

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

MINUTES January 19, 2021

CALL TO ORDER

The regularly scheduled remote meeting was called to order by Chairman Blackwell at 7:35 p.m. following adequate and electronic notice under the Open Public Meetings Law and N.J.A.C. 5:39 (revised annual meeting notice including information on how the public could access and participate in the meeting, make public comment and where relevant documents, if any, will be made available published in the Times of Trenton, provided to Packet Publications, sent to the Borough Clerk for filing and posting, posted at the Board offices, the firehouse entrances and on the fire district's web site, as well as provided to any person requesting same in advance of the meeting).

ROLL CALL

Present by roll call were Commissioners Mark Blackwell, Bob DiFalco, Ryan Fraser and Brian Hofacker. Absent: Commissioner Wayne Blauth. Also present were Chief DeForte, Deputy Chief Demareski, LOSAP Coordinator Rodriguez, Joe Carducci and Attorney Griswold.

2021 BUDGET – PUBLIC HEARING and ADOPTION

On a Motion by Cmsr. Hofacker and seconded by Cmsr. Di Falco, **Resolution 2021-01** – Authorizing the 2021 Fire District Budget be Read by Title was adopted.

Motioned by Cmsr. Blackwell, seconded by Cmsr. Hofacker and passed, the public hearing on the 2021 approved budget was opened.

After taxpayers of the fire district and all persons having an interest in the budget were given an opportunity to speak, and there being no comment, motioned by Blackwell, seconded by DiFalco and passed, the public hearing was closed.

Motioned by Blackwell and seconded by DiFalco, the 2021 Fire District Budget was presented for adoption in the same content and amount as the approved budget. The estimated tax rate is \$0.05 per \$100.00 assessed value. A synopsis is appended to these minutes.

Resolution 2021-02 – Adoption of 2021 Fire District Budget

Aye: Blackwell, DiFalco, Fraser, Hofacker.

Nay: None.

Absent: Blauth.

PUBLIC COMMENT –

David Napier, Vice-president and Collection Chairman of the NJ Fire Museum in Allentown, which had been contacted some time ago regarding a possible donation of the 1991 aerial to the museum, spoke on its behalf. Mr. Napier requested to see the apparatus to determine if it would fit into the museum's collection, which visit was scheduled for tomorrow. Commissioner Blackwell reported that there is a sale pending as a result of the Municibid public auction and that if that sale falls through and the museum is interested, the board would revisit the donation.

CHIEF'S REPORT

The fire company responded to 419 calls during 2020. There were 53 calls in December, 2020: 12 of them in Pennington Borough, 23 in the Township, 0 in Hopewell Borough and 18 other. Calls included 1 residential, 4 wires/transformer, 5 gas leak, and 3 CO calls. There were 18 accidental alarms/activations and 18 mutual aid calls. No drills were held.

Development - Site work planning is underway for the development off Scotch Road, behind Shoprite. Construction of the 300 apartment complex in the southern part of the township off Bull Run and Federal City Roads is expected to begin in the fall.

Aerial – Out of service. At a recent call a problem arose when a lift cylinder began to seep and caused the ladder to tilt. No one was injured. This occurred once (and was repaired) when the truck was newly delivered (2017) and not since, until now. Apparently it is an issue of first impression for the manufacturer, who is sending its engineer to investigate the cause and direct the repair. The chief has arranged for mutual aid coverage when necessary and he will keep the board apprised of progress on the repair(s). The aerial ladder is U/L tested annually and passed inspection in 2020. The chairman and chief were told that the ladder listing to one side will not structurally affect the ladder. The chief mentioned that some firefighters have expressed a lack of trust in the ladder and that he may request it be tested again at the conclusion of the repairs.

Training - Deputy Chief Demareski reported that the state mandated annual training courses will be conducted remotely this year and that the fire company is hoping to hold outdoor ice training if the temperature gets cold enough.

New Truck (Pumper) - Title, registration, insurance secured. Radios will be installed, the lettering done and the truck outfitted. The manufacturer will send someone to train fire company members on the truck's operation and when the weather warms up, on the CAFS system. The chief is hoping to put the truck into service in late February or March.

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. An amendment was proposed to increase open Purchase Order 2020-82 by \$500.00 to cover costs associated with the mounting equipment. The Chief Financial Officer certified there were sufficient encumbered funds from the 2020 budget to pay the bills and approve the purchase orders as presented. Motioned by Hofacker, seconded by DiFalco and passed, **Resolution 2021-03** – Amending Purchase Order 2020-82 to \$1,700.00, approving/ratifying purchase orders and paying bills in the amount of \$33,253.95 was approved by roll call vote.

Cmsr. Blackwell stated his intent to be recorded as an abstention from any votes to approve payments throughout the year for bookkeeping services or to Metal Fab Pro Racing.

The \$4,500.00 refund from Campbell Supply for unused inspection trips relating to the new pumper was received.

OLD BUSINESS

Sale of Old Aerial – At the close of the Municibid auction the high bid for the vehicle was \$8,600.00. Motioned by DiFalco and seconded by Fraser, **Resolution 2021-04** – Reducing the auction reserve and accepting the highest bid on the aerial was passed on a roll call vote.

- SOG's – Draft revised and under review.
- Outstanding Pagers – No update.
- Insurance – The insurance broker's presentation to the board and to fire company members will be held as soon as feasible.
- Gear Dryer – No update.
- Trailer Striping – No update.
- Tanker Truck – No update. Possible refurb will be addressed at a later date.
- Rescue Truck - "Open Door" warning light system glitch still being diagnosed; repair hopefully completed this month.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motioned by Cmsr. Hofacker and seconded by Cmsr. Fraser, the minutes of the December 15, 2020 meeting were approved as presented.

NEW BUSINESS

Annual Resolutions: Motioned by Cmsr. Fraser and seconded by Cmsr. DiFalco, **Resolutions 2021-05 through 2021-10** were approved by roll call vote as follow:

2021-05: Adoption of a temporary budget of \$126,753.00 and appropriation of \$181,154.00 for annual debt service on the aerial and pumper.

2020-06: Adoption of a cash management plan and designating PNC Bank as depository.

2020-07: Designation of the Times of Trenton as the official newspaper of the fire district and the Hopewell Valley News and/or Princeton Packet as secondary publications.

2020-08: Appointment of Barbara S. Griswold as fire district attorney for 2021, as professional service without competitive bidding.

2020-09: Appointment of Joseph Carducci of Bedard, Kurowicki & Co., as fire district auditor for 2020 audit and LOSAP review, as professional service without competitive bidding.

2020-10: Appointment of Nottingham Insurance as the fire district's insurance broker of record.

LOSAP - 2020

The certified list of volunteers indicating those who qualified for LOSAP contributions in 2020 was submitted to the board. 46 volunteers earned contributions.

Motioned by DiFalco and seconded by Fraser, **Resolution 2021-11** – Approving the 2020 certified LOSAP participation list and authorizing its posting for review was passed by roll call vote.

2021 Election and Budget Referendum: To date, two people filed candidate petitions to run for open seats on the Board of Fire Commissioners – Ryan Fraser for an unexpired two-year term and Robert Ingram for a three-year term. The election will take place on April 20, 2021. At this time voting is scheduled to take place at the Pennington Fire Company firehouse from 2-9 pm, however details may change depending on the governor's directives in light of the Covid 19 Public Health Emergency.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:12 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Board will be held remotely, via Zoom, at 7:30 p.m. on February 16, 2021.

**BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
PENNINGTON BOROUGH FIRE DISTRICT NO. 1**

The budget adopted for the year 2021 by Resolution of the Board of Fire Commissioners of Fire District No. 1, Pennington Borough, Mercer County, New Jersey, following a public hearing at its meeting held January 19, 2021, is as follows:

Anticipated Revenues		
Interlocal Service Agreement (Hopewell Twp)	302,833.00	
Capital Lease reimbursement (Hopewell Twp)	162,104.00	
Amount to be Raised by Taxation	<u>259,375.00</u>	
Total Revenues		\$724,312.00 =====
Operating Appropriations		
Administration:		
Election	\$ 2,500.00	
Office Expense	5,500.00	
Professional Service	34,000.00	
Telecommunications	8,000.00	
Awards	2,500.00	
Subscriptions & Advertising	5,139.00	
Medical	1,000.00	
Contingent Expenses	<u>500.00</u>	
Total Administration		\$ 59,139.00
Cost of Operations:		
Insurance	\$ 80,000.00	
Apparatus Housing	58,500.00	
Truck Repair & Maintenance	20,000.00	
Operating Supplies	2,250.00	
Education & Training	8,500.00	
Fuel & Oil	12,000.00	
Firefighting & Radio R&M	<u>10,000.00</u>	
Total Cost of Operations		191,250.00
Turnout Gear	\$ 16,250.00	
Firefighting equipment	35,275.00	
Radio Equipment	<u>11,550.00</u>	
Total Other Assets - non-bondable		63,075.00
Deferred Charge-expenditure w/o appropriation		77,694.00
LOSAP Appropriation		85,000.00
Capital Appropriations:		
Principal Payments on Debt	\$ 150,056.00	
Interest Payments on Debt	31,098.00	
Reserve for future capital purchases	<u>67,000.00</u>	248,154.00
Total Appropriations		\$ 724,312.00 =====

Estimated Tax Rate per \$100.00 = \$0.050

A copy of the budget is available for review at the Pennington Borough Municipal Building during normal business hours, or a copy may be obtained by calling (908) 782-7900. A copy is also on the fire district website (www.pbbfc.org)

The annual election and budget referendum for the Board of Fire Commissioners of Pennington Borough, District No. 1, will be held on Tuesday, April 20, 2021, at this time scheduled from 2:00 to 9:00 p.m., at the Pennington Volunteer Fire Company firehouse located at 120 Broemel Place in Pennington, New Jersey. Details may change dependent on the Covid 19 Public Health Emergency.