

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

**MINUTES October 19, 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, Ryan Fraser, Brian Hofacker, Robert Ingram. Absent: Commissioner Robert DiFalco. Also present were Chief DeForte, LOSAP Admin. Rodriguez, Joe Carducci and Attorney Griswold.

**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 Fraser and seconded by Hofacker, **Resolution 2021-36** – Approving payment of the bills as presented in the amount of \$108,250.25, which includes the annual debt service payment on the Spartan pumper, was approved by roll call vote.

The 3rdQ tax check from the township (\$60,793.16), proceeds from auction of the old engine (\$9,600.00), and worker's compensation audit refund (\$7,400.00) were received and deposited during the month.

Cmsr's. Fraser and Ingram will take the necessary steps to add their names to the checking account signature cards.

**CHIEF'S REPORT**

There were 78 calls in September, 2021 (Hurricane Ida storms): 17 in Pennington Borough, 50 in the Township, 4 in Hopewell Borough and 7 other. Calls included 4 residential, 1 non-residential, 1 motor vehicle/rescue, 1 automobile/machinery, 2 gas leak, 2 HazMat, 2 cellar pump and 4 CO alarms. There were 34 accidental alarms and 11 mutual aid calls. To date this year the fire company has responded to 420 calls. 4 scheduled drills were held; there was not an instructor available to conduct the scheduled and confirmed live-burn drill at the Dempster Center so members did the training without fire. The chief reported that he is again going to research training opportunities at the Somerset County facilities.

- Aerial – Leak in foam tank; no update.

- New Engine (pumper) – Will go back to Campbell Supply next week for a problem with the light tower and additional minor issues.

-Radio noise; no update.

-Transfer of modem from old engine to this vehicle; no update

Brush Truck Decking – Awaiting quote(s) for Rhino-Lining and repair.

**PUBLIC COMMENT** - none

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

On a motion by Hofacker, seconded by Fraser and passed, the minutes from the August 17 and September 21, 2021 regular meetings meeting were approved as presented.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

- SOG's – Draft revised and under review.

- Outstanding Pagers – No update.

- Fixed Asset Inventory and Appraisal – No update.

- Fire Protection Agreement – Commissioner Blackwell reported that the township board is working on it.

- Electronic Funds Transfer Policy – Policy being prepared.

- Tablets – Tablets received. Will be installed in the vehicles.

- Obsolete or Surplus Equipment – Work in progress.

- Attorney Search – No response to date in response to posting of position.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

- 2022 Budget – The chief was asked to follow up on the changes to the Firefighting and Radio Repair appropriation discussed last month. The township needs the proposed budget by November 18<sup>th</sup>. The board also discussed various aspects of reburberishing the tanker in the next year or two, the cost of which is expected to be paid from the existing capital account and not require any financing. Commissioner Hofacker recommended that if some of the board's cap bank will be applied to the 2022 budget that the township board be included in determining how much its board can afford.

- Transfer of Funds to Capital - On a motion by Hofacker, seconded by Ingram and passed, **Resolution 2021-37** – Transferring \$67,000.00 from the 2021 budget line item for Reserve for Future Capital Purchases to the Capital Reserve was approved by roll call vote.

LOSAP – Commissioner Blackwell reported that the township board has taken an interest in joining the Hopewell Borough and Pennington Borough districts in adopting a standard procedure for the return to the fire district of funds being held in inactive, unvested members' accounts. He was told that a committee was being formed with representatives from each district to create a uniform policy. To date, neither borough LOSAP administrator has been contacted in this regard. Pennington would like to address other provisions for clarification or inclusion in any revised LOSAP document and will make a

suggestion to the township board to also include discussion of these items. Commissioner Hofacker was appointed to work with the Mr. Rodriguez on this committee.

**CLOSED SESSION** (8:55 p.m.)

On a motion by Blackwell and seconded by Hofacker, **Resolution 2021-38** - 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** (9:10 p.m.)

No formal action will be taken at this time with regard to matters discussed in closed session. Commissioner Blackwell will contact Nottingham Insurance to arrange a presentation for the board to review, clarify and answer questions regarding the content and adequacy of the board's insurance policies. Commissioner Hofacker recommended that the fire company arrange a separate insurance presentation for members, perhaps in conjunction with a risk management discussion, so they are aware of their risks, responsibilities and protections afforded the individual members and the fire company. Commissioner Fraser recommended that the board undertake a review of, and update or create written policies and directives aimed at protecting the board, fire company members and the public.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the board, motioned by Hofacker, seconded by Fraser and passed, the meeting adjourned at 9:11 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Board will be held remotely, via 'Zoom', at 7:30 p.m. on November 16, 2021. Instructions for joining the meeting can be found on the board's website at [www.pbbfc.org](http://www.pbbfc.org)