

## **June 6, 2024 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 6, 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., Michael Dugan Sr., and Gary Keyser were present.

Deputy Administrator Hark Jr., Chief Martin, District 2 Chief Perrello, FF Martin, FF Ujfalussy, EMT Waldron, some District 2 members, and 3 members of the public were also in attendance.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** District 2 FF Wittnebert reported that he has heard rumors of Hanover Township using Atlantic Health for EMS and since the District 2 Board are not forthcoming with information asked the District 3 Board if they had any information about this. Commissioner Cornine reported that he did have information and asked Deputy Administrator Hark Jr. to provide FF Wittnebert with a copy of the letter that he sent to the Township Council members concerning this. Commissioner Cornine reported that the rumors were confirmed a few weeks ago when District 3 received an email asking us to come to a meeting with Atlantic Health, Hanover Township representatives, and District 2 representatives. Commissioner Cornine reported that the meeting was had at the direction of District 2 commissioners. Commissioner Cornine reported that the District 3 representatives sat in the meeting, listened, and then came back and shared the information with the full District 3 Board at a Special Meeting last week. Commissioner Cornine reported that he then drafted a letter to the Township saying that District 3 wanted nothing to do with it as there were no known problems with District 3 EMS and if there were problems that District 3 will address them. Commissioner Cornine reported that this is where it stands at the moment. Commissioner Cornine reported that the District 2 Board did initiate the meeting but he could not speak to what they share in District 2 since he does not attend their meetings. Commissioner Cornine reported that the District 3 Board is not in favor of privatizing EMS and appreciate our staff and the District 2 staff. Commissioner Cornine noted that the letter will be posted on our website after the minutes from the last meeting are adopted. Commissioner Cornine

reported that currently Hanover Township District 3 is, by resolution, the only agency that provides EMS transport in Hanover Township. Commissioner Cornine noted that District 2 does the fantastic 1<sup>st</sup> responder program in the interest of our residents. Commissioner Cornine reported that District 3 does not see a problem and plans to just forge forward. Commissioner Cornine reported that the Township Council is the one who gave District 3 the authority to provide EMS and is the only one who can take it away so the ball is in their court.

Ms. Atkinson asked if there has been any feedback on the letter that the Board sent to the Township Committee members regarding EMS privatization. Commissioner Cornine reported that there has been no official response. Commissioner Keyser reported that he has attended a number of District 2 Board meetings in the past and when asked about EMS it seemed that nothing was being done at the time. Commissioner Keyser noted that prior to the May 21<sup>st</sup> meeting between all the parties an email chain came to light indicating that District 2 has been working on EMS privatization for quite some time. District 2 Chief Perrello reported that he and the District 2 staff have no knowledge of the time frame that the District 2 Board has been working on EMS other than the discussion of the email chain at the May 21 meeting. Chief Perrello reported that he and the District 2 staff are not in support of privatizing EMS either.

**CORRESPONDENCE:** Commissioner Cornine reported that the Board has received correspondence from District 2 Chief Perrello asking if District 3 would like to split the cost of the After the Fire program for the high school seniors again this year. This will be discussed under New Business.

#### **APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES:**

**The minutes from the May 16, 2024 Regular Meeting were reviewed.**

**Amendments to the Previous Minutes: None.**

**Commissioner Keyser made a motion to approve the minutes from the May 16, 2024 Regular Meeting, seconded by Commissioner Dugan Jr. All were in favor.**

**The minutes from the May 28, 2024 Special Meeting were reviewed.**

**Amendments to the Previous Minutes: None.**

**Commissioner Keyser made a motion to approve the minutes from the May 28, 2024 Special Meeting, seconded by Commissioner Dugan Jr. All were in favor.**

**The minutes from the May 2, 2024 Executive Session were reviewed.**

**Amendments to the Previous Minutes: None.**

**Commissioner Dugan Jr. made a motion to approve the minutes from the May 2, 2024 Executive Session, seconded by Commissioner Keyser. All were in favor.**

**REPORT OF THE TREASURER:** Commissioner Dugan Sr. distributed the interim May 2024 financial reports and indicated that the District is operating within budget although things are still tight. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that there are some sizable expenditures coming up such as \$6,000 for a new computer server that was approved last year. Commissioner Cornine asked if there were any questions for the treasurer. There were no questions.

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

**CHIEF'S REPORT:** Chief Martin submitted his Bi-Monthly report on June 6, 2024 and did not have any additions. Commissioner Cornine asked if there were any questions for Chief Martin. There were no questions.

**EMS:** Nothing to report.

**BUDGET:** Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the 2025 budget process should begin in July 2024. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the 2023 Audit was received and asked the Board members to review it so the Board could act on it at the next meeting.

**PERSONNEL:** Commissioner DeSimone reported that there was no need for an Executive Session.

Commissioner Cornine reported that this is a small agency and 90% of the stuff that the Personnel Committee are things that the agency should be able to self-manage or avoid and asked the staff to be mindful of the surroundings. Commissioner Cornine felt that this agency is better than some of the issues before the Personnel Committee indicate and asked everyone to do better.

**NEGOTIATIONS:** Commissioner Keyser reported that Negotiations are proceeding.

**LIAISON TO THE VOLUNTEERS:** Commissioner Dugan Jr. reported that there is a meeting on Monday, June 10.

**BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS:** Commissioner Dugan Jr. reported that there is a leak in the 1<sup>st</sup> floor hallway following all the heavy rain that will be looked into.

**APPARATUS/EQUIPMENT AND MAINTENANCE:** Commissioner Dugan Jr. reported that Engine 34 is back in service and Ambulance 38 is out of service for repairs. Commissioner Keyser asked what the issue was with Ambulance 38.

Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the District has not received a report on necessary repairs yet.

**INSURANCE:** Nothing to report.

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

**WEBSITE:** Commissioner Dugan Jr. asked that Deputy Administrator Hark Jr. add the call numbers for April 2024 to the website.

**PLANNING COMMITTEE:** Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the Planning Committee met today and is working on updating the cost to secure the building so that the committee will know approximately how much can be spent on other building improvements. Deputy Administrator Hark Jr. reported that the Booker Grant that the District applied for has made it to the next level of the process and the District should know in the next 4-5 months if it is approved, so the District needs to sort out the options for securing the building. Commissioner Cornine reported that this is about a \$4 million grant that was kicked back by Senator Booker's office to their actual allotted funding and noted that approval would be good for both the district and the taxpayers.

Commissioner Cornine reported that Shared Services are also rolled into the Planning Committee. Commissioner Cornine reported that in some of the meetings that District 3 had with District 2 about EMS some things were discussed. Commissioner Cornine reported that if any short comings are found serving the other residents of this municipality, District 3 is prepared to discuss and enter into MOAs with District 2 to even the ambulance coverage in the Township based on heat maps, use of facilities so staffing can go different places, revisiting all of the old presumptions that staff can't cross staff, etc.

Commissioner Cornine reported that District 3 is willing to revisit all this and will address anything that is a problem. Commissioner Cornine felt that Shared Services may be one of the big things. Commissioner Cornine reported that District 2 and District 3 are working together on shared technologies for computer programs and the felt the Districts should keep moving forward in other areas.

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

**RECORDS RETENTION:** Nothing to report.

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

**OLD BUSINESS:** Deputy Administrator Hark Jr. reported that the District is set to go before the Local Finance Board on June 12 regarding the application for financing for the new Ambulance 39.

Deputy Administrator Hark Jr. reported that Truck 33 has been picked up and removed from the vehicle insurance policy.

Commissioner Keyser asked about the status of the new Fire Official's vehicle. Deputy Administrator Hark Jr. reported that vehicle is in the shop having a case installed and graphics applied. Deputy Administrator Hark Jr. reported that the dealer said the vehicle should be ready in 2-3 weeks.

**NEW BUSINESS:** Commissioner Cornine reported that FF Ujfalussy reached out to him to revisit a conversation the District has had in the past about exercise in the firehouse. Commissioner Cornine reported that he is a big supporter of it but the District ran out of places to put the exercise equipment so the discussion fell flat. Commissioner Cornine reported that FF Ujfalussy would like to revisit the conversation due to the new-found space in the apparatus bay. Commissioner Cornine reported that there are other activities being had in the firehouse that may be encompassed under physical fitness. Commissioner Cornine felt that before speaking with the Chief and the Fire Co. about this he wanted to make sure that the Board felt that the staff should be allowed to exercise in the firehouse. Commissioner Cornine reported that if the Board agrees then the staff can work with Chief Martin to come up with a policy. Commissioner DeSimone expressed concern about what would happen if someone was hurt while exercising. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that they would be covered by Workmen's Compensation because it is an approved activity. Commissioner Cornine reported that the Board expects our people to arrive on scene fit and capable of doing the job so stretching and exercising is well within the norm and it is industry standard. The Board supported allowing the staff to exercise at the firehouse at the discretion of the Chief. Commissioner Cornine asked Chief Perrello if District 2 had exercise equipment in their firehouse. Chief Perrello reported that the District 2 firehouse had a gym on premises.

Commissioner Keyser reported that the first Thursday in July is July 4<sup>th</sup> and he made a motion to have a Board meeting on Tuesday, July 2<sup>nd</sup> instead.

Commissioner Dugan Jr. seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Deputy Administrator Hark Jr. reported that Chief Perrello has been moving forward with the proposed shared services for computer software and asked that

the Board approve continuing to move forward with getting quotes for the shared service. Commissioner Cornine asked if the vendor would require the contract to have a single payer. Chief Perrello reported that he has been using this model for ease so as not to complicate matters but felt that each District paying their half individually could be worked out with the vendor.

Commissioner Keyser asked if the Town has been sent the Fire Prevention Ordinance that he has been working with Lt. McGuinness on. Chief Perrello reported that the Town will have the ordinance with the changes that the Town asked for being addressed tomorrow. Chief Perrello reported that Mr. Giorgio assured him that the Town would move on it.

Commissioner Cornine reported that every year District 2 & 3 split the cost of the After the Fire program for the Whippany Park High School seniors and this year the overall cost is \$1500. Commissioner Keyser made a motion to split the \$1500 cost of the After the Fire program, seconded by Commissioner DeSimone. All were in favor. Commissioner Cornine asked the bookkeeper to prepare a check to the Joint Board so it could be signed this evening.

#### **REMINDERS:**

The next Regular Meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners will be held on Thursday, June 20, 2024 at 7:00 P.M.

The next Joint Fire Prevention Board Meeting will be held on Monday, September 9, 2024 at 6:30 P.M. at the District 2 Firehouse.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** District 2 FF Wittnebert thanked the Board for the copy of the letter that was sent to the Township Council members.

District 2 Chief Perrello reported that the District 2 new ladder truck is scheduled to be delivered in December 2024.

Ms. Atkinson asked if the 2 Districts were still looking into consolidating. Commissioner Cornine reported that the consolidation talks have been tabled for the time being and that the Districts are looking into some shared services agreements. Commissioner Cornine felt that if there are enough shared service agreements in place then the discussion about consolidating could be un-tabled and it might be a simpler conversation at that time. Ms. Atkinson felt that the District 2 ambulance thing just pushes the 2 Districts further apart. Commissioner Dugan Sr. felt that the final outcome will decide whether it pushes the Districts further apart. Commissioner Cornine felt that our previous Chief and Chief

Perrello put together a presentation with information that is beneficial to both sides and he is adamantly opposed to letting personalities get involved that can rub people the wrong way. Commissioner Cornine felt that if consolidating makes business sense down the road then both Boards would vote for it. Commissioner Cornine noted that obviously not being forthcoming about massive changes like the EMS provider and presenting it the way it was presented doesn't sit well but the residents should vote for the people that they want to facilitate the change they are looking for at the next election. Commissioner Cornine felt that if that is how they want to do business then that is on them but luckily the Town Council is very receptive and responsive to District 3. Commissioner Cornine reported that our Town Council liaison is very responsive and shares his opinions and allows us to continue doing business.

**RESOLUTIONS:** Commissioner Cornine asked if there were any objections to voting by consent agenda on the resolutions. There were no objections.

**Commissioner DeSimone read Resolution 24-06-06-73 appointing Per Diem EMT Studer.**

**Commissioner DeSimone read Resolution 24-06-06-74 appointing Per Diem EMT Schneider.**

**Commissioner DeSimone read Resolution 24-06-06-75 appointing Per Diem EMT Lucarello.**

**Commissioner DeSimone read Resolution 24-06-06-76 appointing Junior EMT Volunteer Smith.**

**Commissioner DeSimone read Resolution 24-06-06-77 accepting the resignation of Per Diem EMT Spirko.**

**Commissioner Dugan Jr. made a motion to introduce the resolutions, seconded by Commissioner Keyser. All were in favor. Commissioner Cornine abstained.**

**EXECUTIVE SESSION: None.**

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

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by

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Mary Lou DeSimone, Secretary