

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS  
Pennington Borough Fire District No. 1  
P.O. Box 387  
Pennington, NJ 08534

**MINUTES September 15, 2020**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The regularly scheduled monthly meeting was conducted remotely via ZOOM and was called to order by Commissioner Blackwell at 7:40 p.m., following notice under the Open Public Meetings Law (revised meeting notice including information on how the public could access and join the meeting published in the Times of Trenton, provided to the Borough Clerk for posting, posted at the Board offices and on the fire district's web site, and provided to any person requesting same in advance of the meeting).

**ROLL CALL**

Present by roll call were Commissioners Mark Blackwell, Bob DiFalco, Brian Hofacker (joined late), Wayne Blauth and Ryan Fraser. Absent: None. Also present were Chief DeForte, Deputy Chief Demareski, Assistant Chief Baldorossi, LOSAP Plan Administrator Rodriquez, Joe Carducci and Attorney Griswold.

**PUBLIC COMMENT** – None.

**CHIEFS' REPORT**

There were 55 calls in August, 2020: 14 in Pennington Borough, 34 in the Township, 1 in Hopewell Borough and 6 other. Calls included 2 residential, 2 brush/leaves fire, 7 wires/transformer, 1 motor vehicle/rescue, 6 CO calls, 2 gas leaks and 2 hazmat incidents. There were 22 accidental alarms and 7 mutual aid calls. Heavy storms had an impact on calls. 3 scheduled drills were held.

- Tanker – Will be going to Pennsylvania this coming week to have the air conditioner repaired. At the same time the oil leak will be addressed and an issue with the brakes, of which the chief was just made aware, will be looked at as well.

- Chief's vehicle – Light tower is not working again; repair has been attempted a number of times at substantial cost. The chief indicated it is not essential to operations and does not recommend putting any more money toward it at this time.

- 2021 Budget – The fire company prepared and submitted to the board its projected expenses for 2021, as well as a draft version of 5-year operating and capital plans.

Commissioner Hofacker joined meeting

- Valley Chiefs Meeting – The 3 volunteer department chiefs and career staff representatives met to discuss joint training opportunities, purchasing and staffing. There are plans to hold a joint table top drill with the Capital Health Hospital to address emergency plans, procedures and equipment.

- Hose Testing – Some 1 ¾" and 5" lengths failed; replacement hose will be needed, along with some new hose, all available on NJ State Contract. The chief will present a proposal next month. A few

years ago a cooperative purchasing agreement existed between the Township, Hopewell Borough and Pennington fire districts with regard to annual testing which, if reinstated, might reduce costs.

- Dispatch – Ongoing challenges continue with delays in fire and medical dispatching by Mercer County Central. It has been a recurring topic of discussion at Tri-Township and Mercer County Chiefs' meetings, and has prompted public complaints. Currently, the routing of 9-1-1 emergency calls is circuitous and dangerously impedes the prompt receipt of calls by emergency services. Cmsr. Hofacker suggested contacting the county freeholders since little progress has been made to rectify the situation through local channels.

- Tablets in vehicles - On a motion by Cmsr. Hofacker, seconded by Cmsr. DiFalco and passed, **Resolution 2020-21** - Authorizing the purchase of six (6) tablets and mounts, at a cost not to exceed \$4,000.00, was approved. Ass't. Chief Baldorossi will research and circulate competitive quotes for board approval prior to a purchase order being issued.

- Rescue Truck – “Open Door” warning light system; repair in progress. Deputy Chief Demareski stated the pump valve issues must be rectified and recommended the pump panel electronics be refurbished.

- Extrication Training – Station 53 will host. The cost is \$1,250.00 for 5 Pennington members to attend. A purchase order was approved in that amount (#20-58).

## **TREASURER'S REPORT**

A copy of the treasurer's report was made available to each Commissioner with a list and description of the bills to be paid. Two invoices were added to the list: CleanAir Co., \$1,656.35 for engine bay exhaust system repair, and American Trademark Co., \$1,548.36 for accountability tags. After certification that there are sufficient encumbered and unencumbered funds in the 2020 budget to pay the bills as presented, on a Motion by Cmsr. Hofacker, seconded by Cmsr. DiFalco and passed, **Resolution 2020-22** - Paying bills in the amount of \$13,868.59 was passed on roll call vote.

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the August 18, 2020 meeting will be held over for approval at the next meeting.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

- Gas Meters – Only one of the two old gas meters can be repaired at a reasonable cost. A NJ State Contract vendor will provide three (3) new meters, with a 3-year extended warranty, at a cost of \$823.50 each. On a motion by Cmsr. Blackwell, seconded by Cmsr. Hofacker and passed, **Resolution 2020-23**, Amending Resolution 2020-19 to increase the authorized expenditure for the new meters to a total of \$2,470.50 was passed on a roll call vote.

- Sale of Old Aerial – No interest from purchasers; insurance costs continue. Cmsr. Hofacker will look into donating it to qualified entities.

- SOG's – Draft revised and under review.

- Outstanding Pagers – No update.

- Insurance – Board and membership discussion with insurance broker to review policies and benefits and to answer questions will be held as soon as feasible.

- Drivers' Records – No update.

- Gear Dryer – The chief will contact electricians for competitive quotes.

- New Truck (pumper) – Body has been painted and assembly should begin soon. Barring any further COVID-19 delays the mid-construction virtual inspection should take place in the next couple weeks and the apparatus may be completed before November.
- Trailer Striping – The design has been prepared. Cmsr. Blackwell will follow up and report back.
- Missing Radio – Located and back in service.
- Turn-Out Gear- Awaiting a fitting for 2 members expected to graduate from fire school soon. The previously approved order will be placed promptly thereafter.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

- 2021 Budget – Discussion of procedures for electronic submission to the state of the 2021 budget and other documents. New rules require the budget to be filed electronically pursuant to the FAST Program (Financial Automation Submission & Tracking). The district must designate specific officials authorized to obtain login credentials to upload and submit the documents.
- Financial Disclosure Form – Cmsr. Fraser will file.
- Paid Personnel – In light of the increased commercial and residential construction planned and/or approved in the township the chief advised there may come a time when a daytime presence in the firehouse is needed to compliment the volunteer force. Nothing is under consideration for the immediate future.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Board the meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Board will be held via Zoom at 7:30 p.m. on October 20, 2020. Information on how to join the meeting will be posted on the fire district's web site at least 2 days before the meeting – [www.pbbfc.org](http://www.pbbfc.org)