

## **August 21, 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 August 21, 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, and members of the public were also in attendance.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** None.

**CORRESPONDENCE:** Commissioner Gallagher read a letter from the Hanover Heritage Association thanking the District / Department for participating in the annual walking tour of Cedar Knolls with a tour of the firehouse. The letter specifically thanked Commissioner Keyser for his talk on the history of the Fire Department.

Administrator Hark Jr. reported that the District received individual thank you notes from the students of Mountview Road School for the District's assistance with the egg drop held in June.

**APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES:** None.

**REPORT OF THE TREASURER:** No report.

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

**MONTHLY REPORTS:** Asst. Chief McGuinness submitted his, Lt. Gilson's, and Lt. Sulpy's monthly report to the Board prior to the meeting and asked if there were any questions on either report. There were no questions.

**EMS:** Nothing to report.

**BUDGET:** Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that a preliminary 2026 Budget preview will be emailed out tomorrow.

**PERSONNEL:** No report.

**NEGOTIATIONS:** Nothing to report.

**LIAISON TO THE VOLUNTEERS:** Commissioner Harrington reported that the Fire Co. is still planning for the Open House at the firehouse for September 20, 2025.

**BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS:** Commissioner Gallagher had nothing to report other than that the grounds are looking good.

**APPARATUS/EQUIPMENT AND MAINTENANCE:** Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that there have been no issues with the apparatus lately.

**INSURANCE:** Nothing to report.

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

**WEBSITE:** Administrator Hark Jr. reported that the website is up to date except for the Resolutions section, which continues to have issues.

**PLANNING COMMITTEE:** Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the District had a meeting with the architect, H2M, and was introduced to the Parsippany branch team that will be handling the project. Commissioner Keyser noted that the District has been informed that they will not receive the Booker Grant.

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

**RECORDS RETENTION:** Nothing to report.

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

**OLD BUSINESS:** Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that there has been correspondence between the District and the agent for the Post Office regarding the contract for the parking lot rental to the Post Office. Administrator Hark Jr. reported that the District now has a name for the Post Office leasing agent and correspondence has been going back and forth. Commissioner Dugan Sr. felt that one of the issues is that the leasing agent is in charge of negotiating many leases for the Post Office and the District parking lot lease is one small lease among all the other leases.

Commissioner Keyser asked how the annual physicals for employees are going. Administrator Hark Jr. reported that the physicals were postponed for financial reasons and will be discussed at the September 4, 2025 meeting.

Commissioner Gallagher asked that since the Booker Grant is gone what are the plans for general maintenance of the firehouse. Commissioner Keyser thought that the District was going to get quotes to see how much painting the firehouse

would cost. Commissioner Dugan Sr. did not know what options the District has with money so tight. Commissioner DeSimone asked if the District could have a building fundraiser. Commissioner Keyser did not think the district could fundraise. Administrator Hark Jr. reported that the District should work at getting 3 quotes for painting the building so that the District can discuss this at the next meeting. Commissioner Harrington felt that the District should consider vinyl siding because paint does not last. Commissioner Gallagher agreed but noted that siding should not be put over rotted wood. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that parts of the building were vinyl sided at one time but it was removed when the last roof was put on because some on the Board felt the building should remain more historical or natural looking. Commissioner Harrington noted that the historical look was affected by getting rid of the slate roof. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the District will get some quotes and the Board can decide whether to include it in the 2026 Budget. Commissioner Gallagher reported that he is concerned that every year that the District waits on this, the wood is weathering and rotting more. Commissioner Harrington asked if the District could include this cost in 2026 Capital Budget. Administrator Hark Jr. reported that he would get some quotes for the work and then the Board can discuss options at the next meeting.

Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that a while ago the Board tasked EMT Harrington with coming up with a plan to get the firehouse certified as a training center and possibly getting EMTs certified as EMS instructors. Commissioner Dugan Sr. noted that the Board has not reached out to EMT regarding the plan. Commissioner DeSimone noted that she was in favor of looking into this when it was originally discussed. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that he wanted to acknowledge EMT Harrington for submitting a plan and noted that the Board can review and discuss the plan at another time.

**NEW BUSINESS:** Asst. Chief McGuinness reported that he received an email this afternoon from Whippany Park High School requesting a District ambulance to stand by at their football games like the District does every year. Asst. Chief McGuinness noted that there are 10 games this year. Asst. Chief McGuinness reported that the District has a fee schedule for a dedicated ambulance for special events and proposed that the High School be charged the fee for a dedicated ambulance at the 10 football games. The Board agreed that the high school should pay for the dedicated ambulance to help defray the cost of staffing the ambulance.

Commissioner Keyser asked the Board if everyone had reviewed the copy of the job posting for FT EMT. The Board members confirmed they had reviewed the job posting. Commissioner Keyser asked if the District has someone in house that has been with the District a while apply for the position if the Board would be able to adjust the starting salary. Administrator Hark Jr. reported that the salary is set by the terms and conditions of the contract so the Board would be able to adjust the salary. Commissioner DeSimone asked if the District has done any wage surveys recently to see what the going wage is. Administrator Hark Jr. reported that the district did a wage survey for the FT EMT posting that was done a few weeks ago. Administrator Hark Jr. reported that there is no change to the posting from last time but the Board must make a motion to post the position. Commissioner Gallagher questioned why the District needs to go outside if there is a viable candidate in house. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the Board sometimes posts the position internally first to see if anyone is interested. Administrator Hark Jr. reported that the process is open and it is at the Board's discretion if they choose internally first. Administrator Hark Jr. reported that posting internally and externally simultaneously saves time if there are no internal applicants. Commissioner Dugan Sr. made a motion to post the position of FT EMT, seconded by Commissioner DeSimone. All were in favor.

Commissioner Keyser reported that he spoke with Administrator Hark Jr. about putting together an information seminar for the Cedar Knolls residents about who the District and Department are and how each operates. Commissioner Keyser felt the seminar should include the history of the District and Department; where we were, where we are, and where we are going. Administrator Hark Jr. reported that the informational seminar will provide residents with a basic understanding of how the District operates before the 2026 budget meetings which will begin soon after. Administrator Hark Jr. reported that the thought process was to have the information seminar on one of the off weeks between meetings in October and the nights there is nothing going on in Town are either Tuesday, 10/21 or Wednesday, 10/22. The Board agreed on Tuesday, 10/21 at 7 P.M. Administrator Hark Jr. suggested asking for residents to RSVP so that the District can get a feeling for how many people will attend and then the Board can decide where to hold the seminar.

Commissioner Keyser reported that the Historical Society did a historical walk in downtown Cedar Knolls which stopped at the firehouse and he was able to give the attendees a brief history of the firehouse. Commissioner Keyser felt that the people need to know what is going on in the firehouse. Commissioner Harrington

reported that he stopped by the firehouse during Commissioner Keyser's presentation and felt that he did an excellent job. Commissioner Harrington felt that the attendees really appreciated the presentation.

Administrator Hark Jr. reported that he is looking for a motion from the Board to hire the PR firm to help publicize the 2026 budget needs as they did for 2025. Commissioner Keyser asked how much it cost last year. Administrator Hark Jr. reported that it cost about \$7,000. Commissioner Keyser asked if this was something that the District could do ourselves. Commissioner Dugan Sr. and Administrator Hark Jr. felt that the PR firm did an exceptional job and it was more than the District could handle itself. Commissioner Dugan Sr. noted that the quote for last year was a range from \$6,000 to \$15,000 depending on the services the District chose to utilize. Commissioner Dugan Sr. made a motion to hire the PR firm to help publicize the 2026 budget, seconded by Commissioner DeSimone. All were in favor.

#### **REMINDERS:**

The next Regular Meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners will be held on Thursday, September 4, 2025 at 7:00 P.M.

A Special Meeting of the Joint Fire Prevention Board will be held on Monday, September 15, 2025 at 7 P.M. at the District 3 Firehouse.

The next scheduled Joint Fire Prevention Board Meeting will be held on Thursday, September 4, 2025 at 6:30 P.M. at the District 3 Firehouse.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** Ms. Atkinson commended Commissioner Keyser on his presentation to the Historical Society and noted that providing print outs so the Society members to follow along with was very helpful. Ms. Atkinson reported that some of the historical tidbits were also appreciated.

Ms. Atkinson asked the Board what they were planning to have the architect do. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the District provided the architect with the District's needs; sleeping quarters, locker rooms, kitchen, and asked the architect to find a way to work within the existing building or with minimal modifications to the building. Commissioner Dugan Sr. reported that the District will hopefully then be able to get the residents to approve it. Commissioner Dugan Sr. noted that any renovation may include an elevator to make the building ADA compliant as required by the State. Administrator Hark Jr. noted that the 1<sup>st</sup> report from the

architect should be back next week and be able to be discussed at the September 4<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Ms. Atkinson felt that Administrator Hark Jr. should get a raise for all the things that he does and the excellent job he does.

**RESOLUTIONS:** None.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:** None.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 8:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by

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Robert Gallagher, Secretary