

February 22, 2024 Special 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 February 22, 2024 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.

Deputy Administrator Hark Jr., Asst. Chief Martin, Cpt. Costello, FF Colin, FF Martin, FF Ujfalussy, Former Chief Davidson, Fire Co. Member Harrington, Mr. DeSimone, Mr. Lake, Mr. Dugan Sr., and 7 other members of the public were also in attendance.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE OF THE SPECIAL MEETING: This meeting is being held for the purpose of discussing the Fire District's 2024 Budget. There may be a closed session. Formal action may be taken at this meeting.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: None.

DISCUSSION OF THE 2024 BUDGET: Commissioner Keyser reported that while the results of the voting have not been certified it appears that the 2024 Budget has passed but the Referendum was voted down. Commissioner Keyser reported that Administrator Schultz prepared a schedule of the following cuts to the 2024 budget totaling \$203,600 representing the decrease in the amount to be raised by taxation from the Referendum. Commissioner Keyser listed the following reductions in expenses:

EMS Personnel Wages	\$37,800	
Overtime	\$22,000	
Holiday Wages	\$ 2,500	
Sick Time Accrual	\$ 500	
Set Aside for Capital Purchases	\$65,000	
Medical Insurance	\$1,000	
Dental/Vision Insurance	\$ 750	
Workers Compensation	\$11,300	(based on results of audit appeal)
Volunteer Incentive	\$ 5,000	
Health Reimbursement Acct	\$ 5,000	

Conferences	\$ 500
Legal	\$ 1,500
Travel	\$ 250
Office Supplies	\$ 500
Computer Support	\$20,000 (eliminate new PO system)
Inspection Day	\$ 500
General Building Repairs	\$ 5,000
Outside Professionals	\$10,000
Engine Repairs	\$ 2,000
Misc. Hydraulic Tool Maint.	\$ 500
Extinguisher Maint.	\$ 250
TIC Maintenance	\$ 250
Other Apparatus Maint.	\$ 500
Medical Supplies	\$ 250
Class A Uniforms	\$ 500
Class B Uniforms	\$ 2,000
Training Classes	\$ 500
Training Supplies	\$ 500
Recruitment/Retention	\$ 750
Annual Physicals	\$ 2,000
Immunizations	\$ 250
Radios/Pagers	\$ 500
Rescue Equipment	\$ 500
Fire Equipment	\$ 2,000
PPE	\$ 3,000

Administrator Schultz joined the meeting at 7:10 P.M.

Commissioner Keyser reported that the District may have to utilize a more austere staffing model at times and outlined recommendations for the order in which both open EMS and Fire shifts will be backfilled. Commissioner Keyser outlined recommendations for what the District considers both preferred staffing and minimal staffing for both EMS and Fire. Commissioner Cornine asked for clarification that the staffing recommendations are guidelines to help the District keep a tight ship and can be worked out with the Chief. Asst. Chief Martin noted that he was not involved with making the staffing recommendations list.

Commissioner Waldron clarified that Administrator Schultz put together the documents for the Board to review. Commissioner Cornine asked if money is saved in certain accounts it can be applied to other accounts where it is needed.

Commissioner Keyser reported that if budget monies need to be transferred between lines later in the year, it can be done. Administrator Schultz reported that if the District has some unanticipated income, the Board would need to ask the State for permission to bring the monies into the budget and specifically outline where the money is expected.

Commissioner Waldron reported that he is not pleased that Volunteer Incentive is being reduced by \$5,000 but otherwise is satisfied with the reductions.

Administrator Schultz reported that the \$5,000 could be given back towards the end of the year if the District is operating under budget.

Commissioner Keyser asked if there were any questions on the recommended amendments to the 2024 Budget. There were no questions.

Commissioner Keyser thanked the residents who came out tonight and voted on Saturday to approve the budget. Commissioner Keyser noted that if the budget was defeated, it would have been up to the Township to decide how much would need to get cut from the budget.

Commissioner Keyser asked if anyone from the public had any questions or comments.

Former Chief Davidson asked for clarification that if the 2024 Budget had been defeated in addition to the Referendum then the District would have had to cut more than \$203,600. Commissioner Keyser confirmed that this was correct.

Mr. Yannis asked if the Board has reviewed that the District will still be able to operate with the budget cuts that were outlined tonight or does the Board need to look into each cut to see if they are feasible. Commissioner Waldron reported that Administrator Schultz has been heavily involved with preparing the budget for many years and the Board relies on his expertise and knowledge of past practice to know where cuts can be made. Administrator Schultz reported that the \$203,600 referendum was divided among a few summary statutory budget lines and these amounts need to be removed from the 2024 budget.

Administrator Schultz explained that the cuts to individual accounts making up each summary statutory line are determined by the District so that while Salaries and Wages needs to be reduced by \$62,800, the District will decide which salaries lines are reduced.

Former Chief Davidson asked if the proposed budget cuts document will be put up on the District website so that the residents know how the vote is impacting

the District operations. Former Chief Davidson felt that with all the comments on social media about the budget it would behoove the Board to be as transparent as possible. Commissioner Cornine felt that in addition to posting the budget cuts the District should state that services will continue at a good level even with the tight budget. Commissioner Keyser reported that the District has had a tight budget the past few years and has been able to make things work. Commissioner Waldron felt that the residents should also be made aware that the District has had to cut deeply into savings those years.

RESOLUTIONS: Administrator Schultz noted that the resolution before the Board to make the budget cuts for the referendum will have to be nullified if the County Clerk determines that the referendum did not fail due to late counting of mail in votes. Administrator Schultz did not feel that this would happen.

Commissioner DeSimone read Resolution 24-02-22-19 amending the District's 2024 Budget consistent with the rejection of the Cap Referendum.

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

Commissioner Cornine remarked that the public rarely attends the Board Meetings and wanted to be sure that those in attendance tonight got the information that they were looking for. Mr. Yannis asked about the outcome of the other items that were on the ballot. Commissioner Keyser reported that the preliminary results are:

2024 Budget passed 163 to 144

Cap Referendum failed 110 to 195

Ambulance purchase passed 163 to 143

Aerial Apparatus purchase failed 68 to 239

New firehouse building failed 49 to 254

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Commissioner DeSimone read Resolution 24-02-22-18 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 7:34 p.m.

Personnel matters were discussed, and action will be taken.

The Board came out of closed session at 8:15 p.m.

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 8:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by

Mary Lou DeSimone, Secretary