

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

**MINUTES February 23, 2021**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The rescheduled remote 'Zoom' meeting was called to order by Chairman Blackwell at 7:46 p.m. following adequate and electronic notice under the Open Public Meetings Law and N.J.A.C. 5:39 (rescheduled meeting notice including information on how the public could access and participate in the meeting, make public comment and where relevant documents, if any, would be made available published in the Times of Trenton (2/19/21), 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 and Attorney Griswold.

In Cmsr. Blauth's absence, Cmsr. Hofacker was appointed to act as Secretary for this meeting.

**CHIEF'S REPORT**

The fire company responded to 30 calls in January, 2121: 5 of them in Pennington Borough, 16 in the Township, 1 in Hopewell Borough and 8 other. Calls included 1 residential, 1 motor vehicle/rescue, 1 automobile/machinery fire, 1 gas leak, and 3 CO calls. There were 11 accidental alarms/activations and 9 mutual aid calls. 2 scheduled training sessions were held.

There was an excellent response to a residential fire in Hopewell Borough's coverage area. Responding companies worked very well together and the knockdown was excellent – they used nursing tankers and didn't even need to set up the ponds. The chief thanked his crews and complimented the work of all involved.

Development – The chief gave a status report on new developments underway and planned for the next few years in the township including the ShopRite area housing project, Woodmont development (on hold at the moment), future Scotch Road expansion and at Capital Health. Area chiefs are, and will continue to provide township officials and development engineers with input and concerns relating to fire and emergency access, hydrants and water flow, fire suppression system installations, etc.

Aerial – Back in service.

Command Vehicle – Planned to be put in service in the next week or so.

New Truck (Pumper) – Brackets, mounts, and fittings are needed. Witmer Public Safety quoted the amount of \$3,895.00. Additional quotes will be required prior to a PO being issued. Motioned by Hofacker and seconded by DiFalco, the board passed **Resolution 2021-12** - Approving an expenditure and issuance of a Purchase Order of not more than \$3,895.00 for the purchase of brackets, mounts, fittings, etc. from the lowest quoting vendor.

1991 Engine (pumper) – Once the new engine is in service the 1991 engine will no longer be needed for public use. Cmsr. Blackwell will contact the Chairman of the township board to discern whether that board has any interest in the vehicle or its disposition.

## **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 will be made to last month’s treasurer’s report, as the rental payment made in January (\$4,656.00) should have been designated as a payment from the 2021 temporary budget. As additional invoice was added to the list of bills being paid at this meeting - \$1,024.00 to Al’s Sunoco, chargeable to the 2020 encumbered Truck Repair appropriation. The Chief Financial Officer certified there were sufficient encumbered funds from the 2020 budget and funds in the 2021 temporary budget to pay the bills and approve the purchase orders as presented. Motioned by DiFalco and seconded by Hofacker, **Resolution 2021-13** – Approving payment of bills as presented and supplemented in the amount of \$114,901.30 was approved by roll call vote.

PNC Bank has closed its Pennington branch and service at the Hopewell branch has been unsatisfactory. Cmsr. DiFalco will research services, account options and interest rates at other local banks and will report back to the board.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### LOSAP - 2020

Motioned by DiFalco and seconded by Fraser, the board passed **Resolution 2021-14** – Authorizing a periodic cost of living adjustment and payment to the LOSAP Plan Provider of the board’s share of the 2020 LOSAP contribution in the amount of \$15,054.92. This payment will be in addition to the list of bills presented for payment this evening.

- 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 glitch - no report on repair.

2021 Election and Budget Referendum: The governor announced earlier this month there will be in-person voting at the fire district elections. The date is Tuesday, April 20, 2021, and polls will be open at the Pennington Fire Company firehouse from 2-9 pm. Voters will elect 2 two commissioners; one for a 2-year unexpired term and one for a 3-year term, and will also vote on the 2021 fire district budget. There are no capital purchases planned for 2021. A copy of the budget is on the fire district website at [www.pbbfc.org](http://www.pbbfc.org) and can be viewed at the Pennington Borough Clerk’s office.

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the January 19, 2021 meeting will be presented for approval at the next meeting.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

- **Budget Line Item Transfers (2020 Budget)**: Motioned by DiFalco and seconded by Hofacker, **Resolution 2021-15** – Authorizing a transfer of funds between line items in the 2020 budget was passed.

- **Public Comment Procedures for Remote Meetings**: Motioned by Fraser and seconded by Hofacker, **Resolution 2021-16** – Adopting Standard Procedures and Requirements for Public Comment During a Remote Public Meeting was passed.

- **Professional Services Appointments**: Motioned by Fraser and seconded by Hofacker, the board passed **Resolution 2021-17**- Amending Resolutions 2021-08 and 2021-09 only insofar as the dollar amount of the contracts awarded therein.

- **Special Meeting**: The board discussed holding a special meeting during the month to address the sufficiency of appropriations for professional fees and election costs in the 2021 adopted budget and potentially to amend the document. If an amendment is allowable, the time line to accomplish it is short. Attorney Griswold will contact DCA to inquire whether an amendment is possible at this time and will contact the board.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT** - none

Board members expressed their condolences to Chairman Blackwell and fire company members on the death of Chairman Blackwell's brother Tommy, a long- time member, firefighter and leader of the fire company.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 10:26 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Board will be held remotely, via 'Zoom', at 7:30 p.m. on March 16, 2021.