

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

MINUTES March 16, 2021

CALL TO ORDER

The regularly scheduled remote 'Zoom' 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 (annual meeting notice including information on how the public could access and participate in the remote meeting, make public comment and where relevant documents, if any, would be made available published in the Times of Trenton (1/27/21) and Hopewell Valley News (1/29/21), provided to Packet Publications and Hopewell Express, sent to the Borough Clerk for filing and posting and posted on the board's website, at the firehouse entrances and at board offices, as well as provided to any person requesting same in advance of the meeting.

ROLL CALL

Present by roll call were Commissioners Mark Blackwell, Wayne Blauth, Bob DiFalco, Ryan Fraser and Brian Hofacker. Absent: None. Also present were Chief DeForte (arrived 7:51), Deputy Chief Demareski, LOSAP Coordinator Rodriguez, Joe Carducci (arrived 7:50) and Attorney Griswold.

CHIEF'S REPORT

The fire company responded to 24 calls in February, 2121: 4 of them in Pennington Borough, 15 in the Township and 5 other. Calls included 4 residential, 1 automobile/machinery fire and 2 gas leak. There were 8 accidental alarms/activations and 5 mutual aid calls (all residential). 4 scheduled training sessions were held remotely.

Training – Mandatory training has been completed by most firefighters. Respiratory training will take place this week.

Aerial – Out of service again. Spartan's lead engineer will arrive this week to inspect and direct repair. The work is still being covered under warranty. Dep'ty Chief Demareski requested the apparatus remain out of service until receipt of written documentation of what the issue is, the repairs undertaken and an assurance by Spartan that the truck and ladder are safe to use. Cmsr. Di Forte recommended the lines of communication remain open between all parties.

Command Vehicle – No report.

New Truck (Pumper) – Looking to have training done and the apparatus in service sometime in May. Due to delays attributable to Covid19, Spartan will extend warranties to begin when the truck actually goes into service.

1991 Engine (pumper) – Cmsr. Blackwell will contact the Chairman of the township board to discern whether that board has any interest in the vehicle or its disposition.

6-wheeler – One wheel rim needs replacement. The chief will secure quotes and present for the issuance of a purchase order.

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. The Chief Financial Officer certified there were sufficient encumbered funds from a prior year's budget and funds in the 2021 temporary budget to pay the bills as presented. Motioned by Fraser and seconded by Hofacker, **Resolution 2021-18** – Approving payment of bills as presented in the amount of \$40,075.02 was approved by roll call vote.

Purchase Orders-

2 additional courses were included in the mandatory training by Alpha Omega Training; the added cost is \$650.00. A set of irons and brackets are needed for the Deputy Chief's car; lowest quote is \$527.50 from Witmer Public Safety. The budgeted thermal imaging camera for the Assistant Chief's vehicle will cost \$5,695.00 pursuant to lowest quote from Witmer Public Safety. The officer's side Vista screen (control panel) in the rescue truck has malfunctioned; a replacement screen will cost \$2,560.00 and the manufacturer is the sole provider. Four Lanes End will order and install. One of the cameras is not working on the same side of the rescue and it is hoped that the new screen will remedy that issue, as well.

Motioned by Hofacker, seconded by Fraser and passed, purchase orders will issue as follows:

PO 2021-11 to Alpha Omega Training Solutions for \$650.00, chargeable to Training 2021

PO 2021-12 to Witmer Public Safety for \$527.50, chargeable to FF Equipment

PO 2021-13 to Witmer Public Safety for \$5,695.00, chargeable to FF Equipment

PO 2021-14 to Four Lanes End for \$2,560.00, chargeable to Truck Repair

OLD BUSINESS

- **Banking** - 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.

- **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 when COVID restrictions allow.

- **Gear Dryer** – Delivered.

- **Trailer Striping** – No update.

- **Rescue Truck** - "Open Door" warning light glitch - no report on repair.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motioned by DiFalco and seconded by Hofacker, the minutes of the January 19, 2021 meeting were approved as presented.

Motioned by Hofacker and seconded by DiFalco, the minutes of the rescheduled February 23, 2021 meeting were approved as presented.

NEW BUSINESS

- 2021 Election and Budget Referendum: In-person voting will take place on Tuesday, April 20, 2021, and polls will be open at the Pennington Fire Company firehouse from 2-9 pm. A copy of the budget is on the fire district website at www.pbbfc.org and can be viewed at the Pennington Borough Clerk's office. A copy can also be secured by calling 609-466-3967 between the hours of 9:00 and 5:00 pm.

Motioned by Hofacker and seconded by Fraser, Cmsr. Blackwell was authorized to secure poll workers and obtain the voter lists and provisional ballots for the election, and the board approved **Resolution 2021-19** – Authorizing Poll Worker Election Expenses. Commissioner Hofacker will open, and Commissioners Blackwell and DiFalco will close the elections.

- Trunking Radios – The chief reported that the manufacturer has stopped making replacement parts for the portable trunking radios purchased 7 or 8 years ago. Ultimately the county's dispatch system will no longer be able to recognize these radios. This product is used throughout the county by fire and emergency services, all of whom will need to begin replacing them over the next few years. They cost about \$6,000 each. The cost will be significant and hopefully, as with the last purchase, may fully or partially be covered through a grant.

- Amendment of 2021 Fire District Budget – The board held a duly noticed special meeting on March 11, 2021, to discuss the underfunding of appropriations for professional fees, election costs and contingencies in the previously adopted 2021 budget and to seek an amendment to the budget. The Division of Local Government Services in Trenton must authorize any amendment which, if authorized, may be subject to a public hearing before the amendment can be adopted. Mr. Carducci will reach out to DLGS to discuss authorization and to determine the steps to be taken. He will report back to the board. Pending authorization to proceed, on a motion by Hofacker and seconded by Fraser, **Resolution 2021-20**, Approval of an Amendment to Increase Three Appropriations in the 2021 Adopted Budget and to Authorize a Public Hearing on the Amendment was passed.

PUBLIC COMMENT - none

ADJOURNMENT

Motioned by Hofacker, seconded by DiFalco and passed, the meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Board will be held remotely, via 'Zoom', at 7:30 p.m. on April 20, 2021.