

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

MINUTES March 15, 2022

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 (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, Brian Hofacker, Robert Ingram. Absent: Commissioner Ryan Fraser. Also present were Chief DeForte, Lt. Rodriquez, Jon Weiss and Attorney Griswold.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

CHIEF'S REPORT

There were 31 calls in February, 2022: 6 in Pennington Borough, 17 in the Township, and 8 other. Calls included 2 residential, 1 motor vehicle/rescue, 1 wires/transformer, and 1 gas leak. There were 13 accidental alarms and 8 mutual aid calls. 3 scheduled drills were held.

- Rescue – Hydraulic hose reel; situation assessed, waiting for Hurst recommendations. Door switches; to be worked on this month.
- Tanker – Transfer case leak; parts arrived - will be dealt with this month.

Training: The owner of Circle Liquors will allow the fire company to perform training exercises at the property located at 1 Pennington-Washington Crossing Road before its demolition scheduled for early May. The board will provide the requested insurance certificate. This is a good training opportunity and the chief will invite the other valley fire companies to participate if they are interested.

Annual Testing: The chief is waiting for response from the township chief regarding its annual testing (hose, ladder, pump, etc.) and whether a joint purchasing agreement is possible to help reduce costs.

Annual Mandatory Training – Current year’s completed; looking into format options for next year.

Firefighter Compliance Notice – The NJ Division of Fire Safety issued an alert regarding compliance with the Dep’t of Labor/PEOSH respirator (SCBA) rules requiring all firefighters to submit, at least annually, to a FIT test, and forbidding a firefighter to have facial hair that interferes with the seal of the SCBA mask to the face. Failure to comply may result in suspension or revocation of NJDFS certifications.

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/or funds in the 2022 budget to pay the bills as presented.

Motioned by DiFalco and seconded by Hofacker. **Resolution 2022-15** – Approving payment of the bills as presented in the amount of \$10,762.00 was adopted by roll call vote.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes from the December, 2021 meeting will be held for approval at this time, as will be minutes of the February 15, 2022 minutes.

OLD BUSINESS

- SOG’s – Draft revised and under review. Commissioner Fraser asked whether certain fire company or board policies are included as part of the document. He will help review.
- Outstanding Pagers – No update.
- Fixed Asset Inventory and Appraisal – No update.
- Obsolete or Surplus Equipment – Work in progress.

- Attorney Search – Underway. Attorney Griswold will be unavailable after May 31, 2022.
- LOSAP (inactive unvested member accounts) – Clarification of procedure to return funds to district will be addressed at a future meeting.
- Fire Protection Agreement – The township board representative will meet with the chairmen and chiefs of the three valley departments to discuss renewals.

NEW BUSINESS

On a motion by Hofacker, seconded by DiFalco and passed, issuing the following PO’s was approved/ratified:

- #2022-10 – 2 batteries for the deputy chief’s vehicle to MetalFab Pro Racing at \$349.90
- #2022-11 – Vehicle fuel to Hopewell Township at \$418.87
- #2022-12 – Tru fuel to Tractor Supply at \$91.93
- #2022-13 – Annual testing of extrication tools to ESI at a cost of \$548.00.
- #2022- 04 – Hose repair to Witmer Public Safety at a cost of \$60.00
- #2022-15 - Annual SCBA flow testing, not to exceed \$2,200.00, to Witmer Public Safety

LOSAP 2021

Motioned by DiFalco and seconded by Hofacker, the board passed **Resolution 2022-16** – Authorizing a periodic cost of living adjustment and payment to the LOSAP Plan Provider of the board’s share of the 2021 LOSAP contribution in the amount of \$15,658.44. This payment will be in addition to the list of bills presented for payment this evening.

Insurance – The renewal process has begun. The criminal acts coverage, including protection against losses due to electronic hacking, will be increased for a minimal increase in premium (\$30-35). A 2019 change in the NJ workers’ compensation law provides that certain emergency service workers who suffer an injury, illness or death caused by certain types of medical conditions (including certain cancers) may qualify for medical benefits and financial compensation without demonstrating causation or exposure. As a result many insurers, including the board’s carrier, have stopped providing workers compensation insurance to firefighting services in the state. The board will have a new workers’ compensation provider, or will have to join the state’s insurance pool.

DMV Driver Abstracts – Commissioner Hofacker will start the process for the periodic review of fire company members’ driving records.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the board, motioned by Ingram, seconded by Fraser and passed, the meeting adjourned at 8:16 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Board will be held remotely, via ‘Zoom’, at 7:30 p.m. on April 19, 2022. Instructions for joining the meeting can be found on the board’s website at www.pbbfc.org