

June 16, 2022 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 16, 2022 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 Jr., Robert O'Hare, and Shawn Waldron were present.

Chief DiGiorgio, Chief Perrello, Administrator Schultz, Fire Co. President James Hark Jr., Cpt. Costello, Lt. Belott, Lt. McGuinness, FF DiGiacomo, EMT Perrone, Fire Co. Member Gary Keyser, Fire Co. Member Jess Sainato, Patti Sainato, and Michael Dugan Sr. were also in attendance.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: None.

CORRESPONDENCE: None.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES:

The minutes from the June 2, 2022 Regular Meeting were reviewed.

Amendments to Previous Minutes: None.

Commissioner Waldron made a motion to approve the minutes from the June 2, 2022 Regular Meeting. Commissioner O'Hare seconded the motion. All were in favor.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER:

Commissioner Waldron reported that the District is operating within budget. Commissioner Waldron reported that the chimney repairman thinks the check we sent was lost in the mail so a stop payment was put on that check and another one was issued.

Report of Fire Commissioner Board Committees and Chief of Department:

CHIEF'S REPORT: Chief DiGiorgio distributed his Bi-Monthly report on June 13, 2022. Chief DiGiorgio had the following additions to his report.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that the firehouse hallway painting project has concluded with the exception of a few places that need to be touched up. Chief DiGiorgio thanked FF Martin for spearheading the project.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that he reviewed the employee review forms that Commissioner DeSimone gave him and made comments on which he thought were appropriate.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that he met with Commissioner Waldron to discuss the policy on shorts for the EMTs and progress has been made.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that he and Commissioner Waldron met with the candidates for the open lieutenant position and notified them of the Board's position. Chief DiGiorgio noted that there is a resolution before the Board tonight along the lines of the Board's discussion from the last meeting.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that the career staff removed the last of the lights from the tree today. Commissioner DeSimone thanked the career staff that removed the lights.

Chief DiGiorgio concluded his report. Commissioner DeSimone asked if anyone had questions for Chief DiGiorgio.

Commissioner O'Hare asked for the status on all 3 ambulances functionality. Chief DiGiorgio reported that all 3 ambulances are up and running although Ambulance 38 has been speaker issues.

EMS: Commissioner O'Hare asked for a status on implementing the additional skills of aspirin and albuterol now that Narcan has been implemented. Chief DiGiorgio reported that he would reach out to Dr. Gluckman to see if either of these could be added before the annual competencies are completed in September.

Commissioner Waldron reported that he received a text from the Dept. of Health regarding the law that states that the District is required to give the family of anyone given Narcan a replacement dose. Chief DiGiorgio clarified that the law states that the victim should be given replacements and he received something from the Dept. of Health about applying for a grant to cover the cost of the Narcan to be left behind. Commissioner Waldron reported that his notification did not specify grants but stated that free Narcan was available. Commissioner

Waldron reported that he forwarded the text he received about getting free replacement Narcan to FF Sulpy. Commissioner DeSimone noted that she also received the text. Commissioner Cornine reported that it is very easy to sign up for, the requested Narcan ships within a couple of days and it is a very good program. Chief DiGiorgio noted that Dr. Gluckman was very specific about which one the District could buy and wants to make sure that it is okay to give out a different type than what the District administers.

BUDGET: Nothing to report.

PERSONNEL: Commissioner Waldron reported that the committee met with the three lieutenant candidates. Commissioner Waldron reported that the District has not received all the paperwork back on the two PT or Per Diem EMT candidates so we don't know where they stand.

NEGOTIATIONS: Commissioner Cornine reported that there is a resolution before the Board to approve a MOA between FMBA Local 109 and the District about acting officer position and officer development initiative. Commissioner Cornine reported that the Board could discuss the draft in closed session.

LIAISON TO THE VOLUNTEERS: Nothing to report.

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS: Commissioner Waldron reported that the lights are down from the tree and the painting has been completed. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the back bay door has been repaired and the insurance check was received today for the repair of the front door.

APPARATUS/EQUIPMENT AND MAINTENANCE: Commissioner Cornine had nothing to report other than what was in the Chief's report.

Commissioner DeSimone asked for the status of having Chief DiGiorgio's vehicle decaled. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the decals have been ordered.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that 34 is out of service and will go to Fire & Safety tomorrow to repair a rotted fuel tank. It will be out of service for about a week.

INSURANCE: Commissioner O'Hare reported that he and Administrator Schultz have working on securing another Workmen's Comp carrier. Administrator Schultz reported that the District has received the assigned risk premium calculation for the coming year and it will be a \$30,000 increase from last year

due to the fact that we are going back into assigned risk. Administrator Schultz reported that as long as our current company, 7710, is pulling out of New Jersey we will have to go into assigned risk and get whichever company comes up in the rotation. Administrator Schultz noted that the increase is not a big surprise since the District would be going from open market to assigned risk.

BY-LAWS: Nothing to report.

WEBSITE: Up to date.

PLANNING COMMITTEE: Commissioner Dugan Jr. reported that he had nothing outside the presentation later in the meeting.

Commissioner Waldron asked for a status on the planning for this building now that the District had received the report from the structural engineers.

Commissioner Cornine reported that there have not been any planning meetings since the report was received.

LIASON TO EXEMPTS: Nothing to report.

RECORDS RETENTION: Commissioner O'Hare asked whether our auditor has resolved the issue with the State over access to see our records on the State site. Administrator Schultz reported that the auditor, Ms. Lee, still cannot see our documents on the State site.

LIAISON TO HANOVER TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE: Nothing to report.

OLD BUSINESS: Commissioner DeSimone asked Administrator Schultz for a status update on the recruiting seminar that the County may host. Administrator Schultz reported that he forwarded the information to the County Chiefs but was not present at the last meeting to hear any discussion. Chief DiGiorgio reported that it was discussed at the last meeting but are waiting on a quote on the cost. Administrator Schultz reported that he forwarded the quote to the County Chiefs and they were going to approach the County commissioners to see if they would fund it. Administrator Schultz reported that the quote \$3,000 for as many people as we want to attend and the plan is to open it up to all of Morris County.

Commissioner DeSimone asked for the status of the Power DMS cleanup. Chief DiGiorgio reported that for the most part it is complete.

Commissioner DeSimone noted that the uniform policy is still under discussion.

Commissioner DeSimone asked if Chief DiGiorgio has submitted a letter of intent. Chief DiGiorgio reported that when he makes a decision he will notify the Board. Commissioners O'Hare and Waldron felt that the Board should start the process independent of Chief DiGiorgio's decision. Commissioner DeSimone reported that the Board would need a formalized job description. Commissioner Waldron noted that the Board needs to decide what they are going to look for.

Commissioner O'Hare reported that some time ago the Board sent Mr. Trimboli a copy of our Professional Standards Policy and Procedures. Commissioner O'Hare reported that he spoke to Mr. Trimboli yesterday to see where he is on reviewing it and was informed that Mr. Trimboli had just finished making his suggested revisions. Commissioner O'Hare reported that he received the revised copy today and sent a copy of it out to everyone to review so a determination on what to do could be made at the next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS: Commissioner Waldron asked Chief DiGiorgio if there is a due date for the workplace conduct training. Chief DiGiorgio reported that there was no due date set but he would meet with FF Ujfalussy to make sure that the process does not drag on. Chief DiGiorgio noted that there are 2 different training modules, one for supervisors and one for non-supervisors. Commissioner DeSimone reported that she felt the training module was good but took some time to complete so any deadline should take this into account.

Commissioner DeSimone asked if Chief DiGiorgio could put his schedule on EMS Manager so people would know when he is at meetings or on PTO. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the Board had previously asked him to let them know when he was taking PTO but he could advise them of items they would like to know about. Commissioner DeSimone felt that it would be helpful if the career staff knew if Chief DiGiorgio was away from the firehouse and where he was. Commissioner Waldron reported that Chief DiGiorgio has always notified the on duty officer of his whereabouts.

REMINDERS:

The next regular meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners will be held on Thursday, July 21, 2022 at 7:00 P.M at the firehouse.

The Joint Fire Prevention Board Meeting will be held on Monday, September 12, 2022 at the Whippany Fire House at 6:30 P.M.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: None.

RESOLUTIONS:

Commissioner Cornine read Resolution 22-06-16-44 accepting the resignation of EMT Waldron. Commissioner O'Hare made a motion to introduce the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Cornine. All were in favor.

Commissioner Waldron abstained.

Commissioner Cornine read Resolution 22-06-16-45 appointing Data Entry Operator. Commissioner Cornine made a motion to introduce the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Waldron. All were in favor.

DEPART FROM REGULAR AGENDA: Chief DiGiorgio and Chief Perrello gave a presentation of an analysis of the operational efficiencies of and the feasibility of consolidation or merger of Hanover Township Fire District's No. 2 and No. 3. that they prepared under the guidance of the Consolidation Committee.

Chief DiGiorgio and Chief Perrello asked if anyone had any questions after the presentation. Fire Co. Member Keyser asked if the District 2 purchase of a ladder truck will happen in 2022 and if so is the cost reflected in the financials in this presentation. Chief Perrello reported that the purchase will not happen in 2022 and therefore the cost is not reflected in the financials in the presentation. Chief DiGiorgio noted that the decision was made that for this presentation the Committee would look at combining the 2 existing budgets, not to forecast what the future budgets would look like. Chief Perrello reported that the ladder truck cost will add about \$30,000 a year in debt payments starting in 2024 than was in the presentation plan. Chief Perrello explained that District 2 is currently paying off Engine 81 and it will be paid off in 2024 when payments on the new ladder would start. Chief DiGiorgio reported that DCA will look at whether the debt service taxing could be kept with the original District that approved the debt. Chief DiGiorgio noted that carving out the debt would create more work for Mr. Silvio when trying to come up with tax rates and indicated that there is some non-taxpayer income that would also have to be carved out because it is being used towards the debt. Mr. Keyser asked if the budget in both Districts was offset by

surplus. Chiefs DiGiorgio and Perrello explained that the budget costs are offset by revenue not surplus. Administrator Schultz noted that if the District 2 debt is carved out and put on District 2 residents it would drive up the District 2 tax rate more than outlined in the presentation. Chief Perrello reported that in Committee discussions it was noted that the District 3 tax rate would decrease even with both Districts paying the debt. Chief Perrello noted that if after any consolidation work was needed on the District 3 firehouse it would then be shouldered by the consolidated District. Mr. Keyser noted that the change in a resident's fire tax change would depend on the assessed value of their house. Chief DiGiorgio reported that another thing to consider is that there are PILOT developments being built in District 2 and they will receive 4% of whatever PILOT payments are made. Chief DiGiorgio noted that this would further the imbalance in tax rate between the two Districts. Mr. Keyser asked when the Township will be reassessed. Chief DiGiorgio did not know.

Mr. Keyser asked where there would be hose testing cost savings. Chief DiGiorgio reported that as the motor pool gets smaller there will be some savings. Chief DiGiorgio noted that he and Chief Perrello were not tasked with finding budget savings but with combining the budgets, come up with the staffing plan, and come up with a plan on how a consolidated District would continue to provide Fire and EMS service. Chief DiGiorgio felt that looking into too much detail such as how to combine 12 hour shifts and 24 hour shifts should not make or break why this is right for the community. Chief Perrello noted that the goal in determining some of the costs was not to cut ourselves short where in a few years the District would have to ask the taxpayers for more money. Chief DiGiorgio noted that there is \$250,000 set aside in this plan for future capital expenditures because that amount was in the District 2 budget. Chief Perrello reported that there is a little over \$2 million in unrestricted fund balance between the two Districts.

Commissioner Waldron asked if it was worth discussing staffing models before a new Board is elected. Chief DiGiorgio acknowledged that the new Board could come in and overturn whatever decisions were made prior to consolidation but he does not feel that the new Board would do that. Commissioner Waldron reported that there seemed to be some contradictions on the staffing slides regarding Part-time and Per Diem EMTs and he was concerned about their

welfare with all the cross training of career staff. Chief DiGiorgio assured Commissioner Waldron that the Part-time and Per Diem EMTs were included in the consolidated staffing models. Commissioner DeSimone asked if the volunteers were represented in the consolidated staffing models. Chief Perrello put up the consolidated organization chart to show when the volunteers were represented and where the straight EMTs were represented. Chief DiGiorgio reported that in District 2 there is no need to staff firefighters during the night because there are enough volunteers that respond. Chief DiGiorgio noted that in a consolidated District the FF / EMT that worked on that side of Town would transition over to ride the ambulance at night. Chief DiGiorgio noted that the proposed staffing model in this presentation is not carved in stone and that the Consolidation Committee is still doing research and discussing options.

Cpt. Costello reported that during the presentation it was mentioned the 2 ways to consolidate the Districts would be for one District to merge into the other or for a new consolidated District be formed and the existing 2 Districts to go away. Cpt. Costello asked if it would be an overnight process to go from 2 Districts to 1. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the Committee has been studying past fire district consolidations along with Mr. Braslow and making a list of some of the past mistakes so they can be avoided here but acknowledged that there will be bumps in the road. Cpt. Costello asked if the residents were going to vote on consolidation. Chief Perrello reported that the residents can voice their opinion at the public hearing but it is the 2 Boards that will vote on a resolution to consolidate. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the Committee identified all the stakeholders in a consolidation and former Chief Davidson met with all the stakeholders to address concerns.

Mr. Dugan Sr. asked what assurance the residents of District 3 have that the District 3 building will not disappear. Chief DiGiorgio acknowledged that the consolidated Board could be a little lopsided either way but noted that the entire Township would be able to vote in the new Board so District 3 residents would have their say. Chief DiGiorgio felt that if residents heard a rumor that the District 3 firehouse was being eliminated they could come down to a Commissioners meeting to ensure that it does not happen. Chief Perrello felt that with all the development going on it is getting more difficult to get around and it would be beneficial to have 2 fire stations.

Commissioner Waldron reported that in the presentation it was pointed out that the 13 exterior firefighters would be trained to become interior firefighters and wondered why we need a consolidated fire district to do that. Mr. Dugan Sr. felt that some of the 13 exterior were interior at one time but did not feel up to it anymore. Chief DiGiorgio reported that the discussion around that slide included recruitment of volunteers so maybe the 13 existing exterior firefighters would not move to interior but that 13 new recruits could be trained to become interior firefighters.

Cpt. Costello felt that the proposed consolidated organization chart might create a point of contention by placing all of the volunteers under one Deputy Chief. Chief DiGiorgio reported Whippany currently has both Deputy Chief and Asst. Chief of volunteers while Cedar Knolls only has Asst. Chief of volunteers. Chief DiGiorgio reported that in the consolidated chart the Whippany Asst. Chief would oversee the Whippany volunteers, the Cedar Knolls Asst. Chief would oversee the Cedar Knolls volunteers, and the Deputy Chief position would rotate between the two. Cpt. Costello felt that this still might be perceived as a change when it was stated that nothing would change for the volunteers. Commissioner Waldron felt that the perception that nothing is going to change had to do with the social aspects of the volunteer organizations, that each volunteer organization can have car washes, play in softball leagues, and hold spaghetti dinners. Cpt. Costello felt that it might be a problem if the idea is not pitched correctly. Chief DiGiorgio hoped that the identified stakeholders would continue to be involved if the consolidation moves forward and even afterwards if the consolidation happens.

Chief DiGiorgio reported that the Consolidation Committee will have another meeting to discuss the concerns that were brought up at the various presentations. Commissioner Cornine noted that outside of the Board representation on the Consolidation Committee the remainder of the Board is seeing the presentation for the first time tonight. Commissioner Cornine felt that the Board is going to need some time to digest the information. Commissioner Cornine reported that both Boards need to have serious discussions on what they like and do not like about the report. Commissioner Cornine reported that the Boards need to discuss how they see a consolidated district regarding what staffing would look like, what the budget would look like, and how to provide

equal or better service at an equal or better cost. Commissioner Cornine noted that this is a draft plan and there is still a lot of work to do before it is final.

Mr. Dugan Sr. asked if a consolidated District would need 2 ladder trucks. Chief Perrello reported that with all the developments in Whippany there is a need for a ladder truck but conceded that a decision has not been made on what to do with the aging District 3 ladder truck. There was discussion on various possibilities.

Chief DiGiorgio asked that any future questions or comments be forwarded to him or Jim Davidson.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Commissioner Cornine read Resolution 22-06-16-46 to enter into executive session. Commissioner Cornine made a motion to introduce the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Waldron. All were in favor. The Board went into closed session at 9:15 p.m.

Personnel matters were discussed, and action will be taken.

The Board came out of closed session at 9:42 p.m.

RESOLUTIONS:

Commissioner Cornine read Resolution 22-06-16-47 Approving signing a MOA with FMBA Local 109. Commissioner O'Hare made a motion to introduce the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Cornine. All were in favor.

ADJOURN: A motion was made by Commissioner O'Hare, seconded by Commissioner Dugan Jr., to adjourn the meeting. All were in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by

Steven Cornine, Secretary