

## May 18, 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 May 18, 2023 in accordance with 1silence for all those who have given their lives in service of their communities and nation.

**ATTENDANCE:** Commissioners Michael Dugan Jr., Gary Keyser, and Shawn Waldron were present. Commissioners Steven Cornine and Mary Lou DeSimone were absent.

Asst. Fire Chief Martin, Administrator Schultz, Mr. James Hark Jr., EMT Makar, and EMT Perrone were also in attendance.

**DEPART FROM REGULAR AGENDA:** The Board departed from the regular agenda to recognize the following Eagle Scouts.

Commissioner Dugan Jr. read Resolution 23-05-18-61 recognizing Eagle Scout Wyatt Lieto, Commissioner Waldron made a motion introducing the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Dugan Jr. All were in favor. Commissioners Cornine and DeSimone were absent.

Commissioner Keyser reported that resolutions recognizing the other Eagle Scouts were passed at a prior Board meeting. Commissioner Keyser noted that copies of the resolutions would be given to each Eagle Scout after they were signed by the Secretary.

The Board recognized Eagle Scouts Wyatt Lieto, Michael Hoppes, Ian W. McSorley, Michael R. Grogan, James Efrain Jeffers, and Noah H. Kaplan. The Eagle Scouts each shared the Eagle Projects they had worked on with the Board. The Board congratulated each of the Eagle Scouts on their accomplishment and wished them well in their future endeavors.

The Board returned to the regular agenda.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** None.

**CORRESPONDENCE:** Commissioner Keyser read a letter from Poelstra Properties regarding their interest in purchasing the parking lot that the District owns adjacent to the Post Office.

## **APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES:**

The minutes from the May 4, 2023 Regular Meeting were reviewed.

Amendments to Previous Minutes: None.

Commissioner Waldron made a motion to approve the minutes from the May 4, 2023 Regular Meeting. Commissioner Dugan Jr. seconded the motion. All were in favor. Commissioners Cornine and DeSimone were absent.

**REPORT OF THE TREASURER:** Commissioner Waldron reported that the District is operating within budget.

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

**CHIEF'S REPORT:** Asst. Chief Martin submitted his Bi-Monthly report and supplemental reports on May 17, 2023. Asst. Chief Martin had the following additions to his report.

Asst. Chief Martin reported that the air filter for Truck 33 came in today and will be installed in house.

Commissioner Waldron noted that all mandatory training was required to be completed by February 28, 2023 and asked if the deadline was put out to the membership. Asst. Chief Martin reported that the membership was informed of the deadline. Commissioner Waldron asked if Asst. Chief Martin was taking action with those members who are delinquent. Asst. Chief Martin reported that there were only 2 people that he was concerned with as the remainder were 2<sup>nd</sup> floor auxiliary members. Fire Co. President Hark Jr. reported that he has reached out to the members about the situation.

Commissioner Keyser noted that Asst. Chief Martin included patch and badge samples in his report. Asst. Chief Martin reported that the patch and badge samples were submitted for the Board's approval. Commissioner Waldron noted that since the new patch would be worn by any operational members both Hanover Township Fire District 3 and Cedar Knolls Fire Dept. are included on the patch. Asst. Chief Martin reported that the new patch would be worn on the left sleeve but a company patch could be worn under the American Flag on the right sleeve. Commissioner Keyser questioned the cost of providing each member with new patches. Asst. Chief Martin reported that the District would no longer be embroidering either the patch or names on the shirts because it is cost prohibitive so this would allow patches to be reused on different shirts. Commissioner

Keyser felt that Fire Co. President Hark Jr. should discuss this with the Fire Co. and move forward after that. Commissioner Waldron agreed that the Board should speak with the fire Co. and ensure that there is money in the budget to cover the cost. Asst. Chief Martin felt that the Board needs to move forward on this and uniforms for the compensated staff because they need new uniforms and take their time with the Fire Co. The Board chose the patch with Cedar Knolls Fire Dept. on top and Hanover Township Fire Dist. 3 on the bottom. Commissioner Waldron made a motion to proceed with the new patches for the career staff, seconded by Commissioner Dugan Jr. All were in favor. Commissioners Cornine and DeSimone were absent.

**EMS:** Nothing to report.

**BUDGET:** Commissioner Waldron reported that the budget is tight and the Board has to purchase a new uniform for each of the career staff. Commissioner Waldron reported that the rest of the compensated staff may need some uniform pieces as well so the Board has to find money in the budget for this. Commissioner Waldron noted that Asst. Chief Martin has received 3 quotes for uniforms with the lowest quote being the 1<sup>st</sup> one so the Board knows what each uniform will cost and can now look at the budget to find some money. Asst. Chief Martin reported that he is only looking to purchase Spring and Summer uniforms at this point. Commissioner Keyser noted that it does not matter what time of the year the purchases are made because the money needs to be found in the annual budget. Commissioner Waldron reported that the last 4 hires were never issued the 3 uniforms due to new employees and if the money cannot be found in this year's budget then it should be put in the budget for next year.

**PERSONNEL:** Commissioner Waldron reported that the Board has resolutions for COEs for one volunteer Firefighter, one volunteer EMT, and 2 Per Diem EMTs before it tonight. Commissioner Waldron reported that there is also a resolution appointing a Per Diem EMT that was offered a COE at the last meeting.

Commissioner Waldron reported that he and Administrator Schultz met with the FMBA regarding a difference of opinion about whether a MOA was done properly last year. Commissioner Waldron reported that all career personnel under the FMBA contract has been abiding by all factions of the MOA. Commissioner Waldron reported that recently there was a complaint about the discrepancy between the contract and MOA health insurance optout payout. Commissioner Waldron reported that he believes the issue has been resolved.

**NEGOTIATIONS:** Nothing to report.

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

**BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS:** Commissioner Keyser reported that he had items to discuss under Old Business.

**APPARATUS/EQUIPMENT AND MAINTENANCE:** Commissioner Keyser asked about the status of the light tower on Engine 34. Asst. Chief Martin reported that he got a quote on it but based on some of the other information that was received recently he is a little apprehensive to move forward with it.

**INSURANCE:** Nothing to report.

**BY-LAWS:** Administrator Schultz reported that the 2<sup>nd</sup> reading for the proposed changes to the By-Laws cannot happen tonight because 4 Commissioners need to be present.

**WEBSITE:** Up to date.

**PLANNING COMMITTEE:** Commissioner Waldron reported that there is nothing new since last meeting.

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

**RECORDS RETENTION:** Nothing to report.

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

**OLD BUSINESS:** Commissioner Keyser asked about the status of the Annual Physicals policy. Commissioner Waldron reported that the Board has received an opinion from the attorney who questioned why the Board is not requiring volunteers to have an annual physical either from the Board appointed provider or their personal physician if they complete the required paperwork. Commissioner Waldron reported that the attorney felt that annual physicals should be mandatory. Commissioner Waldron noted that most neighboring departments only require a physical for new employees. Commissioner Keyser felt that volunteers can sign a waiver if they do not want to have an annual physical. Commissioner Waldron reported that the attorney gave his opinion on the liability for the opt out option. Commissioner Dugan Jr. did not feel that an annual physical should be mandatory. Commissioner Waldron reported that there are tests that are required based on age for an annual physical. Commissioner Waldron reported that by next meeting the Board will have an idea

if the optout form can be used or not. Commissioner Waldron noted that he hates to go against the opinion of the attorney that the Board pays for.

Commissioner Waldron reported that the District has a Ford ambulance that is relatively new and 2 older ambulances one of which is a remount. Commissioner Waldron reported that the 2 older ambulances are costing the District money each year to maintain them. Commissioner Waldron reported that Asst. Chief Martin has an opinion where he thinks the District should go with this. Asst. Chief Martin reported that he has a \$16,000 estimate for repairing Ambulance 39 and the ambulance is 13 years old. Asst. Chief Martin felt that doing the repair would be a complete waste of money. Asst. Chief Martin reported that Ambulance 38 was remounted in 2018. Asst. Chief Martin felt that the Board has 3 options regarding the ambulances. Asst. Chief Martin reported that Option 1 would be to forgo fixing Ambulance 39 and remount it. Asst. Chief Martin reported that he is working to get some prices on the remount and hopes to have them relatively soon. Asst. Chief Martin felt that a remount could take a long time. Asst. Chief Martin reported that Option 2 would be to get rid of both Ambulance 38 and Ambulance 39 and replace them with another one. Asst. Chief Martin reported that he spoke with an ambulance representative who stated that he has a couple of demos coming in relatively soon. Commissioner Keyser asked what make the demos are. Asst. Chief Martin did not know the makes of the demos but felt that it would not be far from the District already has. Commissioner Keyser liked Option 2 over Option 1 and reported that Administrator Schultz would have to inform the Board about the process to move forward. Asst. Chief Martin reported that Option 3 would be to keep Ambulances 32 and 38 and replace Ambulance 39. Asst. Chief Martin recommended keeping Ambulance 38 until a new ambulance was available. Commissioner Keyser asked for a motion to look into selling both Ambulances 38 and 39 so that the process can move forward. Commissioner Waldron reported that there are reasons that the District had 3 ambulances; it allowed 2 ambulances to stay in service while one was out for maintenance and the District is looking to build up staffing to be able to put a power truck back on the road. Commissioner Waldron felt that the Board should get some pricing on replacements before making a motion to get rid of 2 ambulances. Commissioner Keyser reported that he would like to get rid of both ambulances and get a new one. Commissioner Waldron felt that if the pricing is right the District may be able to keep Ambulance 38 as a backup. Asst. Chief Martin felt that the District may get decent money for the box but not much for

the cab and chassis because they need work. Administrator Schultz reminded the Board that they could not touch the money they get for the sale of either ambulances this budget year. Administrator Schultz outlined the process for the sale of the ambulance and the purchase and possible financing of new one. Administrator Schultz estimated that it would be at least 4 months before the Board could sign a contract on a new ambulance. Commissioner Waldron still felt that the first step should be to get prices for a new ambulance. Commissioner Waldron does not want the Board to approve the sale of both ambulances because depending on the price of a demo ambulance the District may be able to keep Ambulance 38. Asst. Chief Martin reported that he is working on getting pricing and timing estimates.

Asst. Chief Martin reported that the Governor of NJ allowed the State bidders to increase their prices due to inflation and this will affect the purchase of a new command vehicle. Asst. Chief Martin recommended that the Board put a little money into Cars 31 and 37 to give them facelifts and the District could get an additional 150,000 miles on each. Asst. Chief Martin recommended getting rid of Car 36 because the Board will get more money for it and it is not set up to be an emergency vehicle due to lack of front-end protection and poor emergency lighting. Commissioner Waldron made a motion to look into selling Car 36 and purchasing a new vehicle to replace Car 36. Commissioner Dugan Jr. seconded the motion. All were in favor. Commissioners Cornine and DeSimone were absent. Administrator Schultz reminded the Board that the new vehicle could not exceed \$60,000 and suggested that the Board not sell Car 36 until a new vehicle is purchased.

Commissioner Waldron reported that the last time the Board was doing promotions there was a change to the policy and his understanding was that it was supposed to be a one time change for that promotional process only. Commissioner Waldron reported that the Board has never had the policy reverted back to the original one. Commissioner Waldron felt that if the Board is in agreement about reverting back to the original policy then it should ask the Asst. Chief to make the change to the policy. Commissioner Waldron reported that he does not want to wait until the next promotional process to make the change and felt the policy should be changed well before any new promotional process. Commissioner Keyser asked for clarification on what policy was being discussed. Commissioner Waldron reported that the Board wanted to change the policy for promotion to lieutenant to include having completed Firefighter 2 but made the

one-time change to allow a successful candidate to complete FF 2 within a year after being promoted because the Board felt that it changed the policy too close to the beginning of any new promotional process. Commissioner Waldron made a motion to change the policy for promotion to lieutenant to be that a candidate must have completed FF 2, seconded by Commissioner Dugan Jr. All were in favor. Commissioners Cornine and DeSimone were absent.

Commissioner Keyser asked if the Board members had received the packet of information on the building inspection from the engineer. The Board members acknowledged receiving the information packet. Commissioner Keyser reported that there are problems with the existing building and felt after discussing different options with Administrator Schultz that the best course of action is to move forward with getting a new building. Commissioner Keyser felt that the District needs to get the cost on different building options along with possible apparatus needs and hire a good public relations firm to talk to the residents. Commissioner Keyser felt that the Township Committee, mayor and some residents will ask why the 2 Fire Districts don't just consolidate. Commissioner Waldron noted that consolidating would not change the need for a usable building on this side of Town. Commissioner Keyser felt that there would be a lot of obstacles to overcome if the Board decides to move forward with the project. Commissioner Waldron felt that first and foremost the Board needs to find out if we can stay in the 3-story side of the building or when we need to vacate that side of the building. Commissioner Keyser felt that the Board should also look into whether there is any office space available to rent. Commissioner Waldron reported that the Committee has already discussed approaching the Churches and/or using Town Hall for public meetings. Commissioner Waldron reported that the Committee is also looking into properties with office space and possibly a bay or two to rent. Commissioner Waldron noted that there was also some talk about splitting up EMS and fire. Commissioner Waldron felt that the Board needs to be cognoscente of the fact that there are residents that live on Forest Way and the District cannot be on the other side of Rt. 10. Commissioner Waldron reported that the architect has a public relations department that will come in to discuss the new building plan with the residents but he did not know if they would come in this early in the project. Commissioners Keyser and Waldron agreed that there is a lot of research that needs to be done before any decisions can be made about the building. Commissioner Waldron noted that the current building is centrally located and that the Committee feels that any new building

should be towards the center of Cedar Knolls. Mr. Hark Jr. reminded the Board that there is a meeting scheduled with H2M on June 5<sup>th</sup> at the firehouse.

Administrator Schultz felt that based on the engineer's statement and the fact that the report has been submitted to VFIS, he felt that the Board should at least allow Planning to move forward with any contingent plans that can come up as quickly as needed. Administrator Schultz reported that H2M will be working on getting a cost on a hybrid building which should cut the cost significantly.

Administrator Schultz reported that the Committee has identified at least one potential property to move people to while the new building project is ongoing.

Administrator Schultz felt that if VFIS comes back tomorrow and says that they will cover X, Y, and Z, and these are things that the District needs to do, the Planning Committee should be allowed to start finding office space and whatever else needs to be done. Administrator Schultz felt that the Committee has been moving along slowly but needs to be able to kick it into high gear now.

Commissioner Waldron made a motion allowing the Planning Committee to move forward with office space for staff according to the engineer recommendations and VFIS accommodations to spend up to \$2000 until the next meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Dugan Jr. all were in favor.

Commissioners Cornine and DeSimone were absent. Commissioner Keyser reminded the Planning Committee to keep the rest of the board in the loop about progress. Administrator Schultz thought it would be prudent to let the Township know what is going on.

**NEW BUSINESS:** Commissioner Keyser asked if the board had seen the letter regarding the possibility of selling the lot next to the post office. Administrator Schultz reported that the letter came today and that every so often the Board receives an inquiry about selling the lot next to the post office. Administrator Schultz reported that the District could also raise the rent the post office pays in monthly rent as the rent has not been raised in over 10 years. Administrator Schultz recommended discussing in executive session since it concerned negotiations.

Asst. Chief Martin reported that he forwarded a copy of the email that he received from the communications center regarding EMS response limits. Asst. Chief Martin asked if everyone understands that CUD (Closest Unit Dispatched) response is 10 minutes from where the ambulance is located, not 10 minutes from our firehouse. Asst. Chief Martin reported that the Board can either decide not to participate in CUD or live with the fact that one of our ambulances may



sometimes be dispatched further than 10 minutes from our firehouse. Commissioner Waldron reported that at an earlier meeting the Board decided that it did not want to pull out of CUD. Asst. Chief Martin reported that the District has received Mutual Aid 20 times so far this year. Commissioner Waldron reported that the figures do not indicate that Mutual Aid was received because 2 ambulances were out from our District. Commissioner Waldron reported that there have been instances when an ambulance was available at the firehouse but it was not used. Commissioner Keyser felt that if there is a 2<sup>nd</sup> ambulance available, it should go out. Commissioner Waldron felt that the individual in charge decided to go with next available on the times that the 2<sup>nd</sup> ambulance did not respond. Commissioner Keyser felt that the Board needs to find out why. Administrator Schultz reported that a firm policy needs to be made regarding getting the 2<sup>nd</sup> ambulance out. Commissioner Waldron reported that the issue is operational and Asst. Chief Martin is aware of it and working on it.

Asst. Chief Martin left to go on a fire call.

**REMINDERS:**

The next regular meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners will be held on Thursday, June 1, 2023 at 7:00 P.M at the firehouse.

The Joint Fire Prevention Board Meeting will be held on Thursday, June 1, 2023 at the District 3 Fire House at 6:30 P.M.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** None.

**RESOLUTIONS:** Commissioner Dugan Jr. asked if anyone had objections to passing the following resolutions by consent agenda. There were no objections.

**Commissioner Dugan Jr. read Resolution 23-05-18-62 appointing Per Diem EMT Spirko.**

**Commissioner Dugan Jr. read Resolution 23-05-18-63 offering a COE to Samantha Bednarz-Shafer.**

**Commissioner Dugan Jr. read Resolution 23-05-18-64 offering a COE to Nora Burd.**

**Commissioner Dugan Jr. read Resolution 23-05-18-65 designating Ambulance 39 as surplus.**

**Commissioner Dugan Jr. read Resolution 23-05-18-66 offering a COE to Janvi Patel.**

**Commissioner Dugan Jr. read Resolution 23-05-18-67 offering a COE to Lorenzo Lima.**

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

**EXECUTIVE SESSION: Commissioner Dugan Jr. read Resolution 23-05-18-68 to enter into executive session. Commissioner Waldron made a motion to introduce the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Dugan Jr. All were in favor. Commissioners Cornine and DeSimone were absent.**

**The Board went into closed session at 8:50 p.m.**

Personnel and financial matters were discussed, and action will be taken.

**The Board came out of closed session at 9:12 p.m.**

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

The meeting was adjourned at 9:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by

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Mary Lou DeSimone, Secretary