AND MAINTENANCE:** Commissioner Cornine reported that the Chief's report covered everything. Commissioner Dugan Jr. asked if the new ambulance was under recall. Commissioner Cornine reported that the ambulance was under recall. Commissioner Dugan Jr. asked if the recall is affecting the delivery of the ambulance. Administrator Schultz reported that the ambulance was sent back to the dealer to handle the recall item. Commissioner DeSimone reported that she saw the diagram of the lettering for the new

ambulance and asked why the lettering is different from the other two ambulances, specifically why it says Hanover Township when the other ambulances say Cedar Knolls Fire Dept. Commissioner O'Hare reported that he was not aware of the change. Commissioner Cornine reported that he has seen the proofs for the lettering but was not aware of the history of past lettering. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the ambulance is following the same lettering and color scheme as the fire apparatus. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the front door of the ambulance will have the Maltese Cross, the door behind it will have Cedar Knolls Fire Dept. and the apparatus number just like the fire apparatus. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the ambulance says Hanover Township because our EMS license requires it. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the original EMS license was under Cedar Knolls but that it was switched to Hanover Township Fire District 3, and the name on the license has to appear on the apparatus so the name had to be added to the existing ambulances. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the work group made the decision to have the new ambulance follow the lettering and color scheme of the fire apparatus. Commissioner Davidson felt that the District might need to re-letter the existing ambulances down the road to make them more license compliant. Commissioner Cornine noted that the apparatus are all inspected by the State. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the State allowed the lettering of the existing ambulances because it has both Cedar Knolls Fire Dept. and Hanover Township Fire District 3. Commissioner DeSimone did not want people to feel that the intent was to eliminate the name of Cedar Knolls Fire Dept. Chief DiGiorgio reported that members of the work group brought up this concern and that is why the work group decided to add Cedar Knolls Fire Dept. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the vendor made the change and sent new proofs back which were approved by the work group. Commissioner Cornine asked if the work group was comprised of a diverse group of people spanning all the entities that exist here. Chief DiGiorgio reported that all apparatus work groups under his tenure have been open to anyone and everyone who wants to participate.

**INSURANCE:** Commissioner O'Hare asked if the District had received an answer on the question of insurance coverage for training that is not necessarily part of the scope of their duties. Administrator Schultz reported that a person operating within the scope of their job for training is covered. Commissioner Davidson asked if this was true if a person training for something outside the scope of their



job. Administrator Schultz reported that it was decided that this was within the scope of what the employee could be required to do at a scene.

**BY-LAWS:** Commissioner DeSimone reported that she has submitted her recommendations for changes to Commissioner Davidson to review and it looks like the recommended changes will require changes to the Policies and Procedures Manual as well. Commissioner DeSimone reported that she and Commissioner Davidson will review it further before presenting it to the Board. Commissioner Davidson asked if there was a specific process that needs to be followed when changing either By-Laws or Policies & Procedures. Administrator Schultz reported that there is a specific process and it is outlined in the By-Laws. Administrator Schultz reported that the Committee will propose a change, have it introduced by a resolution, have a period to review the proposed change, then it will be approved after a second reading at a Board meeting. Commissioner Davidson asked if a formal public hearing was required. Administrator Schultz reported that the public may comment at the Board meeting when the proposed changes are read a second time, before the Board votes to approve the changes. Commissioner Davidson asked if the same procedures were followed for changes to Policies & Procedures. Administrator Schultz reported that Policies & Procedures were normally changed by a resolution. Commissioner Davidson noted that the cover of the Policies & Procedures indicates when they were last revised. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he puts that date on the cover.

**WEBSITE:** Up to date. Chief DiGiorgio noted that FF Vagell has been updating the electronic sign with public service announcements such as heat warnings.

**PLANNING COMMITTEE:** Commissioner Dugan Jr. reported that there was nothing beyond what Chief DiGiorgio already discussed in his report.

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

**RECORDS RETENTION:** Commissioner Davidson reported that all the records that are scheduled to be destroyed have been cataloged with the State of New Jersey and the District is waiting to hear back from the State.

Commissioner Davidson reported that he has created a resolution log from 1996 through 1998 in an effort to find the resolution Mr. Keyser alluded to at the last

meeting regarding physicals. Commissioner Davidson reported that he will continue the project.

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

**OLD BUSINESS:** Commissioner Davidson reported that the Special Meeting scheduled for June 24, 2021 was not held.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that he and Administrator Schultz have made some progress on the FF/EMT hiring process and he will update the Board in closed session.

Administrator Schultz reported that he will reach out to the bay floor contractor to earmark some dates towards the end of summer for him to come fix the bay floors. Commissioner Davidson asked for an explanation of what was wrong with the floors. Administrator Schultz explained that there were some imperfections noted in the floors after they were originally finished and the contractor is going to address them.

Commissioner O'Hare reported that a while ago EMT Thompson had some questions about people who were out on COVID and making them whole. Commissioner O'Hare reported that the Board has the answers to his questions and will arrange to meet with him to answer his questions.

Commissioner Cornine reported that at last meeting Mr. Keyser asked him a question which he told him he would look into before giving him a generic answer. Commissioner Cornine asked that the following letter be sent to Mr. Keyser in answer to his question.

Steven J. Cornine  
Fire Commissioner  
Hanover Twp Fire District #3

Gary Keyser  
Fire Company Member  
Cedar Knolls, NJ 07927

July 1, 2021

Dear Gary Keyser,

A question was presented directly to me on June 17, 2021, at the second June Commissioner's meeting, asking what the main purpose of being on the board of Fire Commissioners is. My immediate response was to research the published meaning and report back to you. However, after questioning me further, it became apparent that you were looking for my position on filling the role of Fire Commissioner. Please accept the following statement from me as my position on the purpose of being a Fire Commissioner.

"A Fire District Commissioner should serve to represent and protect the citizens and taxpayers of Cedar Knolls. We must provide emergency services to our community through short and long-term planning. Additionally, we are responsible for oversight on all things administrative and legislative within Hanover Township Fire District #3."

I look forward to serving the community in the capacity of a Fire Commissioner in the Hanover Township Fire District #3 and welcome all questions.

Respectfully,

**Steven J. Cornine**  
Fire Commissioner

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**NEW BUSINESS: None.**

## **REMINDERS:**

The next regular meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners will be held on Thursday, July 15, 2021 at 7:00 P.M at the firehouse.

The next Joint Fire Prevention Board Meeting will be held on September 13, 2021 at 6:30 P.M. at the Whippany Firehouse.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** None.

## **RESOLUTIONS:**

**Commissioner Cornine read Resolution 21-07-01-67 accepting the resignation of EMT Kelly.**

**Commissioner Cornine made a motion to introduce the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Davidson. All were in favor.**

**Commissioner DeSimone asked Chief DiGiorgio if he was sending EMT Kelly an exit interview form. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he will be sending EMT Kelly an exit interview form. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he has been sending exit interview form to all who resign and has received three back already.**

**Commissioner Cornine noted that there is value to the exit interviews and they identify District policies that are worthy of the Board review. Chief DiGiorgio noted that he has seen some continuity in the exit interviews. Commissioner DeSimone reported that items that are continually be brought up in exit interviews should be reviewed and corrective action taken.**

**EXECUTIVE SESSION: Commissioner Cornine read Resolution 21-07-01-68 to enter into executive session. Commissioner Cornine made a motion to introduce the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Davidson. All were in favor. The Board went into closed session at 7:52 p.m.**

Personnel matters were discussed. Action will be taken. Commissioners Davidson and DeSimone excused themselves from the meeting.

**The Board came out of closed session at 9:45 p.m.**

## **RESOLUTIONS:**

**Commissioner Cornine read Resolution 21-07-01-69 authorizing a Personnel Agreement.**

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

**ADJOURN: A motion was made by Commissioner Dugan Jr., seconded by Commissioner Cornine, to adjourn the meeting. All were in favor. Commissioners Davidson and DeSimone were absent. The meeting was adjourned at 9:47 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted by

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Steven Cornine, Secretary