

**The Monthly Meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners
District #3, in the Township of Hanover,
County of Morris, Cedar Knolls, New Jersey
January 7, 2010**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM on January 7, 2010 in accordance with the Open Public Meeting Act of 1975, Chapter 231.

Attendees: Commissioners Thomas Harrington, Gary Keyser, Joseph Martin, Paul Pilipie, Thomas Quirk

Chief James Davidson was also present.

The Board stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

The first order of business was the swearing in of two new volunteer fire members. Commissioner Pilipie read **Resolution 10-01-07-02 appointing Joseph Martin and Matthew Thompson as junior volunteer members in Fire District #3. A motion was made by Commissioner Keyser to accept the resolution appointing the new members, seconded by Commissioner Quirk, all in favor.** The new members were then sworn in and congratulated by the Board members.

The next order of business was the approval of the minutes from the November 19, 2009 monthly work session. Commissioner Keyser indicated that there were three corrections. On page 2, 2nd paragraph, 4th sentence from the end of the paragraph should read, *Then the Board could put out a referendum for the voters to vote on in February for Fire District #3's general election.* Then the next sentence, *They also discussed putting everything on hold...* should be deleted. Page 2, 3rd paragraph, 3rd sentence should read *Cook Roofing* instead of *Sonny Cook*. There were no additional corrections so **Commissioner Keyser made a motion to accept the minutes as corrected, seconded by Commissioner Pilipie, all in favor.**

Next was the approval of the minutes from the December 3, 2009 regular monthly meeting. **Commissioner Keyser made a motion to accept the minutes as submitted, seconded by Commissioner Martin, all in favor.**

Next was the approval of the December 17, 2009 **Special Meeting, monthly work session and Personnel minutes from December 17, 2009.** Commissioner Keyser made a motion to accept the minutes as submitted, seconded by Commissioner Pilipie, all in favor.

Old Business

Chairman Harrington asked for a roofing update from Commissioner Keyser. The Commissioner reported that North Roofing Maintenance Company evaluated the roof and came in with a price of \$104,225.00, but there is not enough money in the budget as a capital project for this year. Even repairs would be beyond what the Board has right now – therefore, this project will have to be put on hold. Commissioner Keyser said that the building was checked for asbestos awhile ago by Parette & Somjen and none was found at that time. Commissioner Keyser said there is something in writing confirming that.

There was discussion regarding the Interlocal Agreement with Fire District #2. Chairman Harrington distributed a letter that he received earlier when he and Commissioner Quirk met with District #2's Chairwoman, Julie Mihalko, and Secretary, Robert Cobane. It was the Chairman's understanding that Commissioners Mihalko and Cobane were leaving the earlier meeting to go directly to see Joseph Giorgio, Township Administrator, to sign the Interlocal Agreement. As of 5:00 PM, the agreement had not yet been signed, possibly due to other meetings that Mr. Giorgio was involved in. However, the letter received from Chairwoman Mihalko was very disheartening because there were many points and facts that had been made available to District #2 in the past and at the November 6, 2009 Special Meeting that they asked for again. John Sheridan also gave a verbal report at the November 6th Special Meeting on District #3's billing committee's evaluation regarding the pros and cons of billing. Chairman Harrington told them that they could form their own committee on billing and do their own research, but District #3 was not going to form or resume a committee to look into billing again at this time. There were many suggestions among the Commissioners on how to handle the letter including not going to Whippany for EMS calls. However, generally, it was felt that the Board has a moral and ethical responsibility to the Township residents and no one wants to see residents left in the lurch for possible life threatening emergencies. The Chairman felt that the way to handle this would be to educate Whippany residents as much as we can to the issues and having Whippany residents come to this Board's meetings so they can ask questions. It might come down to having an article in the newspaper explaining the issues because most of the Township residents are not aware of the financial problems regarding EMS calls. It was suggested also that anyone with questions should come to this Board's meetings and ask questions directly. Commissioner Martin suggested the possibility of going to their meetings to bring up these issues also.

Another stepping stone was that District #2 wanted a copy of the letter that was given to Chairman Harrington to be attached to the new Interlocal Agreement. All of District #3's Commissioners were opposed to that because the date that the Agreement was to be signed by was December 31, 2009 and the Agreement was not signed until January 2, 2010. In addition, Commissioner Quirk was opposed to the fact that the letter was not attached when District #3's Board signed the Agreement -- in essence, District #2 added more stipulations in the Interlocal Agreement *after* District #3's Board signed the document. He also questioned why District #3's Board did not receive the letter before they signed the Agreement? Commissioner Pilipie suggested sending a letter to

their fire company, attention Fred Brunner, President of the Whippany Fire Department, with a copy to Hanover Township Committeeman George Coppola, Township Liaison to the fire districts, so that they know that this Board is open to going to District #2's Board meetings to answer any questions. Commissioner Quirk said that the letter to them should state how unhappy this Board is regarding the letter and which will not be attached as part of the agreement. He agreed with Commissioner Pilipie that another letter should be sent to their fire company inviting anyone with questions to come to a Board meeting here and the Commissioners would be happy to answer any questions they may have. The Chairman suggested that the Board wait until the next work session to see what happens. He also suggested including in any letter to District #2 that the Interlocal Agreement has been in effect since 2004 and has been working well and that this Board does not see any reason to change something that has already been working well. It was agreed to send a second letter to the Whippany Fire Company telling them when this Board meets and inviting them to come with any questions or comments directly. Both letters should copy Joe Giorgio and George Coppola. The Board can discuss the results of these letters at the next monthly work session.

Commissioner Pilipie then read **Resolution 10-01-07-01 regarding the sale of surplus personal property. The resolution stipulates that the surplus property will be sold in accordance with the appropriate statutes of the State of New Jersey, i.e., the highest bidder at a Public Auction on January 19, 2010 at 11:00 A.M. A motion was made by Commissioner Keyser to accept the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Quirk, all in favor.**

Commissioner Pilipie then read **Resolution 10-01-07-03 authorizing temporary appropriations sufficient to cover commitments made during the period January 1, 2010 to the date of the adoption of the annual budget. Total Temporary budget appropriations totaled \$156,900.00. Commissioner Keyser made a motion to accept the temporary budget appropriation, seconded by Commissioner Martin, all in favor. A roll call vote was taken with all Commissioners voting in the affirmative.**

Chairman Harrington made all the Commissioners aware that the tent in the back of the firehouse fell down and hit Unit 30. *Do It Yourself* came and put it back in place with bigger stakes in the ground. The estimate for damage was \$964.33 which was handed into the insurance, although there is a \$1,000.00 deductible on the coverage.

The Chairman indicated that Commissioner Keyser had some numbers regarding the financing of bonds. Chairman Harrington said raising the tax rate 3 ½ cents would mean fire taxes would go up somewhere between \$84.00 – 90.00/year. Raising the tax rate about 3 ½ cents would put the tax rate somewhere around 15 cents which does not count the regular operating budget each year. The 15 cents would only cover the loan. The Chairman felt that he did not want to raise the tax rate that much with the current economic situation. The Commissioners felt that putting the tax increase on a referendum would cause the budget to be defeated. It was thought that, in the summer, a possibility would be to have a special meeting in which Title 40 A would be publicized and explained why these improvements need to be done. The Chairman did suggest

going up from 11 ½ % to 12% on the fire tax so that a little extra could be put in capital outlay to build that up for future use instead of having a special election.

Commissioner Keyser reported that the stone problem near Hunan Wok has not been resolved. He felt that the Board should have someone mark off the property line and put a fence there to keep cars off the Fire Department's property. The Commissioners agreed and Commissioner Keyser said he would look around and see what type of fence would be good.

Chairman Harrington indicated that a quote had been received to design a Fire District website. The quote was \$375.00 to \$575.00 with \$140.00/year for maintenance. Someone would be needed to maintain the site and post information to keep it current. There will be further discussion on this topic at the monthly work session.

New Business

Commissioner Keyser said he missed the December 10, 2009 Fire Prevention Bureau meeting and he questioned why the Fire Prevention Bureau approved getting alarms on phones. The Chairman said it was another alerting system. The Commissioner questioned if it was worth the \$600.00 cost, but he said he would speak with Chief Davidson to see what benefit it was. There could be a savings if the two districts go into it together.

Treasurer's Report

Commissioner Keyser reported that checks #3781 – 3862 were paid in the amount of \$142,206.94 as of December 31, 2009. **Commissioner Quirk made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report as submitted, seconded by Commissioner Pilipie, all in favor.**

There was no other business to discuss. **A motion to adjourn was made at 8:05 PM by Commissioner Martin, seconded by Commissioner Quirk, all in favor.**

Respectfully submitted by:

Paul Pilipie, Secretary

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