

October 16, 2025 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 October 16, 2025 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 Mary Lou DeSimone, Michael Dugan Sr., Robert Gallagher, Thomas Harrington, and Gary Keyser were present.

Administrator Hark Jr., Asst. Chief McGuinness, Lt. Gilson, and members of the public were also in attendance.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Ms. Atkinson asked if either Commissioners Dugan Sr. or Keyser had brought a report back to the Board about what was discussed at the District 2 Monthly BFC Meeting that they attended. Commissioner Keyser reported that the District 2 BFC Meeting will be discussed tonight.

CORRESPONDENCE: None.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES:

The minutes from the October 2, 2025 Regular Meeting were reviewed.

Amendments to the Previous Minutes: None.

Commissioner Gallagher made a motion to approve the minutes from the October 2, 2025 Regular Meeting, seconded by Commissioner Harrington. All were in favor.

The minutes from the October 9, 2025 Special Meeting were reviewed.

Amendments to the Previous Minutes: None.

Commissioner Dugan Sr. made a motion to approve the minutes from the October 9, 2025 Special Meeting, seconded by Commissioner Gallagher. All were in favor.

The minutes from the September 18, 2025 Executive Session were reviewed.

Amendments to the Previous Minutes: None.

Commissioner Harrington made a motion to approve the minutes from the September 18, 2025 Executive Session, seconded by Commissioner Dugan Sr. All were in favor.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER: Commissioner Dugan Sr. distributed interim October 2025 financials and reported that through 79.2% of the year the District has spent 82.86% of the budget. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that things are still tight.

Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the Board was signing checks totaling \$44,493 tonight.

Report of Fire Commissioner Board Committees and Chief of Department:

MONTHLY REPORTS: Asst. Chief McGuinness reported that he forwarded the incorrect monthly report and would send out the correct one after the meeting.

Asst. Chief McGuinness reported that he has two issues to discuss in Executive Session. Asst. Chief McGuinness reported that all the trucks are in good shape with the exception of Engine 35 which will go for service on Monday due to a constant “check engine” light being on.

Asst. Chief McGuinness reported that the live burn that was scheduled for October 4th was cancelled by the Academy so District 3 will be doing a joint live burn with Mt. Tabor.

EMS: Commissioner Keyser reported that a couple of the District 3 Commissioners attended the District 2 Monthly BFC meeting on October 13th. Commissioner Keyser reported that the District 2 Board asked District 3 to stop balance billing the District 2 residents. Commissioner Keyser reported that District 3’s EMS billing agent sends out 2 notices to both District 2 and District 3 residents but does not go to collections. Commissioner Gallagher asked if the notices could be stopped to save District 3 the cost of mailing them. Administrator Hark Jr. reported that there are legal requirements that the notices be sent and there is not a separate cost to the District to send them. Commissioner Gallagher felt that it sounds like District 3 is handling the notices the same way for all of Hanover Township by sending two notices and not chasing it. Administrator Hark Jr. reported that the difference is that the notice to District 3 residents states that it is not a bill. Commissioner Gallagher asked if the notices for District 2 residents could be changed to state that they are not a bill. Administrator Hark Jr. reported that there is a legal component to the issue because District 2 residents are not paying for EMS service as part of their fire tax while District 3 residents are. Commissioner Gallagher reported that the reason he suggested it was because if the 2 Districts are rolling into a merger and this seems to be a big issue for District 2 then maybe it would be something to talk

about. Commissioner Harrington asked what the District 2 request has to do with becoming one District. Commissioner Keyser reported that if there was only one fire district in Hanover Township then the differences in EMS billing would go away but it is not relevant to discussions to become one district. Administrator Hark Jr. reported that District 3 has reached out to Mr. Braslow for his opinion since District 2 referenced the Township resolution appointing District 3 as the EMS provider as a reason why District 2 does not have to pay for EMS services. Commissioner Dugan Sr. noted that the Township resolution was passed prior to District 3 billing for EMS and has not changed now that District 3 is billing. Commissioner Gallagher reported that eventually he is going to bring up that District 2 has been dragging their feet about the merger and the same topics are brought up over and over again. Commissioner Gallagher felt that District 3 has almost perfect attendance at the Joint Board meetings while District 2 attendance has been spotty and he is frustrated with going in circles. Commissioner Keyser reported that Administrator Hark Jr. has responded to all the information requests from District 2 but they have not responded to his requests for information. Administrator Hark Jr. reported that he will address this at the next Joint Board meeting on October 27.

BUDGET: Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the preliminary 2026 Budget is status quo as the committee is waiting to get numbers from outside parties. Administrator Hark Jr. reported that the committee is setting up a meeting with the accountant the first week of November because at that point every number should be in except pension.

PERSONNEL: Commissioner Keyser reported that the Board needs to go in to Executive Session.

NEGOTIATIONS: Nothing to report.

LIAISON TO THE VOLUNTEERS: Commissioner Harrington reported that the Fire Co. is working on the Holiday Tree Lighting.

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS: Nothing to report.

APPARATUS/EQUIPMENT AND MAINTENANCE: Commissioner Harrington reported that when Engine 34 was out for the turbo problem, the mechanic did not invoice for labor so a separate invoice for this may be coming.

INSURANCE: Nothing to report.

BY-LAWS: Nothing to report.

WEBSITE: Administrator Hark Jr. reported that the website is up to date.

PLANNING COMMITTEE: Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that he hopes to hear from the architect soon with schematics for the building renovation.

Administrator Hark Jr. reported that the architect called at 5:50 P.M. today to set up a meeting in the next 2 weeks to discuss the schematics they have done.

LIASON TO EXEMPTS: Nothing to report.

RECORDS RETENTION: Nothing to report.

LIAISON TO HANOVER TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE: Nothing to report.

OLD BUSINESS: Administrator Hark Jr. reported the copy of the deed for the parking lot has been forwarded to the USPS agent and the District is waiting for the new 5-year contract with the Post Office regarding the parking lot rental to be returned. Commissioner Keyser asked if the Board will need to pass a resolution for the contract. Administrator Hark Jr. confirmed that a resolution will be needed.

Administrator Hark Jr. reported that First Due, the contractor for the new reporting software, has prorated the cost of the contract to reflect only the 4th quarter 2025 and the check is to be signed to night.

Commissioner Keyser asked for the status of the letter to the DOT about a Rt. 24 traffic study. Administrator Hark Jr. reported that the draft letter was forwarded to Mr. Giorgio, Hanover Township Administrator, who then forwarded it to a senator. Administrator Hark Jr. reported that he would touch base with Mr. Giorgio about the status.

NEW BUSINESS: Administrator Hark Jr. reported that there is a resolution before the Board tonight authorizing a MOU with NJ MVC and this will allow the District to do background checks on staff driving history, which is done twice a year. Administrator Hark Jr. reported that in the past the MVC has just done a user agreement but this year they have switched to a MOU.

Asst. Chief McGuinness reported that a Letter of Commendation was written by Lt. Belott for FF Colin, Probationary FF Villane, and EMT Harrington. Asst. Chief McGuinness reported that on October 3rd there was a major gas leak at Countrywood and Malapardis. Asst. Chief McGuinness reported that the gas getting into storm drains which was in turn getting into houses sump pumps and filling the houses with gas. Asst. Chief McGuinness reported that Lt. Belott recognized the three individuals for their professionalism, expertise and courage

at the high-risk gas emergency. Asst. Chief McGuinness reported that the individuals were able to mitigate the issue until PSE&G arrived and they all did an excellent job. Asst. Chief McGuinness reported that while that major emergency was going on the District responded to a car fire on Rt. 287. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that he was on the scene of the gas leak for a little while, witnessed the crew working and they were top notch.

Commissioner Harrington reported that there was a letter in the weekly newspaper from a resident who felt that District 3 was providing EMS services to District 2 at basically no cost. Commissioner Harrington hopes that residents come out to the Special Meeting on October 21 and the Special Joint Board meeting on October 27 so that they understand how the Districts work and how the process for consolidation works. Commissioner Harrington reported that he hopes that residents don't make decisions on how to vote on the budget based on the opinion that they do not want to subsidize District 2 EMS. Commissioner Harrington felt that if the residents want a consolidated Fire District they need to come out to the meetings and make their opinions heard by the Districts and the Town. Commissioner Harrington reiterated that just knocking the District 3 budget down will only hurt District 3 residents.

REMINDERS:

The next Regular Meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners will be held on Thursday, November 6, 2025 at 7:00 P.M.

A Special Meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners will be held on Tuesday, October 21, 2025 at 7:00 P.M.

A Special Meeting of the Joint Fire Prevention Board will be held on Monday, October 27, 2025 at 7 P.M. at the District 3 Firehouse.

The next scheduled Joint Fire Prevention Board Meeting will be held on Monday, December 8, 2025 at 6:30 P.M. at the District 2 Firehouse.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Ms. Atkinson reported that she is against not balance billing the District 2 residents and felt that the District 2 residents should pay taxes to support EMS service or be balance billed for service rendered. Ms. Atkinson felt that the District 2 Board has not been speaking like they are for consolidation and that they are talking more about saving money than providing service. Commissioner Keyser reported that here in District 3 we will provide the best service that we can for our residents and he did not feel that District 2 is on