

**December 7, 2023 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 December 7, 2023 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., Gary Keyser, and Shawn Waldron were present.

Administrator Schultz, Deputy Administrator Hark Jr., Asst. Chief Martin, District 2 Chief Perrello, Lt. McGuinness, Lt. Sulpy, FF Ujfalussy, FF Yen, EMT Bergman, EMT Perrone, Hanover Township Committeeman Cahill, and Mr. DeSimone were also in attendance.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** None.

**CORRESPONDENCE:** None.

**APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES:**

**The minutes from the November 2, 2023 Executive Session were reviewed.**

**Amendments to Previous Minutes: None.**

**Commissioner DeSimone made a motion to approve the minutes from the November 2, 2023 Executive Session, seconded by Commissioner Cornine. All were in favor.**

**The minutes from the November 16, 2023 Regular Meeting were reviewed.**

**Amendments to Previous Minutes: Commissioner Keyser reported that the date for public commentary on the 2024 budget on page 3 needs to be changed from January 5, 2024 to January 4, 2023.**

**REPORT OF THE TREASURER:** Commissioner Waldron reported that things are tight but the District is still operating within budget.

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

**CHIEF'S REPORT:** Asst. Chief Martin submitted his Bi-Monthly report on December 6, 2023.

Commissioner Keyser asked if the Engine 34 brakes were replaced. Asst. Chief Martin confirmed that the brakes were replaced. Commissioner Keyser asked if the hose bed for Engine 34 needs to be redesigned. Asst. Chief Martin reported that a clamp was put on incorrectly and has been fixed.

Commissioner Cornine asked what was needed to move forward on the Uniform Policy and the Staffing Plan. Asst. Chief Martin reported that he was told that the Uniform Policy had to be reviewed by the Board. Commissioner Keyser reported that the Uniform Policy could not be enforced until all staff received their uniforms. Asst. Chief Martin reported that he is waiting for some patches to be put on some jackets and then everyone will have uniforms. Commissioner Keyser asked if anyone had any other questions on the Uniform Policy. There were no questions. Commissioner Cornine reported that the Uniform Policy could then be put in place. Commissioner Keyser asked Lt. Sulpy to show the Board the new patch on his uniform. Commissioner Keyser reported that the new patches would be worn by compensated career staff, not the volunteers. Asst. Chief Martin clarified that volunteers would wear the patch when they are operating as a functioning unit of the District. Commissioner Keyser asked what functioning unit of the District meant. Asst. Chief Martin reported that volunteers were operating as a functioning unit of the District when they come down for details such as the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. Commissioner Keyser felt that those were Department functions and did not feel that the District could enforce a District Uniform Policy for them. Commissioner Keyser asked if the Fire Co. had a problem with the policy. Commissioner DeSimone reported that there was a discussion about it at one of the Fire Co. meetings. Commissioner Desimone reported that she was told that if she volunteers for EMS calls she must wear the new patch. Asst. Chief Martin reported that the reason is because it is required by Section 8. Asst. Chief Martin felt that the Fire Co. had an issue with having to wear the new patch on class A uniforms and he told them that the District has nothing to say about the Class A uniform because they are distributed by the Fire Co. Commissioner DeSimone felt that the Fire Co. was okay with wearing the new patch when operating as an EMT for the District in Class B uniforms. Commissioner Cornine reported that Asst. Chief Martin has also stated that if a volunteer is responding from home he does not care what they are wearing. Asst. Chief Martin clarified that there have been times when a firefighter has been injured that the District has been written up because the firefighter was wearing polyester clothing instead of 100% cotton which offers some flame protection. Commissioner DeSimone asked if the District provided the volunteers with the uniform with the new patch. Asst. Chief Martin

reported that the District has always provided everyone with Class B uniforms. Commissioner Cornine reported that the reason he brought up the Uniform Policy was because it has been pending on Asst. Chief Martin's report for months and he wanted to know what was preventing it from being posted. Asst. Chief Martin reported that the Uniform Policy has been in place since 2000 and the bulk of what has changed is going from uniform standards for 4 separate times of the year while the new policy only has standards for 2 separate times a year. Asst. Chief Martin reported that the only other changes to the policy are clarifications so there is no confusion as to what can be worn. Asst. Chief Martin noted that he sat with the Union and they were satisfied with the changes. Commissioner Cornine felt that once the outstanding new uniforms were received it was up to Asst. Chief Martin's discretion to repost the Uniform Policy.

**EMS:** Commissioner Cornine noted that Lt. Sulpy was in attendance and asked if he had anything to report. Lt. Sulpy reported that the District has the contract for the loaner ambulance.

Lt. Sulpy reported that the demo ambulance that was discussed at the last meeting will be in New Jersey next week so the District can schedule a time to see it. Lt. Sulpy reported that the District can then sign some paperwork so the manufacturer can hold the ambulance until the budget passes if the District decides to go that route.

Lt. Sulpy reported that he touched base with the Medical Director today and the EMS competencies are on schedule. Lt. Sulpy reported that the dates will be posted tonight and anyone that cannot make it will have other arrangements made to get up to speed. Asst. Chief Martin noted that there is a good possibility that the District will be going into next year with some of the EMS competencies so the deadline may need to be extended until the end of January 2024. Commissioner DeSimone asked who would be doing the competencies. Lt. Sulpy reported that the Medical Director will do 2 presentations with skill stations, one day and one evening. Lt. Sulpy noted that if anyone has a conflict they can reach out to him to get them done.

Commissioner Keyser asked about the status of Ambulance 32. Lt. Sulpy reported that the District has the First Priority contract for the loaner ambulance. Deputy Administrator Hark Jr. reported that the District has forwarded everything on to legal counsel and everything for Ambulance 32 is on hold for the moment. Administrator Schultz reported that Nielson Ford sent an email stating that they want to file a report with their insurance company for the claim so the District has

forwarded it to legal counsel to pursue. Commissioner Waldron asked for an estimate on the time before the ambulance is ready to go out for repair and if the time is about 8 weeks he wondered if it was worth putting the Power Truck program back up for 8 weeks. Commissioner Waldron asked how far out the District was for the loaner. Lt. Sulpy reported that from the date the District signs the paperwork it will take 2-3 days to letter the ambulance to State specifications before it will be transferred to the District for registration. Lt. Sulpy reported that after that the ambulance has to go to Trenton for inspection all of which can take up to 4 weeks. Commissioner Waldron asked Asst. Chief Martin for his thoughts on putting the Power Truck program back because if the District is doing the loaner anyway it really does not matter when Ambulance 32 goes out for repair as the District should still have 2 ambulances in service. Asst. Chief Martin felt that the District needs to get the loaner ambulance in District first before making any other plans. Commissioner Waldron felt it would save time to decide now that when the loaner ambulance comes in the District will start the Power Truck program as opposed to waiting for the meeting after the loaner comes in to decide. Commissioner Waldron noted that the District could start the Power Truck program now with 2 ambulances in service and then the District will have 3 ambulances for a while. Commissioner Waldron asked if the Board wanted to implement the Power Truck Program now. Commissioner Waldron reported that there have been some back to back calls recently that had to pass off because the 2<sup>nd</sup> ambulance was not staffed. Asst. Chief Martin felt that the Power Truck program was discussed earlier this year and it was decided that the District was going to revisit it again next year. The Board decided to hold off on the Power Truck program discussions until next year.

**BUDGET:** Administrator Schultz reported that the 2024 District Budget was finalized by the District accountant and this evening the Board will vote to introduce the budget along with a referendum resolution to exceed the 2% cap. Commissioner Waldron asked if the tonight's 2024 budget was without the full 2-cent increase. Administrator Schultz reported that the current budget does not include the full 2% allowable increase. Commissioner Waldron asked if there was going to be a discussion on increasing the budget by the full 2-cent allowable. Commissioner Keyser reported that he would like to discuss it because he is in favor of doing it. Commissioner Waldron asked Administrator Schultz if the accountant is ready to act upon it if the Board decides to increase the budget by the full 2%. Administrator Schultz felt that the accountant was ready. Commissioner Keyser reported that while reviewing the 2024 Budget he noticed

that the proposed tax increase was 1.92% and felt that it would be beneficial to go up the full 2% to get an additional \$65,000 for future capital purchases. Commissioner Keyser felt it was important that the District save for future capital purchases. Commissioner Keyser noted that the Board will introduce the 2024 budget tonight but that it can be amended on January 4<sup>th</sup>. Administrator Schultz asked the Board to defer the conversation until the resolution to introduce the budget so that he could speak with legal counsel.

Commissioner Keyser reported that the other thing that the Board discussed was a new piece of apparatus and a new firehouse which will be on the ballot in February. Commissioner Keyser reported that he would like to have a Special Meeting and notify all the residents so they can hear from the Board, accountant, and architect about the 2 questions they will vote on in February. Commissioner Waldron asked if the architect has been told that he will be needed in February. Deputy Administrator Hark Jr. reported that he is trying to get him to come to the December 21 meeting. Commissioner Waldron felt that the December 21 presentation was separate from the whole marketing plan that was discussed early on in the project. Deputy Administrator Hark Jr. reported that the architect gave the District the name of the marketing firm that they use and noted that the architect would also come to any Special Meeting. Commissioner Waldron felt that the marketing program needs to be put together soon because the Special Meeting will need to be held soon. Commissioner Keyser noted that the Special Meeting should be held at the Town Hall general meeting room so the District should reach out and find out when the room is available. Deputy Administrator Hark Jr. reported that they would reach out to the architect and asked if Commissioner Keyser had a date in mind for the Special Meeting. Commissioner Keyser reported that he did not have any date in mind but it has to be before February 17.

**PERSONNEL:** Commissioner DeSimone reported that the Board would need to go into Executive Session.

**NEGOTIATIONS:** Commissioner Keyser reported that he and Commissioner DeSimone hope to meet with Lt. Ujfalussy on December 15<sup>th</sup> at 4 p.m.

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

**BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS:** Nothing to report.

**APPARATUS/EQUIPMENT AND MAINTENANCE:** Commissioner Keyser asked what the District was going to do with Ladder 33 now that the brakes were fixed.

Commissioner DeSimone asked for clarification that the ladder could not be used. Commissioner Keyser confirmed that the aerial could not be used and he thought there was an issue with the gauges. Commissioner DeSimone felt that the Board made the decision to go forward with the purchase of a new ladder truck. Commissioner Waldron thought that Administrator Schultz had indicated that VFIS would not insure the apparatus so it could not go anywhere. Commissioner Dugan Jr. felt that if the Board does not plan to repair and recertify the truck that it is useless to the District and should be sold. Asst. Chief Martin noted that if the truck sits idle for too long the injectors will get gunked up and will cost money to get fixed. Commissioner Cornine asked if the District could ask some of the new ladder vendors if they are interested in a trade in. Asst. Chief Martin felt there would not be any interest and the vendors tell clients that they should sell used apparatus privately to get the most money. Commissioner DeSimone asked if Asst. Chief Martin already had vendors that the District could potentially purchase a demo truck from. Asst. Chief Martin confirmed that he had 3 vendors identified. Commissioner Cornine felt that the Board should hold off on any decision on Ladder 33 until after the vote in February to see if the residents approve the purchase of a new ladder truck or not. Commissioner Cornine felt that the Board should not make \$40,000 in additional repairs to the truck now but may have to consider it if the voters reject the purchase of a new truck. Commissioner Keyser asked for clarification on the insurance status of ladder 33. Administrator Schultz reported that the truck aerial has not met UL's compliance requirements so until all the repair work that has been previously enumerated is done, they will not issue a certificate. Administrator Schultz reported that without the certificate VFIS will not insure the aerial. Commissioner Keyser asked what the Board wanted to do. Commissioner Cornine felt that the Board should keep the truck until after the voters' vote. Commissioner Cornine felt that if the voters approve a new truck than the Board should sell the existing one but if they do not approve it then the prospect of costly repairs may look a bit more appealing. Commissioner Keyser noted that any needed repairs are not in the 2024 budget. Commissioner Waldron reported that regardless of what the voters say, if the truck is not repaired the District will be without a truck for about 3 years. Chief Perrello noted that District 2 is scheduled to receive their new ladder truck at the end of 2024. Chief Perrello reported that there are companies that will rent the District a ladder truck but it is very expensive. Commissioner Cornine felt that the District could rely on Mutual Aid if the voters approve the purchase of a new truck until the truck is purchased but did not want to burden Mutual Aid

indefinitely by selling the existing truck only to have the voters not approve a new one. The Board agreed to leave Ladder 33 out of service until the District knows what the taxpayers will the District to do. Administrator Schultz asked Asst. Chief Martin if there was anything safety wise or with the pump that needs to be done. Asst. Chief Martin reported that the only thing that needs to be replaced immediately is the rear tires. Administrator Schultz noted that VFIS is not insuring the aerial but as long as the rest of the truck is deemed safe it can be used as a very big pumper. Commissioner Cornine noted that the Board could ask another agency to certify the aerial after looking at the current report from UL. Administrator Schultz reported that ATC is going to be local on December 20 and he will reach out to see if they are willing to look at Truck 33. Commissioner Keyser asked if there were any other questions on Truck 33. There were no questions.

**INSURANCE:** Commissioner Keyser asked about the status of negotiations with Liberty Mutual regarding the District Workmen's Comp insurance. Administrator Schultz reported that the premium had already been reduced and felt that after submitting further paperwork felt that it would be further reduced.

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

**WEBSITE:** Up to date.

**PLANNING COMMITTEE:** Nothing to report.

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

**RECORDS RETENTION:** Nothing to report.

**LIAISON TO HANOVER TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE:** Commissioner Keyser asked Committeeman Cahill about the status of the fines for false alarms. Committeeman Cahill reported that he has the topic on the agenda for the Executive Session at the next Committee meeting.

**OLD BUSINESS:** None.

**NEW BUSINESS:** Commissioner Waldron reported that there are 3 financial items to discuss. Commissioner Waldron reported that Chief Perrello has asked if our District will go along with the District 2 Board in splitting the cost of the CPR cards for the Whippany Park Senior Class. Commissioner Waldron indicated that the District 3 portion would be \$630. Commissioner Keyser asked if the Police Department had been approached to contribute. Chief Perrello reported that he had not but he can work on that as well. Commissioner Cornine made a motion

to tentatively approve the \$630 if District administration can find the money, seconded by Commissioner Waldron. All were in favor. Commissioner Waldron reported that the second request is for District 3 to split the cost of the After the Fire program for the high school seniors again with District 2. Commissioner Waldron indicated the cost would be \$750. Commissioner Waldron made a motion to pay \$750 for the After the Fire program, seconded by Commissioner Cornine. All were in favor. Chief Perrello reported that the program would take place in Spring 2024. Commissioner Waldron reported that the last item was actually very old business regarding sharing the cost of District 2 setting up an air trailer. Commissioner Waldron reported that District 2 asked District 3 to help fund the air trailer but due to changing specifications and safety issues District 3 has not yet contributed to the cost of the trailer. Commissioner Waldron reported that the trailer ended up being less complex than originally thought and that Commissioner Keyser has received satisfactory air quality and safety issues reports. Commissioner Waldron reported that the Board had originally agreed to help fund the air trailer and the cost is less than was originally agreed upon. Commissioner Waldron asked if there are any ongoing costs associated with the trailer. Chief Perrello reported that the air is free but there has been some maintenance cost in changing some of the fittings and hydrotesting is due next year. The Board agreed to have a check ready for signature at the next meeting. Chief Perrello agreed to let District 3 know the exact amount.

Commissioner Keyser reported that Rep. Mikkie Sherrill is having her 2023 Heroes recognition breakfast at the Rec Center on Tuesday, December 19<sup>th</sup>. Asst. Chief Martin reported that the location may have been changed to Parsippany.

#### **REMINDERS:**

The next Regular Meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners will be held on Thursday, December 21, 2023 at 7:00 P.M.

The next Joint Fire Prevention Board Meeting will be determined.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** Chief Perrello reported that he received a call from Jeff Paul from the County asking why a Commissioner from his District was calling to ask why he would be looking to have an ambulance be stationed at the District 2 firehouse. Commissioner Keyser indicated he was curious about what was going on with it. Chief Perrello reported that the District 2 union is in the middle of contract negotiations and they are trying to improve services in District 2 with 24-hour EMS coverage.



Administrator Schultz thanked the Fire Co. and everyone else who participated in putting together the Tree Lighting. Administrator Schultz felt that the tree looks beautiful and is a hallmark of the Town and everyone involved should be commended for their actions.

Commissioner Keyser reported that the Board would consider the Resolutions after Executive Session.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION: Commissioner DeSimone read Resolution 23-12-07-134 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 8:02 p.m.**

Personnel matters were discussed, and action will be taken.

**The Board came out of closed session at 9:00 p.m.**

Deputy Administrator Hark Jr. counted the ballots and reported that the voters unanimously approved the purchase of computer equipment and SCBA.

Administrator Schultz reported that the accountant has amended the 2024 budget to include the full 2% tax increase and this will be the budget that the Board is considering in the following resolutions.

#### **RESOLUTIONS:**

**Commissioner Desimone read Resolution 23-12-07-130 allowing for cap referendum. Commissioner Cornine made a motion to introduce the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Dugan Jr. All were in favor.**

**Commissioner DeSimone read Resolution 23-12-07-131 introducing the 2024 Budget. Commissioner Waldron made a motion to introduce the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Dugan Jr. All were in favor.**

**Commissioner DeSimone read Resolution 23-12-07-132 authorizing filing of ARPF Grant Application. Commissioner Cornine made a motion to introduce the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Dugan Jr. All were in favor.**

**Commissioner DeSimone read Resolution 23-12-07-133 appointing DFS liaison. Commissioner Dugan Jr. made a motion to introduce the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Waldron. All were in favor.**

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

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by

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Mary Lou DeSimone, Secretary