

**The Monthly Work Session of the Board of Fire Commissioners
District #3, in the Township of Hanover
County of Morris, Cedar Knolls, New Jersey
March 18, 2010**

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM on March 18, 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

The Board stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioner Quirk acted as Chairman until Mr. Harrington was sworn in.

The first order of business was the swearing in of Thomas Harrington who was elected as Commissioner for a three year term by the voters of Hanover Township, Fire District #3. Commissioner Harrington then took over the Chairman's responsibilities.

In Chief Davidson's absence, Chairman Harrington reported that the Chief was still working on the antennae problem.

Chairman Harrington indicated that he had received an e-mail from Hanover Township Committeeman George Coppola suggesting the dates of April 23rd or April 30th to get the two districts together. Next week, the Chairman said he was meeting with Committeemen Henry Hansch and Michael Mihalko from District #2. Commissioner Quirk said he could not make the meeting if it was on the 30th.

The Chairman also mentioned that John Sheridan was still working on the Billing Committee's report, but that he is busy with tax season work right now and would submit it after tax season when he won't be quite as busy.

The Chairman asked the Board if anyone had invited Anthony Bucco, Jr., Esq. to the Board's April 15, 2010 work session to discuss issues such as the Interlocal Agreement and the possible lawsuit relative to the SLAP program. Commissioner Quirk questioned whether the Board should speak with Mr. Bucco or the Board's labor attorney, Fredric Knapp, Esq., regarding whether the volunteers would be joining the fire company or the fire district. Chairman Harrington said that the question of joining the fire company or the fire district has come up several times previously. The Relief Association doesn't care which wording is used and the fire company's by-laws read that, if anyone joins here, they are automatically a member on the Second Floor. Mr. Braslow had said that either way was fine. There was further discussion and Commissioner Keyser felt that they never received anything in writing.

Commissioner Pilipie said, during a recent casual discussion, the subject of whether anyone who has been out sick needs a doctor's note to say that he can go back to work within the fire department. Commissioner Quirk asked if there was anything in the SOP's regarding the policy on someone coming back to work or as a volunteer after being out sick. The Chief had said, during that discussion, that the policy does not require a note to return. There was discussion on whether someone who is on medication or has a physical or medical problem should be allowed to come back without a doctor's approval. If the Board, Chief or anyone knows that a member has a medical problem of some sort, how can they allow that person to go into a burning building, for example. However, HIPPA privacy rights and confidentiality regarding a person's medical condition make it difficult to require the employer to inquire as to specifics of the medical condition and whether that person is fit to come back. Commissioner Martin said that "this is why physicals should be mandated. If someone has a heart condition, for example, it will show up during the physical and that person would not be cleared by a doctor. However, if someone tries to backdoor the system and develops a heart condition in between physicals and doesn't tell the department, then your hands are tied." Commissioner Pilipie suggested that the Board should check with the Board's new attorney, Anthony Bucco, Jr., to see what he suggests, and the Board agreed. Commissioner Pilipie said he would look at the SOP's to see what the policy is on this issue and would bring it up at the next meeting if he finds anything. Commissioner Quirk asked if the SOP's are issued to new recruits – the Chairman said that he believes the Chief does do this. He said that the SOP's should be made available to volunteers so that they know about insurance and other related issues. Commissioner Keyser felt that the SOP's should go on the fire department's website so that it is available to all members and that an updated hard copy should be in the Day Room for anyone to see. The Chairman said he would see the Chief on these items.

Commissioner Keyser felt that there are some members in the department who are candidates for heart attacks. He feels that volunteers should also have physicals. Commissioner Martin said that interior firefighters should have physicals every year. There was discussion on whether volunteers should go to their own doctors. If the fire department picks a doctor, the doctor would be informed on what is required physically from the volunteers. That way the doctor would be the one to tell them whether they are fit for duty. Commissioner Martin suggested checking with Dr. George Manis, the department's Medical Director, because he could come up with criteria needed for physicals for volunteers.

Chairman Harrington asked if anyone had sent a letter to Giovanni Landscaping because he saw the landscaper who said that he had not heard anything on whether he had gotten the bid. The Chairman said he would call the landscaper to tell him that his bid was accepted, but that he needed to send a copy of his Insurance Certificate and Business Registration Certificate immediately before he does any work for the department. Chief Davidson had said previously that he would have a resolution prepared for the regular meeting regarding using Giovanni Landscaping for the upcoming year.

The Chairman pointed out to the Board that each Commissioner should have a copy of the list of officers' appointments which Chief Davidson had prepared and left for the Board members on the conference table. He is having problems getting people to commit to being officers. Craig Vagell stepped down as Lieutenant, but he will stay on as Crew Chief.

Chairman Harrington asked about recognizing the volunteers who have done above and beyond what is required. In the past, under the Retention Budget, money was given to crews to use for gift cards for their crews, breakfast for their crews, shirts and hats, etc. or other ideas that the Crew Chiefs came up with. It was decided to stay with certificates of appreciation.

Further to the discussion regarding in-house class instruction, Commissioner Keyser said that he had reviewed the contract with the career men and there is a section that said that they get overtime for in-house class instruction. Chairman Harrington was not at the last meeting, but wanted to add that he feels that this department has one of the best Chiefs in Morris County, certainly the most knowledgeable Chief in Morris County as far as training and as far as being known in the State of New Jersey. He said he feels that the department is very fortunate in having his skill and his teaching experience in this department. The department is also very lucky to have two other instructors under him. For the department not to use the in-house instructors would be a big mistake. Chairman Harrington said the department saves a lot of money by having the classes here vs. paying for each person to attend the academy classes. There was discussion on people not showing up for the classes and, if that continues, there should be repercussions for not showing up. The Chairman said the Board should require a list of who is signing up for any classes so that they could monitor whether people are going or not. Commissioner Quirk said that he had attended Chad DiGiorgi's CEVO class. He said he had been to many classes at the fire/police academy, but this class was specifically geared to Cedar Knolls and you left knowing exactly what was applicable to this department. The Commissioner said he was very impressed.

Chairman Harrington said he had read the section of the minutes regarding the Fire Official while Chief Davidson is out. The department has two Fire Officials. There is no conflict of interest because one inspector could find a problem and the other one would act as the Fire Official. There was a question on whether there would be additional compensation, but the Chairman said he had spoken to the union representative and that was not a problem.

The Chairman informed the Board that Frank DeSimone was in a motorcycle accident and would be out for up to two weeks. Chairman Harrington said he would be able to fill in somewhat in the next week or so.

Commissioner Keyser said he had been in touch with G.M. Masonry who will be doing the concrete apron in front of the firehouse and told him not to start any of the work until mid April at which time the paperwork can be resubmitted to the insurance company. He also spoke to him about setting in concrete pillars along the property line

by the strip mall. They will meet and he will give the Commissioner a price. Fred Meola should be coming soon to do the survey.

The Commissioner also reported that arrangements have been finalized for the caterer, MeadowWood Manor, for the May 28, 2010 Inspection Night. The contract has been signed and a check was sent with the contract.

Commissioner Keyser also said that it was previously discussed that the Board should get the architect back to discuss getting the work started on the firehouse since the budget was passed by the voters at the recent election. Chairman Harrington said what was needed was a new Financial Advisor to replace Bill Homa who was previously the Financial Advisor to the Board. The Board needs to tell that person what the goals are and how much money the Board has to work with and how much the taxpayer will have to pay. The Board needs to have a professional who can guide them from beginning to end on the projects. There is someone who is a Chief Financial Officer in Morristown who does work on the side. Commissioner Keyser said he had two names from Parsippany who he can call. The Chairman also suggested calling Parsippany to see who the Financial Advisor is for their district and also a woman, Janice, who was suggested by Sylvio Esposito as a person who would be a good candidate for Financial Advisor for District #3. Chairman Harrington suggested having them come to the work session in April and have them come in half hour increments to speak with the Board. Commissioner Keyser said the Board needs to find out what the costs will be before they can get someone to oversee the project. The Chairman said that the Board has an approximate number, but the Board needs someone to direct them.

There was discussion regarding a mandatory training classes spreadsheet that the Chief had printed out for the Board and there, apparently, was a problem with the highlighted areas and refresher classes. Chairman Harrington said he would speak with Chief Davidson to see if there were mistakes regarding what is mandatory and what are refresher classes.

Commissioner Quirk reported that Robert Lake fixed and painted the wooden horses, some of which were in bad condition, that the Commissioner received from Brian Foran. These will be used to keep cars off the fire department's property which is adjacent to the strip mall next to the firehouse.

Commissioner Quirk complimented the career personnel and some of the volunteers who helped residents out in the storm. There were 28 houses that were affected in Whippany.

Commissioner Keyser reported that all of the financial records have been taken to the Auditor for 2009 for the yearly audit.

There was no further business to discuss. **A motion to adjourn at 8:15 PM was made by Commissioner Quirk, seconded by Commissioner Martin, all in favor.**

Respectfully submitted by:

Paul Pilipie, Secretary