

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

**MINUTES January 18, 2022**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The regularly scheduled remote 'Zoom' meeting was called to order by Chairman Blackwell at 7:30 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 (12/29/21) and Hopewell Valley News (1/07/22), provided to the Hopewell Express, sent to the Borough Clerk for filing and public 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, Robert DiFalco, Ryan Fraser, Brian Hofacker, Robert Ingram. Absent: None. Also present were Chief DeForte, Joe Carducci and Attorney Griswold.

**LOSAP** – Lt. Rodriguez had a schedule conflict but stopped in to report that the list of members qualifying for LOSAP contributions in 2021 will be presented at the next meeting for board approval and posting.

**INSURANCE PRESENTATION** – Kirk LeBlanc from the Nottingham Insurance Agency was present to answer questions from the board and to present an overview of the policies currently in place.

**2022 BUDGET – PUBLIC HEARING**

Motion by Blackwell and seconded by DiFalco, **Resolution 2022-01** – Authorizing the 2022 Fire District Budget be Read by Title was adopted.

Chairman Blackwell opened the public hearing on the 2022 approved budget. 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 public present and no comment, the Chairman closed the hearing.

**CHIEF'S REPORT**

There were 34 calls in December, 2021: 7 in Pennington Borough, 16 in the Township, 1 in Hopewell Borough and 10 other. Calls included 2 residential, 1 motor vehicle/rescue, 2 brush, 1 gas leak, and 2 CO calls. There were 14 accidental alarms and 11 mutual aid calls. 4 scheduled drills were held.

The fire company responded to 508 calls throughout 2021.

- Aerial – Leak in foam tank; no update - 4 Lanes End to look at.

- New Engine (pumper) – Went back to Campbell Supply to deal with light tower warranty as well as a recall issue on the steering. Expected to be returned and back in service within the week. Additional minor issues still to be addressed.
- Rescue – Hydraulic hose reel; waiting for Hurst representative to assess - no update.  
Door switches; repair to be done by 4 Lanes End.
- Tanker – Leak on transfer case – 4 Lanes End to address.  
(4 Lanes End technician has been out with an injury – expected back to work soon)

Given the resurgence of Covid the fire company has reinstated safety measures, including a return to remote meetings and limiting firehouse access to only those responding to emergency calls and performing necessary operational tasks.

The chief again expressed to this board, as he has to the township board, his ongoing concern with dispatching. It would save precious minutes (and perhaps lives) if the township would directly dispatch the local fire services, especially for smoke conditions and structure fires. Per current protocol 911 emergency calls go to the township. All fire calls are then relayed to Mercer County central dispatch for dissemination to the first responders. The time that elapses between the initial receipt of a call and its dispatch by the county is time wasted. In a recent incident it was more than 3 minutes. The township chiefs will meet to discuss the best way to initiate improvements to the system. Commissioner DiFalco asked the chief to put his concerns and the particulars of notable delays in writing.

### **TREASURER’S REPORT**

Motioned by Hofacker and seconded by Fraser, **Resolution 2022-02** – Adoption of a temporary budget of \$ 57,885.00 and appropriation of \$103,460.00 for annual debt service on the aerial was passed by roll call vote.

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/or funds in the 2022 temporary budget to pay the bills as presented. Motioned by Fraser and seconded by Ingram, **Resolution 2022-03** – Approving payment of the bills as presented in the amount of \$136,931.05, which amount includes annual debt service on the aerial, was adopted 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.

**PUBLIC COMMENT** - none

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes from the December 21, 2021 meeting will be held for approval at the next meeting.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

- SOG’s – Draft revised and under review.
- Outstanding Pagers – No update.
- Fixed Asset Inventory and Appraisal – No update.
- Tablets – Will be installed as soon as the engine comes back from Campbell Supply.
- Obsolete or Surplus Equipment – Work in progress.
- Attorney Search – Underway.

- LOSAP (inactive unvested member accounts) – Clarification of procedure to return funds to district will be addressed at a future meeting.

**- 2022 BUDGET – ADOPTION**

Motion by Hofacker and seconded by Ingram, the 2022 Fire District Budget was presented for adoption in the same content and amount as the approved budget. The estimated tax rate is \$0.59 per \$100.00 assessed value. A synopsis is appended to these minutes.

**Resolution 2022-04 – Adoption of 2022 Fire District Budget**

Aye: Blackwell, DiFalco, Fraser, Hofacker, Ingram.      Nay: None.      Absent: None.

On a motion by DiFalco, seconded by Fraser and passed, the following PO's were issued:

**#2022-01**- State mandated annual training courses, to be conducted remotely over 3 nights and 1 in-person session (to be held later date), from Alpha Omega (sole provider for this format) at a cost of \$3,275.00; chargeable to Training.

The training will be recorded for those who cannot attend (if allowed) and valley companies will be invited to participate if they choose.

**#2022-02** – Blower motor, resistor and exhaust repairs to Deputy Chief's vehicle from Al's Sunoco at a cost of \$720.00, chargeable to Vehicle Repairs.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Annual Elections:** The following commissioners were elected to hold office for the year:

Chairman: Mark Blackwell - motioned by Fraser, seconded by Ingram and passed

Vice-Chairman: Brian Hofacker – motioned by Blackwell, seconded by DiFalco and passed

Treasurer: Robert Ingram – motioned by DiFalco, seconded by Blackwell and passed

Secretary: Robert DiFalco – motioned by Blackwell, seconded by Fraser and passed

**Appointments:** Commissioner to perform timely review of EFT transactions: Mark Blackwell

Public Records Custodian: Robert DiFalco

Chief Financial Officer: Robert Ingram

Public Agency Compliance Officer (previously appointed): Brian Hofacker

**Annual Resolutions:** Motioned by Cmsr. Fraser and seconded by Cmsr. Ingram, **Resolutions 2021-05 through 2021-09** were approved by roll call vote as follow:

**2022-05:** Adoption of a cash management plan and designating PNC Bank as depository.

**2022-06:** 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.

**2022-07:** Appointment of Barbara S. Griswold as interim fire district attorney for 2022, as professional service without competitive bidding.

**2022-08:** Appointment of Joseph Carducci of Bedard, Kurowicki & Co., as fire district auditor for the 2021 audit and LOSAP review, as professional service without competitive bidding.

**2022-09:** Appointment of Nottingham Insurance as the fire district's insurance broker of record.

**CLOSED SESSION** (9:20 p.m.)

Motioned by Blackwell and seconded by Fraser, **Resolution 2022-10** Authorizing the board to go into closed session was adopted by roll call vote. The board will reconvene at the conclusion of its closed session.

**Return to Open Session** (10:05 p.m.)

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

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the board, motioned by Hofacker, seconded by DiFalco and passed, the meeting adjourned at 10:06 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Board will be held remotely, via 'Zoom', at 7:30 p.m. on February 15, 2022. Instructions for joining the meeting can be found on the board's website at [www.pbbfc.org](http://www.pbbfc.org)

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

The budget adopted for the calendar year 2022 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 18, 2022, is as follows:

Anticipated Revenues		
Interlocal Service Agreement (Hopewell Twp)	318,318.00	
Capital Purchase reimbursements (Hopewell Twp)	163,058.00	
Amount to be Raised by Taxation	<u>314,043.00</u>	
Total Revenues		\$795,419.00 =====
Operating Appropriations		
Administration:		
Election	\$ 1,500.00	
Office Expense	5,500.00	
Professional Service	42,500.00	
Telecommunications	8,000.00	
Awards	2,500.00	
Subscriptions & Advertising	5,139.00	
Medical	1,000.00	
Contingent Expenses	<u>4,500.00</u>	
Total Administration		\$ 70,639.00
Cost of Operations:		
Insurance	\$ 80,000.00	
Apparatus Housing	59,748.00	
Truck Repair & Maintenance	20,000.00	
Operating Supplies	2,250.00	
Education & Training	15,300.00	
Fuel & Oil	12,000.00	
Firefighting & Radio R&M	<u>17,178.00</u>	
Total Cost of Operations		206,476.00
Turnout Gear	\$ 16,800.00	
Firefighting equipment	34,825.00	
Radio Equipment	<u>5,100.00</u>	
Total Other Assets - non-bondable		56,725.00
LOSAP Appropriation		85,000.00
Capital Appropriations:		
Principal Payments on Debt	\$ 154,367.00	
Interest Payments on Debt	26,787.00	
Reserve for future capital purchases	<u>195,425.00</u>	<u>376,579.00</u>
Total Appropriations		\$ 795,419.00 =====

Estimated Tax Rate per \$100.00 = \$0.059

A copy of the budget is available for review at the Pennington Borough Municipal Building during normal business hours. A copy is also on the fire district website ([www.pbbfc.org](http://www.pbbfc.org))