

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

MINUTES July 20, 2021

CALL TO ORDER

The regularly scheduled remote 'Zoom' meeting was called to order by Chairman Blackwell at 7:32 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, Bob DiFalco, Ryan Fraser, Brian Hofacker and Rob Ingram. Absent: None. Also present were Chief DeForte, Deputy Chief Demareski, Ass't. Chief Baldorossi, Jon Weiss and Attorney Griswold.

CHIEF'S REPORT

There were 36 calls in June, 2021: 5 in Pennington Borough, 24 in the Township, 0 in Hopewell Borough and 7 other. Calls included 1 brush, 2 motor vehicle/rescue, 1 wires/transformer and 1 CO alarm. There were 21 accidental alarms and 7 mutual aid calls. 3 scheduled drills were held. The old Bristol Myers Squibb site on Pennington-Rocky Hill Rd. is the source of a number of alarm activations. The township fire official is aware.

The chief inquired into available means of recouping some of the cost of consumable items like Speedy-Dry and foam often used in connection with emergency response to commercial sites and motor vehicle accidents. The board agreed to look into alternatives and to further discuss.

Duty Crews – Reinstated for nighttime calls; a number of nighttime calls are for accidental fire/smoke and CO alarm activations.

- New Engine (Pumper) – There is noise in the emergency radio that the vendor will address. The WiFi from the old engine and an antenna will be installed in this vehicle.

- Tanker – Minor welding completed. In service.

- Chief's Vehicle – SCBA mount on backorder.

- Aerial – Leak in foam tank; tank drained to locate source and repair.

- 1991 Engine (pumper) – Hopewell Borough is not interested in taking possession; awaiting confirmation from the township board as to its intent. If the township waives its right to purchase, the engine will be listed for auction on Municibid.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the June 15, 2021 meeting will be held over for approval at the next meeting.

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 budget to pay the bills as presented. Motioned by DiFalco and seconded by Fraser, **Resolution 2021-31** – Approving payment of bills as presented in the amount of \$17,782.35 was approved by roll call vote.

PUBLIC COMMENT - none

OLD BUSINESS

- Banking - Cmsr. DiFalco has researched services, account options and interest rates at local banks. Further discussion tabled until next month.

- 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 arranged when COVID restrictions allow.

- Trailer Striping – Underway.

- Rescue Truck - "Open Door" warning light – no update.

- Moving Election Date – Awaiting word from the county that the process is complete.

- Fixed Asset Inventory and Appraisal – Should be updated. It was suggested that the board set a cost threshold of \$2,000 to \$5,000 per individual item to define a fixed asset, versus a consumable asset or supply. The board will consider whether it is prudent next year to include a budget appropriation to hire a fixed asset appraisal company to assist in the process.

- Tablets – Ass't. Chief Baldorossi reported that the trucks' electrical systems are sufficient to hardwire or otherwise power the tablets. Some hardware necessary for installation was not included in the original quote. The cost of six (6) charging docking station stanchions from ESCNJ Cooperative Pricing System vendor CDW-G, LLC is \$650.72, for which a purchase order to CDW-G will be issued, chargeable to FF Equipment (#2021-38).

- Electronic Funds Transfer Policy – Mr. Weiss explained it is a new section on the fire district audit questionnaire and even though the board now makes few, if any transactions that may be considered electronic transfers, they may become unavoidable in the future.

NEW BUSINESS

- Obsolete or Surplus Equipment – Ass't. Chief Baldorossi inquired about the process to dispose of outdated radios and headsets, etc. that are no longer in use. Chairman Blackwell explained that

depending on their estimated fair value they should be sold at public auction. He asked for an inventory (make, model, serial #, etc.) and pictures sufficient to list the items on a public auction site. The board will address an auction or other disposition once they have the requested information. Cmsr. Fraser suggested that the board create a policy and process for retiring old or outdated equipment. He and Chairman Blackwell will work on drafting a policy for the board's consideration.

- Purchase Orders – The Deputy Chief requested purchase orders for the following:

1. Class A Foam (8 ea. pails) pursuant to lowest quote from Witmer Public Safety at a cost not to exceed \$832.00, chargeable to FF Equipment. (#2021-39)
2. Single Gas Meter (4 ea) per lowest quote from Witmer Public Safety at a cost not to exceed \$1,180.00, chargeable to FF Equipment. (#2021-40)
3. MSA 4-Gas Meter (1 ea) per lowest quote from Witmer Public Safety at a cost not to exceed \$845.00, chargeable to FF Equipment (#2021-41)
4. Stokes Basket (1 ea) per lowest quote including shipping from Witmer Public Safety at a cost not to exceed \$1,000.00, chargeable to FF Equipment (#2021-42)
5. Turn-out Gear (3 sets) pursuant to NJ State Purchasing Contract #17-Fleet-00837 from Witmer Public Safety at a cost not to exceed \$11,505.75, chargeable to Turnout Gear (#2021-43)
6. Forcible Entry Tool (1 ea – rabbit tool) pursuant to lowest quote from Witmer Public Safety at a cost not to exceed \$1,850.00, chargeable to FF Equipment (2021-44)
7. Boots (1 pr) pursuant to NJ State Purchasing Contract #17-Fleet-00837 from Witmer Public Safety at a cost not to exceed \$478.25, chargeable to Turnout Gear (#2021-45)
8. Hooks and Irons (misc.) pursuant to lowest quote from Witmer Public Safety at a cost not to exceed \$1,313.50, chargeable to FF Equipment (#2021-46)
9. Water Rescue Gear pursuant to lowest quote from Witmer Public Safety at a cost not to exceed \$4,349.00, chargeable to FF Equipment (#2021-47)
10. Paratech Struts pursuant to NJ State Purchasing Contract #17-Fleet-00757 from Continental Fire & Safety at a cost not to exceed \$7,529.70, chargeable to FF Equipment (#2021-48)
11. Tool Boxes (4 ea) from Home Depot at a cost not to exceed \$2,307.48, chargeable to FF Equipment (#2021-49)

Cmsr. DiFalco questioned which purchase requests were for essential items. The Class A foam is absolutely essential. Cmsr. Hofacker recommended there be a minimum quantity of foam maintained in inventory. Presently, 70 gallons is required to fill the foam tanks on the apparatus. Unsealed containers have a shelf life of up to 20 years; if opened 12-18 months.

After certification by the treasurer that sufficient unencumbered funds exist for the purchase orders requested above, on a Motion by Hofacker, seconded by DiFalco and passed, the issuance of purchase order 2021-38, and purchase orders 2021-39 through 2021-49, all as set forth above, were approved by roll call vote, with Commissioner Ingram abstaining from voting on the motion and on the issuance of all said purchase orders.

- Purchasing Process - To streamline and improve the purchasing process, the treasurer recommended that a "budget sheet" be developed to standardize the procedures to be followed in presenting proposed purchases to the board, including the required submission to the board of itemized purchase requests, including complete descriptions, justification, and supporting documentation (quotes, etc.), attached and approved by a fire department official, in sufficient time for its review prior to each meeting. In order to allow fire department personnel time to confirm receipt of items ordered and to review bills for accuracy, the chief suggested a notation be placed on each purchase order that advises vendors of a deadline by which invoices must be received or payment will not be processed that month. Commissioners Hofacker and Fraser will confer with the accountant to formalize the document and present to the board.

CLOSED SESSION (9:42 p.m.)

On a motion by Hofacker and seconded by Fraser, **Resolution 2021-32** - Authorizing a closed session of the board was approved by roll call vote. The board will reconvene at the conclusion of its closed session.

Return to Open Session (10:13 p.m.)

No formal action will be taken at this time with regard to matters discussed in closed session.

ADJOURNMENT

Motioned by Hofacker, seconded by DiFalco and passed, the meeting adjourned at 10:15 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Board will be held remotely, via 'Zoom', at 7:30 p.m. on August 17, 2021.