

## **February 20, 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 February 20, 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 Steven Cornine, Mary Lou DeSimone, Michael Dugan Sr. and Gary Keyser were present. Commissioner Michael Dugan Jr. was absent.

Administrator Schultz, Deputy Administrator Hark Jr., Asst. Chief McGuinness, EMT Harrington, and members of the public were also in attendance.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** Mr. Wedemeyer asked how this fire department works in conjunction with District 2 and District 3, specifically if there is a fire call on this side of Town does Whippany also send an engine. Asst. Chief McGuinness reported that there are Automatic Aid agreements in place so if there is a fire on the Whippany side of Town, District 3 sends resources over to Whippany and visa versa. Asst. Chief McGuinness reported that there are also out of town resources which will all come out for big event fires. Mr. Wedemeyer asked if District 3 sends Fire coverage does EMS respond also. Asst. Chief McGuinness reported that EMS will also respond depending on the type of call but not all the time. Mr. Wedemeyer asked what percent of calls are District 2 versus District 3. Asst. Chief McGuinness reported that he did not know but could find out and let him know. Mr. Wedemeyer reported that he emailed Commissioner Cornine who gave a great reply and decided to bring questions to the BFC meeting because he is trying to get an understanding of how the 2 Districts are presently intertwined. Mr. Wedemeyer reported that he went down this road about 20 years ago and found it interesting that the Town Council did not want to know anything about integration of the 2 Districts at that time. Mr. Wedemeyer recalled that 20 years ago he remembered that the Town paid District 3 a per call fee for EMS calls to help defray some of the costs. Mr. Wedemeyer reported that while he likes the fact that EMS responds from a location close to his house, which his tax dollars support, he also felt that District 2 residents receive the benefit of EMS service with only the cost if they need it. Asst. Chief McGuinness reported that District 2 residents are billed for services rendered. Mr. Wedemeyer felt that District 3 was

maintaining the infrastructure; the building, personnel, apparatus, etc., while District 2 was only paying by call but not the underlying cost of maintaining the EMS service. Commissioner Dugan Sr. noted that District 3 annual EMS Service income covers the annual cost of EMS operations. Commissioner Keyser reported that District 3 accepts the insurance payment for EMS services from District 3 residents as payment in full because they pay an EMS tax while District 2 residents are balance billed because they do not pay EMS tax. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reiterated that EMS income covers all annual EMS expenses plus other District expenses but acknowledged that it does not cover the cost of the ambulances themselves. Mr. Wedemeyer reported that the District 3 budget is difficult to understand but when he subtracted the EMS salaries, medical supplies and ambulance maintenance from the EMS income, there did not appear to be much left. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the volunteer Fire Co. helps out with some of the equipment that goes on the ambulances and reiterated that EMS services is self-sufficient. Mr. Wedemeyer reported that he read Commissioner Cornine's letter to the Town Council about District 2 wanting to utilize private EMS services and asked why they would want to do that as opposed to having District 3 provide EMS service. Commissioner Cornine reported that District 2 is in negotiations with their career staff and noted that District 2 runs a first responder EMS program so their firemen do go on medical calls in the fire truck but do not transport. Commissioner Cornine felt this was a sticking point for negotiations and the District 2 Board felt that instead of paying the staff for responding to EMS calls District 2 would just outsource it. Commissioner Cornine felt that when District 2 started looking into Atlantic Health as an EMS provider, it just snowballed and District 3 got dragged into it. Commissioner Cornine reported that when District 3 got dragged in, we found out that the Township passed a resolution giving District 3 sole authority for EMS services within the Township. Commissioner Cornine felt that District 2 was looking to outsource EMS to cut costs in their negotiations and had nothing to do with the quality of EMS services that District 3 provides. Commissioner Cornine noted that the District 2 residents also want an ambulance close by and District 3 has been running an ambulance out of the District 2 firehouse when data shows it is needed. Commissioner Cornine reported that he wrote the letter to the Township because District 3 was dragged into the EMS privatization discussions and he wanted the Township to be aware that District 3 wanted nothing to do with it. Mr. Wedemeyer reported that he liked the letter. Commissioner Cornine thanked him and noted that if District 3 got no EMS income then the tax income

from the residents would go towards it but that this has historically not been the case.

**CORRESPONDENCE:** None.

**APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES:**

**The minutes from the February 6, 2025 Regular Meeting were reviewed.**

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

**Commissioner DeSimone made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 6, 2025 Regular Meeting, seconded by Commissioner Dugan Sr. All were in favor. Commissioner Keyser abstained. Commissioner Dugan Jr. was absent.**

**The minutes from the January 16, 2025 Executive Session were reviewed.**

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

**Commissioner Dugan Sr. made a motion to approve the minutes from the January 16, 2025 Executive Session, seconded by Commissioner Keyser. All were in favor. Commissioner Dugan Jr. was absent.**

**The minutes from the January 2, 2025 Executive Session were reviewed.**

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

**Commissioner Keyser made a motion to approve the minutes from the January 2, 2025 Executive Session, seconded by Commissioner Dugan Sr. All were in favor. Commissioner Dugan Jr. was absent.**

**REPORT OF THE TREASURER:** Commissioner Dugan Sr. distributed a balance sheet which reflects the receipt of the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter tax check. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the District has \$388,292 in the bank that has to last until the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of May. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that there are 6 payrolls before then estimated to total about \$360,000 so hopefully EMS revenue remains high to cover the other expenses.

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

**MONTHLY REPORTS:** Asst. Chief McGuinness asked if the Board had any questions on the his Bi-Monthly report. Commissioner Keyser reported that his report states that he met with Lester Senior Housing and asked if the EMS false alarms were included in the Township ordinance on false alarms. Asst. Chief McGuinness reported that there are 2 routes that the District can take with false penalties; fining the facility or fining the resident. Asst. Chief McGuinness reported that the Township ordinance does not necessarily address fining

residents for false alarms but is more for commercial facilities so the District needs to get some clarification on this issue but in the meantime has been meeting with the residents of Lester Senior Housing to attempt to educate them.

Commissioner Keyser asked if Lt. Belott is working with Deputy Chief Costello on the training schedule. Asst. Chief McGuinness confirmed that the two were working together. Commissioner DeSimone asked when the training schedule for the year will be released. Asst. Chief McGuinness reported that he has given a due date of 2 weeks for the training schedule to be submitted to him.

Commissioner Keyser asked if the staff have completed their mandatory training. Asst. Chief McGuinness reported that all staff except for 2 who are excused have completed their mandatories.

**EMS:** Nothing to report.

**BUDGET:** Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the 2025 Budget and the referendum both passed. Commissioner Keyser noted that 76% of the residents who turned out voted in favor of the budget. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the procurement policy is in place until May but will probably have to be followed the entire year.

**PERSONNEL:** Nothing to report.

**NEGOTIATIONS:** Nothing to report.

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

**BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS:** Commissioner Keyser reported that the Engine bay has been very chilly and he could not find a thermostat. Commissioner Keyser thanked Lt. Belott for locating the thermostat high up on the bay wall and moving it down lower on the wall and noted that it is now warmer in the bay.

**APPARATUS/EQUIPMENT AND MAINTENANCE:** Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that Ambulance 32 is back in service but noted that there is an issue with a hose leak in air compressor for the horn.

**INSURANCE:** Nothing to report.

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

**WEBSITE:** Up to date.

**PLANNING COMMITTEE:** Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that he hopes to have a committee meeting next week now that the public has passed the budget

and referendum. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the District is also waiting to see if they get a grant that will provide money to make improvements to the building.

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

**RECORDS RETENTION:** Nothing to report.

**LIAISON TO HANOVER TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE:** Commissioner Keyser reported that he has spoken to Committeeman Cahill regarding some issues with District 2.

**OLD BUSINESS:** Asst. Chief McGuinness asked for clarification on the policy on answering 2<sup>nd</sup> EMS calls that are out of Town, specifically if the Board wants to keep 2 personnel back at the firehouse or if out of Town a 2<sup>nd</sup> EMS calls should be taken when it would leave the firehouse unstaffed. Commissioner Keyser reported that the Per Diem EMTs should be taking the 1<sup>st</sup> EMS call and the FF/EMTs should be taking any 2<sup>nd</sup> EMS calls. Commissioner Keyser reported that the FF/EMTs should respond to all ALS calls even if they are out of Town. Asst. Chief McGuinness reported that for ALS calls the computer on the ambulance has to be on in order for the ambulance to be tracked and the County to dispatch. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the current policy states that FF/EMTs should take 2<sup>nd</sup> ALS calls and the computer should be left on so the ambulance can be tracked and sent on calls. Commissioner Cornine clarified that the Board feels that if the staff is here when a call comes in they should respond to the emergency at hand. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the policy reads that there is only discretion on out of Town BLS calls.

Commissioner Keyser reported that the District has been looking at Medical Providers and Asst. Chief McGuinness and Deputy Administrator Hark Jr. recommend using Atlantic Health. Commissioner Keyser made a motion to utilize Atlantic Health as Medical Provider, seconded by Commissioner DeSimone. All were in favor. Commissioner Dugan Jr. was absent. Commissioner Cornine reported that Atlantic Health will be appointed as Medical Provider at the Reorganization Meeting in March.

Commissioner Cornine asked if there was any other Old Business. There was none.

**NEW BUSINESS:** Commissioner Keyser thanked Commissioner Cornine and Commissioner Dugan Sr. for their service.

**REMINDERS:**

The Reorganization Meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 4, 2025 at 7:00 P.M. at the District 3 Firehouse.

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

The next scheduled Joint Fire Prevention Board Meeting will be held on Thursday, March 6, 2025 at 6:30 P.M. at the District 3 Firehouse.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** Ms. Atkinson thanked Commissioners Cornine and Dugan Jr. for their service on the Board.

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

**Commissioner DeSimone read Resolution 25-02-20-18 appointing Volunteer EMT Cho.**

**Commissioner DeSimone read Resolution 25-02-20-19 appointing Volunteer EMT Dave.**

**Commissioner DeSimone read Resolution 25-02-20-20 appointing Volunteer Laviola.**

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

**EXECUTIVE SESSION: None.**

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

The meeting was adjourned at 7:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by

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Mary Lou DeSimone, Secretary