

September 16, 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 September 16, 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, Michael Dugan Sr., and Michael Dugan Jr. were present. Commissioner Robert O'Hare was absent.

Asst. Chief Martin, EMT Thompson, and Hanover Township Committeeman Cahill were also in attendance.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: None.

CORRESPONDENCE: Commissioner DeSimone reported that the Board received a letter from the Hanover Township Police Chief, Michael Loock, thanking the members of our Department for their support, dedication and assistance during Hurricane Ida.

Commissioner DeSimone reported that the District has received a NavHope Flyer outlining available assistance for needy families and posted it to the District website.

Commissioner DeSimone reported that the Board has received an email from Dr. Ralph Meloro regarding an antique fire cart donation. Commissioner DeSimone noted that the email was also sent to District 2. Commissioner DeSimone reported that Dr. Meloro stated in his letter that he has been a Hanover Township resident most of his life and wished to make a donation to honor his friends who are brave firefighters in the Cedar Knolls and Whippany fire departments.

Commissioner DeSimone reported that Dr. Meloro wishes to donate an antique fire cart with its original hose and nozzle which he purchased for this intent along with a plaque containing the essence of this honor. Commissioner DeSimone reported that the letter concludes with a request to let Dr. Meloro know how to proceed with this donation. Commissioner Dugan Sr. noted that both Chief

DiGiorgio and Chief Perrello received the letter. Commissioner DeSimone reported that the Board will ask Chief DiGiorgio if he and Chief Perrello have responded to Dr. Meloro. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that Asst. Chief Martin could reach out to Dr. Meloro if no one else has done so.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES:

The minutes from the August 19, 2021 Regular Meeting were reviewed.

Amendments to Previous Minutes: None.

Commissioner Dugan Jr. made a motion to approve the minutes from the August 19, 2021 Regular Meeting. Commissioner Cornine seconded the motion. All were in favor. Commissioner Dugan Sr. abstained.

The minutes from the September 2, 2021 Regular Meeting were reviewed.

Amendments to Previous Minutes: None.

Commissioner Dugan Jr. made a motion to approve the minutes from the September 2, 2021 Regular Meeting. Commissioner Dugan Sr. seconded the motion. All were in favor. Commissioner Cornine abstained.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER:

Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported the Board has approved the payment of bills presented tonight. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the District is operating within budget and that high overtime costs are being absorbed by other budget lines. Commissioner DeSimone noted that District call volume is less than what it was last year. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that even though expenses are within budget, income is less than budgeted.

Report of Fire Commissioner Board Committees and Chief of Department:

CHIEF'S REPORT: Chief DiGiorgio distributed his Bi-Monthly report on September 13, 2021.

Commissioner DeSimone asked if anyone had any questions on the report. There were no questions.

EMS: Nothing to report.

BUDGET: Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that he met with former Commissioner Davidson and Administrator Schultz to get an idea of where they were heading with the 2022 Budget. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that there is still work to do because right now the budget has the District about \$200,000 in the hole. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that one of the things that former Commissioner Davidson was looking to do was fund the hours of needed coverage and that is what kicks up the salary line. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that funding the hours would help considerably with overtime expense but would require additional hires. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that he hopes to have another budget meeting next week with Chief DiGiorgio, Administrator Schultz, and the bookkeeper. Commissioner Cornine asked for clarification that the \$200,000 deficit would be for next year's proposed budget taking into account things that we did not budget for this year. Commissioner Dugan Sr. confirmed that the deficit was for the 2022 proposed budget.

PERSONNEL: Nothing to report.

NEGOTIATIONS: Nothing to report.

LIAISON TO THE VOLUNTEERS: Nothing to report.

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS: Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the ambulance bay floors were done this week. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that Chief DiGiorgio mentioned at the Joint Board meeting that he plans to get some leaks fixed on Ambulance 39 before sending it to Whippany for storage. Commissioner Dugan Sr. recommended that Ambulance 39 not be parked in the newly finished ambulance bay.

APPARATUS/EQUIPMENT AND MAINTENANCE: Commissioner Cornine reported that according various emails he received, it looks like the ladder truck has a lot more issues that developed during its electronic system rehab. Commissioner Cornine reported that it appears to now have some engine issues and was not sure if it was reported at the last meeting. Commissioner Dugan Jr. reported that if Commissioner Cornine was referring to the injectors, it was discussed at the last meeting. Commissioner Cornine reported that the Board has some planning to do if the ladder truck is going to keep eating up so much money. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that he spoke with Commissioner O'Hare after the Joint Board meeting on Monday and Commissioner O'Hare felt that if the District puts all this

money into repairing the ladder truck, it should be good for a while. Commissioner Dugan Sr. felt that even if these repairs allow the truck to last another 4 years or so, the District should still expect to have about \$15,000 in maintenance costs each year to maintain the truck. Commissioner Dugan Sr. felt that the District should get rid of the truck in the next couple of years. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the current repairs will cost about \$30,000 and the truck has been out of service since February. Commissioner Dugan Sr. noted that the District put a lot of money into repairing rot on the truck a couple of years ago. Commissioner Dugan Sr. felt that it is time to let the truck go and hopefully the District can replace it. Commissioner DeSimone asked Asst. Chief Martin to report on the Truck Replacement Workgroup progress. Asst. Chief Martin asked who was on the apparatus committee. Commissioner Cornine reported that he and Commissioner Dugan Jr. are on the apparatus committee. Asst. Chief Martin recommended that Commissioners Cornine and Dugan Jr. be added to the IAmResponding group so that they can be aware and join the workgroup when it meets with the vendors. Asst. Chief Martin noted that Commissioner Dugan Sr. was very instrumental in the building of Engine 35. Asst. Chief Martin felt that the Apparatus Committee needs to be involved so they can relay to the rest of the Board what is going on. Asst. Chief Martin also felt that Commissioner O'Hare was way off on the 4-year estimate for the current ladder truck. Asst. Chief Martin reported that the truck is going to be 20 years old and noted that there has been a lot of electrical issues with the truck. Asst. Chief Martin noted that repairing the current electrical issues was difficult because the ladder was programmed using a Windows program from the early 2000s and it was difficult to find compatible programming today. Commissioner Cornine asked if one ladder truck services the entire Township. Asst. Chief Martin confirmed that the ladder truck services Hanover Township as well as being on Morris Plains run card. Commissioner Cornine asked that historically one ladder truck has been sufficient for the Hanover Township. Asst. Chief Martin reported that Hanover Township has always only had one ladder truck. Commissioner Cornine reported that he asked because he had heard that Whippany was looking into getting a ladder truck. Asst. Chief Martin felt that Whippany will not be getting a ladder truck right now. Commissioner Cornine reported that perhaps the two Districts could jointly purchase a ladder truck. Asst. Chief Martin felt that the current engine issues are an anomaly and probably occurred because the truck sat so long

without being run and the injectors just got gunked up. Asst. Chief Martin reported that electrical issues have been a constant problem with the truck for more than 15 years. Commissioner Dugan Sr. asked Asst. Chief Martin to keep the Apparatus Committee aware of the progress the workgroup is making.

Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the Planning Committee will also be involved because the committee is going to have architects draw up plans for adding to the firehouse which will be used in the application for a grant to prove that the project is shovel ready. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the Planning Committee is looking to get the price estimate on a few different options for the project in case the residents do not approve of the first one they are presented with. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the Planning Committee was going to hold a town hall type meeting with the volunteers and exempt members to get a feel for what everyone will need for the next 60 years. Commissioner DeSimone asked for confirmation that the meeting has not been held yet. Commissioner Dugan Sr. confirmed that the meeting has not been held.

Asst. Chief Martin reported that after the convention the 3 representatives that the workgroup has already met with are going to come in to do their presentations. Asst. Chief Martin will inform the Apparatus Committee of the exact dates. Commissioner Cornine asked who the three vendors were. Asst. Chief Martin reported that Sutphen, Pierce, and E-1 are going to give presentations. Commissioner Dugan Jr. asked about Seagrave. Asst. Chief Martin reported that he did not have a very pleasant experience with them when Engine 35 was being designed and he felt that the District could not afford a Seagrave. Commissioner Cornine asked if the District uses State contracts for apparatus purchases. Asst. Chief Martin reported that when the District purchased Engine 35 it paid cash. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the District went through Houston Galveston for the one ambulance.

INSURANCE: Nothing to report.

BY-LAWS: Nothing to report.

WEBSITE: Up to date.

PLANNING COMMITTEE: Commissioner Cornine where the cost numbers for engineer, architect, management, fire alarms, IT, bunks, elevator, lighting, paint,

HVAC, and stairs came from that he has seen in some emails because it looks like someone put a lot of effort into getting them. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the cost figures were guesstimates based on some research done by Administrator Schultz. Commissioner Cornine reported that the renovation guesstimates came out to about \$2 million and wondered what a new building would cost. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the District is looking into adding the cost of a ladder truck and another ambulance to the project and felt this would bring the total to about \$4.3 million which would be bonded. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the District is at the point where something needs to be done with the building due to its age and lack of adequate space.

LIASON TO EXEMPTS: Nothing to report.

RECORDS RETENTION: Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the Administrator is custodian of all records and he has brought to Commissioner Dugan Sr.'s attention that there are certain records that the Administrator has not seen. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reminded everyone that anything to do with records has to go through the Administrator.

LIAISON TO HANOVER TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE: Committeeman Cahill reported that after the Joint Board Meeting in Whippany he reported that he stayed for the Whippany Board Meeting. Committeeman Cahill reported that Chief Perrello was looking at the plans for the River Park development and expressed concern about their height and the need for a ladder truck. Committeeman Cahill recommended staying in touch with Whippany on the issue of a ladder truck since there is definitely a need for one in the Township. Commissioner Dugan Sr. noted that there are ladder trucks in many of the surrounding towns so while it might be nice to have 2 ladders in the Township, it is not necessary. Committeeman Cahill reported that he was referring to sharing a ladder with Whippany. Commissioner Dugan Sr. noted that while it would be great to have an ambulance over in Whippany also but felt that the service needs to remain under Cedar Knolls control. Commissioner Dugan Sr. felt that taking away that revenue from District 3 would be unfair since District 2 is so much larger than District 3. Committeeman Cahill reported that he was a bit perplexed by the discussion on ambulance service between the two Districts while acknowledging that there is a lot more to discuss and reminded the Board that the bigger picture is that the Districts should

do what is best for the Township. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that he understands why the Township divided the Fire Districts with Whippany getting more land because at the time there was less development on that land as opposed to the more developed Cedar Knolls area but felt that there is now an inequity because Whippany has seen much development over the years. Commissioner Dugan Sr. felt that either the Districts should be combined or the individual Districts boundaries should be changed to even it out again. Committeeman Cahill felt that the fact that the two Districts were even talking about sharing an ambulance is a great step forward. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that having an ambulance arrive 2 minutes faster to a Whippany call because it started on that side of town is not that significant since the first responders on that side of town start aid. Commissioner Dugan Sr. noted that he is not against having an ambulance on that side of town but it should be run under one organization. Committeeman Cahill noted that perhaps one of the developers will see the need for additional apparatus and step up. Commissioner Dugan Sr. noted that anything that gets donated by a developer would go directly to District 2 because that is the only side of town with land to develop and would further increase the inequity.

CONSOLIDATION: Commissioner Dugan Sr. noted that this was already discussed.

OLD BUSINESS: Commissioner DeSimone reported that Chief DiGiorgio sent the Board an update that 2 additional candidates completed phase 1 of the process on September 11 bringing the total number of applicants to six. Commissioner DeSimone reported that Chief DiGiorgio said that the Fire Academy has been advised and two dates have been scheduled, 9/21 & 9/22, one date for the written exam and walkthrough and the other date for the CPAC and interview. Commissioner DeSimone noted that Chief DiGiorgio said that the candidates have been notified by email and letter. Commissioner Dugan Sr. asked if anyone knew how much this process is costing the District. Commissioner Cornine reported that the cost was originally estimated at \$6,000 but there was an issue with the testing provided that increased the cost. Commissioner DeSimone felt that \$10,000 might have been approved by the Board. Commissioner Dugan Sr. felt that \$10,000 was a lot of money to spend on vetting six people and did not know why the Board has to go through all this. Commissioner Dugan Sr. noted that

Chief DiGiorgio said this is what the Board wanted. Commissioner Dugan Sr. asked what they have gone through so far. Commissioner DeSimone reported that there was a glitch when they originally posted the position on the website and they only got 4 applicants. Commissioner DeSimone reported that the original hiring was suspended on the advice of counsel and the recruitment was then reopened and 2 more applicants applied. Commissioner DeSimone felt that they thought there would be more applicants. Commissioner Dugan Sr. asked if any testing was done yet. Commissioner DeSimone reported that none testing has been done and is scheduled for September 21 & 22. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that he did not know why the District has to put the candidates through this testing if they have gone through Firefighter 1 and have the other qualifications that the Board requested. Commissioner Cornine reported that he planned on speaking in executive session.

Commissioner DeSimone reported that the Ambulance Bay Floor refinishing is completed and awaiting review and acceptance of the Buildings & Grounds Committee and the engineer.

Commissioner DeSimone asked if there was any other old business. There was none.

NEW BUSINESS: Commissioner DeSimone reported that Administrator Schultz asked the Board to consider whether to send FLMA paperwork to an employee. Commissioner Cornine asked if a resolution was needed. The bookkeeper reported that Administrator Schultz told her that all that was need was a motion to allow him to send the application to the employee. Commissioner DeSimone noted that she thought that this was what was discussed at the last meeting. Commissioner Cornine reported that with the new clarity he would make a motion to get the gentleman the FMLA paperwork. The bookkeeper noted that the initials of the employee were on the agenda. Commissioner Dugan Jr. seconded the motion. All were in favor. Commissioner Dugan Sr. abstained. Commissioner O'Hare was absent.

REMINDERS:

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

The next Joint Fire Prevention Board Meeting will be determined.

The Holiday Tree Lighting is scheduled for Saturday, November 27, 2021 at 6:00 P.M. at the Cedar Knolls Fire Station.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: EMT Thompson reported that he noticed that the Board goes into closed session quite often and while the minutes from the open portion of the meeting have been approved regularly, he has not heard minutes for a closed session voted on. EMT Thompson asked if minutes were taken during closed session. Commissioner Cornine reported that minutes were not taken in closed session as far as he was aware. EMT Thompson felt that was a violation of the Open Public Meetings Act but said he could follow it up with the State and get an answer. Commissioner Dugan Sr. felt that there should be minutes taken for closed session and that this was why the Board purchased a second recorder. EMT Thompson reported that he knew that the minutes for closed session were required and that the Board may want to inform Mr. Trimboli.

EMT Thompson reported that the comment about former Commissioner Davidson wanting to fund the shifts is a great idea but felt it would only solve half the problem because the scheduling around here is, on a good day, atrocious and typically, horrible is an understatement. EMT Thompson reported that he and Commissioner DeSimone have worked on schedules in the past and were told to mind their own business. EMT Thompson reported that they came up with a schedule that would create 40 hours a week of surplus time for the Board and reported that Chief DiGiorgio shot it down because the firemen wouldn't think it was fun to work an 8-hour day. EMT Thompson felt that if the Board was going to fund the schedule they may want to look at the scheduling. Commissioner DeSimone reported that EMT Thompson is referring to a time when they were EMS officers, she was the Asst. Chief and he was Captain, and they presented a scheduling proposal that was not accepted. EMT Thompson reported that the proposed schedule provided the same coverage that exists now and created a 40 hour a week surplus. EMT Thompson noted that if the Board was hurting for money they may want to look at how the schedule is being handled because it is bad. Commissioner Cornine asked if the proposal was drafted and presented to the Chief. EMT Thompson reported that it was discussed in a meeting with Chief DiGiorgio and some Board members. Commissioner Cornine asked if there was a draft or summary of the proposal that the Board could look at. EMT Thompson

reported that he could try to come up with it again and noted that the organization had more volunteers then. Commissioner Cornine felt that the Board could look into it.

EMT Thompson reported that at the Company meeting that was held this week a volunteer brought up that they were told when they asked about attending Core EMS classes which the District has always hosted here, typically on weekends so the volunteers can make it, that there was no intention to fund training for people who are probably not going to be here long. EMT Thompson asked if that was the Boards take or if it was just Chief DiGiorgio talking out of school. Commissioners Dugan Jr. and Dugan Sr. reported that it was not their take. EMT Thompson reported that everyone was forced to go to this Core Competency class, which was fine, and he understands the need on one end but the competency used to be run in house to show the competency and develop a training program for the year. EMT Thompson felt that if the volunteers were forced to go to the Core Competency, which is not required by the State, in order to be able to ride and help make the District money, why would the District not provide the training that is mandated by the State for the volunteers. Commissioner Cornine asked if the person that EMT Thompson referred to was in jeopardy of lapsing. EMT Thompson felt this person was one of the few people that was not looking at an exit strategy but he does not know for sure. Commissioner Cornine asked if their EMT license was about to lapse because of not having the Core classes. EMT Thompson reported that because of COVID you could not get into these classes and he thought that it was coming due. Commissioner DeSimone commented that the individual's license is probably expiring at the end of this year or June of next year. Commissioner Cornine asked for clarification that it is Department policy to pay for all training. Commissioner DeSimone reported that the Department does provide training. EMT Thompson reported that he was at an investment committee meeting last night and reported that the Fire Company suggested paying for the training. EMT Thompson reported that the Company should not have to pay for EMT training when every time an ambulance rolls there is a bill sent out. Commissioner DeSimone felt that if District EMTs need to be CEU certified in order to maintain the EMT license than the District should be providing the training. EMT Thompson felt it was contradictory that the District would require people to go through this competency, which is not mandated by the State, why would you not

provide them with the State required training so they can continue to ride. Commissioner Dugan SR. reported that the four Board members present are in agreement with EMT Thompson. Commissioner Cornine reported that the Board will have to follow up with Chief DiGiorgio who is given a lot of latitude for training. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the District EMTs have always been given the opportunity to get their CEUs through the District with no cost to them and did not know why all the sudden this was in doubt. EMT Thompson reported that he was not there but his understanding is that it was a pointed question asked to Chief DiGiorgio and that was his answer. Commissioner DeSimone reported that the EMT CEU class that was last done here was held during the day which makes it difficult for the volunteer to come if they are working. Commissioner DeSimone noted that she has not seen a Core EMT class held on a weekend in a while. EMT Thompson noted that some career staff used to attend the weekend classes if it fit with their schedule. Commissioner Dugan Sr. felt that while the District has a Training Coordinator it needs a Training Officer whose responsibility is to ensure that whoever needs training, gets training. Commissioner Dugan Sr. noted that the Training Officer would also be responsible for making sure that whoever gets training, it gets recorded. Commissioner DeSimone reported that Chief DiGiorgio is giving training responsibilities to FF Ujfalussy. EMT Thompson reported that the perception among the volunteers is that the outside competency thing was nothing more than a road block to try to get people to leave and we have lost some people because of it. EMT Thompson felt this perception is only being reinforced now that someone who went to the competency and is now looking for the State required training and being told that the District will not pay for it because I don't know how long you are going to be here. Commissioner Cornine asked if the member was in good standing. EMT Thompson confirmed that they were. Commissioner Cornine felt that if the member was in good standing and sought training outside so their license does not lapse, he felt pretty sure the District would make them whole. Commissioner Cornine reported that he will follow up with Chief DiGiorgio. Commissioner Dugan Sr. asked if Commissioner Cornine could look into providing a Core EMT training class. Commissioner DeSimone added that it should be held on a weekend or at night. Commissioner Cornine asked who was the individual who maintains licenses, who knows when they are expiring and know who is valid and who is not. Commissioner DeSimone reported that the information is in the ERS

database FF Gilson is able to look up whose CPR certification is expiring. Commissioner DeSimone noted that EMT license information was required to be entered in the database also. Commissioner Cornine reported that the Board could ask the Chief to add the expirations to his next report and the Board can assess our needs. Commissioner Dugan Sr. felt that the comment about not paying due to not knowing how long a volunteer was going to be here is ridiculous and probably prompted by the thought that the District will not see a return on their investment. Commissioner DeSimone felt that if the District wants to retain its volunteers we have to make training available to them. Commissioner Dugan Sr. felt that the District does not want to retain its volunteers. EMT Thompson said that that was how it appeared to this volunteer. Commissioner DeSimone reported that a lot of volunteers work and come here nights and weekends so the District should take this into account when scheduling anything. Commissioner DeSimone asked if Commissioner Cornine would follow up with Chief DiGiorgio. Commissioner Cornine agreed to follow up and noted that he has learned that there are multiple sides to all stories. Commissioner Cornine reported that the Board will make sure that everyone gets the training they need.

RESOLUTIONS: None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Commissioner DeSimone read Resolution 21-09-16-93 to enter into executive session. Commissioner Dugan Sr. made a motion to introduce the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Cornine. All were in favor. Commissioner O'Hare was absent. 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 9:10 p.m.

RESOLUTIONS:

Commissioner Cornine read Resolution 21-09-16-94 terminating a Volunteer Member.

Commissioner Dugan Sr. made a motion to introduce the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Dugan Jr. All were in favor. Commissioner O'Hare was absent.

ADJOURN: A motion was made by Commissioner DeSimone, seconded by Commissioner Dugan Jr., to adjourn the meeting. All were in favor. Commissioner O'Hare was absent. The meeting was adjourned at 9:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by

Steven Cornine, Secretary