

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

MINUTES
August 16, 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, Ryan Fraser, Brian Hofacker, Robert Ingram. Absent: None. Also present were Chief DeForte, Enrique Rodriguez, Michael Baldorossi, Roger Demareski, Attorney Appleby.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

NONE

CHIEF'S REPORT

There were 47 calls in July 2022: 9 to Pennington Borough, 20 to Hopewell Township, 2 to Hopewell Borough, 16 out of district. Chief said firefighters did phenomenal job responding to structure fire on mutual aid call during heatwave. Calls included 2 Brush/Leaves/Field, 2 CO Alarms, 1 Gas Leak, 1 Non-residential, 2 Residential, and 1 trash/dumpster. There were 18 Mutual Aid calls, 14 accidental alarms and 0 false alarms. There were 2 scheduled drills and 1 special drill/work session were held.

Hose testing, pump testing and ladder testing all done. Chief discussed that forgot to put in budget for destructive ladder testing which has to be done every 5 years. Needs to be a line item every year. Batteries were replaced. Discussion with logging in for fuel pumps.

Chief asked about foam and hazmat supplies and how to put in budget. Chief asked about using capital expenditures. Chairman Blackwell and Attorney Appleby stated that this is not something that should be done. Commissioner Ingram spoke as to Township of Beverly and

how they pay for foam. Capital to operating transfers can be done, but frowned upon per Commissioner Fraser. Recurring cost of foam, and Chief does not want to request a P.O. every month. He wants an automatic replenishment. Commissioner Fraser said there should be min/max authorization. Chairman Blackwell discussed that there is a HazMat line item and it was transferred to pay for other things.

Chief discussed automatic grease gun. Cost is \$365 for 5 gallons.

Chairman Blackwell stated that there is money in HazMat line. Discussed "not to exceed" similar to fuel and to have an open P.O. with a vendor. Commissioner Ingram stated that \$2000 is one foam event and is a significant hit in fire company's budget. Foam cannot be left around and cannot be kept on truck for more than a year or 18 months. Commissioners to look into a 2023 grant.

Chief talked about new development and Trenton changing specifications for hydrants.

Commissioner Fraser asked Chief about whether he got any information from Hopewell Township on fire inspections. Borough Mayor thought rates set by State, but set by ordinance. Chairman Blackwell discussed his conversation with Mayor and how Council took away fire services for Hopewell Township. Extended discussion regarding need for electrician for inspections and how Pennington Borough get hit with expense. District cannot negotiate with Bureau since Council took it away. Only way to address is to bring to Borough Council meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On a motion by DiFalco, seconded by Hofacker, the minutes from the July 19, 2022 were approved as presented.

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. Chief asked about check to MidState and payment for radios. Bill came in for Motorola and may need to void the MidState check. Radios sent to Enrique but were not programmed. May be Check 4874 if need to void previous check. Question on check to Hopewell Township and was due to increase in fuel use.

Motioned by Fraser and seconded by Hofacker, approving payment of the bills as presented in the amount of \$47,790.59 was adopted by roll call vote. Chairman Blackwell abstained on payments to Joanne Blackwell and relating to Batteries. Commissioner Ingram abstained on Whitmer Public Service.

OLD BUSINESS

- Audit – Resolution 2022-27 approving Audit and authorizing execution of Group Affidavit. Affidavit must be notarized, so the Affidavit will be with the Borough Clerk for all to sign. Motion by Commissioner DiFalco and seconded by Commissioner Fraser. Roll call vote.

<u>Commissioner</u>	<u>vote</u>
Blackwell	Yes
Fraser	Yes
Ingram	Yes
Hofacker	Yes
DiFalco	Yes

- Driver Abstract updates - Still finishing up. Chief to assist in emailing to list.
- Fire Services agreement with Hopewell Twp – Chairman Blackwell still in the works. Have not had a meeting yet and will come up with budget.
- Fixed asset inventory update – Commissioner Hofacker discussed list of surplus, including outboard motor. Value will probably require auction. Can use GovDeals. Attorney Appleby advised that can use trade value when purchasing new. The rest is scrap.
 - o Michael Baldorossi questioned whether could trade 15 HP jet. Discussed water rescue. Chairman Blackwell stated it depends on budget - \$2500 is budgeted amount.
 - o Discussion as to removing name of Pennington from donated or sold trucks and equipment.
- Political Contribution forms: all have been submitted.
- Policies and SOG's: Attorney Appleby stated that she got the proposed policies from Roger the day before.
- Software for Firehouse: E. Rodriguez discussed that software will no longer be supported at end of the year. State has web-based platform to make NFIRS reports but data is not saved which is needed for accountability and monthly reports. Addresses are not saved. Enrique said all information will need to be entered. With Firehouse Software, can use drop down menu to find addresses. ESO bought out Firehouse Software. The \$1900 transferring fee would be waived. \$3085 a year, 1st year is \$3600. Chairman Blackwell asked if can share with Hopewell Borough or Township. Their bill is a lot higher, but we cannot share. Commissioner Hofacker asked why sharing not possible. Enrique stated that still need to fill out call sheet on mutual aid call. Why can't we just buy another license? Enrique stated that we would have to have put our information in system. Chairman Blackwell stated that if we do not file NIFR's, the District cannot get a grant. Enrique discussed the difference in using the free FEMA software and the paid software. Chairman Blackwell said these are volunteers and he asked DCA what was going on. The time to do entries is 20-40 minutes on "free" where

the paid is 10 minutes. Enrique to get more information. Question as to whether this could be a capital expenditure due to length of time. Superintendent of National Fire Academy could be contacted if run into problem.

NEW BUSINESS

Certificates of Insurance: Chairman Blackwell discussed the Agreement as to the training for member at Hunterdon County Fire Academy. Need to tweak and indemnity provisions and then send to insurance company.

Tools & Equipment – Casters discussed by Commissioner Ingram. Attorney Appleby stated that there was a “not to exceed” amount approved for casters in June in the amount of \$501. No P.O. issued yet. M. Baldorossi discussed the racks. Chairman Blackwell discussed difficulties in budgeting.

- Knox boxes: Chairman Blackwell asked where we stand with software. Need quote – will be sent by Chief to Chairman. Enrique sent to Chairman earlier in the day. Chief said our turn to buy software. iCloud service for 1-6 devices. Pay vendor or Hopewell Township?

. Bill for membership to Commissioner Board received by Chairman for \$300. Will be paid next month.

Training: Enrique asked regarding P.O.’s for training that were sent to Chairman a week ago: \$170 to Somerset County, \$83 to Burlington County for pump operations, \$325 for Hunterdon County Emergency Services, \$1150 for training that was already completed (swiftboard). Brackets for replacement of broken brackets. Chief explained that one set of brackets for new struts. P.O. \$475 to replace broken brackets for tank supply line holder. Enrique stated that \$462.29 P.O. is for supply line that goes into pool. It broke during training and needs to be replaced. The \$475 is for new struts not tank supply line holder – it may be wrong in Enrique R.’s email.

Chairman went through all of the P.O.’s. Chief stated that there was \$8000 in line item for pump and nozzle testing, but Chairman stated that there was nothing. Chief will show Chairman offline, but Chairman said it is \$2030. Repair on all apparatus and equipment line item is \$8500 total. About \$17,000 for everything and Chairman stated that fire company grossly underbudgeted. Commissioner Fraser stated that need to address in next year’s budget. Chief did not realize ladder truck was 5 years old and needed non-destructive testing. Chairman stated that hose testing for 2020 was \$8000, 2021 was \$7955, now \$9000 for 2022. Commissioner Hofacker stated that he will go over budget with Chief to address this issue. Chairman will get John to pull out encumbered numbers so get real, budgeted numbers - \$22,000 comes back in.

Equipment (cont’d) – Rescue truck has issue with Jake brake, red cabinet light keeps coming on, per M. Baldorossi. Extended discussion regarding safety and taking truck out of service.

Chief also discussed magnetic switch on hydrants. Issue with door switches – 3 wire system with a negative ground. Wrong switches came in and had to be sent back. Electronics in trucks

are a challenge with repair going forward. Commissioner Fraser, Hofacker and Blackwell all stated that if unsafe, it should be taken out of service.

Motion to close made by Commissioner Hofacker, seconded by Commissioner Fraser. All voted in favor.

Meeting concluded at 9:02 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the board, motioned by Hofacker, seconded by Fraser and passed, the meeting adjourned at 9:02 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Board will be held remotely, via 'Zoom', at 7:30 p.m. on September 20, 2022. Instructions for joining the meeting can be found on the board's website at www.pbbfc.org